

# Quests of Doom

ADVENTURES WORTH WINNING

## Volume 2

5th Edition Rules,  
1st Edition Feel



FIFTH EDITION  
COMPATIBLE



NECROMANCER  
GAMES

QUESTS OF DOOM

# Quests of Doom

## Volume 2

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NECROMANCER  
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5th Edition Rules,  
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Bugs  
&  
Blobs

# Of Ants and Men

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By Bill Webb

This adventure is designed for characters of levels 4 to 8.

Sometimes bugs are just bugs, and sometimes they are organized into a hive mind that is just as smart as humans. Ants are just that. In battle, the ants become a horde of raging combatants that form a blur on all sides. While ants are typically peaceful, they respond to a threat against the hive with a scale of violence that's almost impossible to imagine. Utterly devoted to duty, ants never retreat from a confrontation—even in the face of certain death. Their engagements are brief and brutal. Working in teams, ants grab enemies, holding them in place until one of the warriors rips into the captive's body, leaving it smashed and oozing.

*Of Ants and Men* begins as a quest to recover (e.g., steal) eggs from a giant anthill near the town of Endhome. The real treasure is a sword made of a rare and strange metal, called the *two-edged sword*, which has amazingly powerful anti-magical properties.

The adventure can also be played (perhaps more effectively) by smaller groups. In response to many requests from our fans, the main encounters are designed to work well with groups of two to three characters of levels 6 to 8. Even a solo adventurer could do reasonably well, if the individual character had very good climbing, trap finding, and stealth skills. Druids, barbarians, and rogues will fare best in cases where the groups are limited in size.

While there's plenty of opportunity for combat here, characters who think through a situation before drawing their swords are likely to do best. Hacking one's way through is likely to result in character deaths.

## Starting the Adventure

If the GM is using the Lost Lands setting by **Frog God Games**, the anthill is located just south of the Penprie Forest, near the city of Endhome and along the banks of the Oldrock River. GMs using another setting could place this adventure anywhere with virtually no modification beyond minor re-tweaking of the "finding the body" portion of the adventure. Otherwise, it's playable anywhere.

There are a number of hooks the GM can use to get the players involved with this adventure. Rumors of a giant anthill "filled with treasure" could be presented in the local watering hole, or perhaps a more direct method could be employed. Bug-hunts such as this often are high on danger and low on treasure (that describes this one), so if incentive is lacking, several methods can be employed. Potential adventure hooks include:

- Player characters are hired to get giant ant eggs. A kindly old wizard, perhaps a friend of the characters, needs these eggs for magical research. He will pay 500 gp if they retrieve eggs for him.

- Player characters are *geased* by a not-so-kindly wizard to gather eggs from the anthill. While not a very nice way to treat player characters, this is about as old-school as you can get. In fact, in the original white box version of the game, virtually all wizards and clerics encountered used *geas* and *quest* on player characters regularly. Alas (for GMs; not so much for PCs), this is a different day and age.

- A powerful lord was killed while fighting gnolls on the fields south of the Penprie Forest, very near where the giant anthill is located. When retainers arrived to recover the dead, they found the bodies had been dragged away by giant ants. His family offers a reward of 1,000 gp for recovery of his body (impossible—he was eaten) or 500 gp for recovery of his plate armor. The armor is inscribed with his family crest: a pair of unicorn heads entwined by

vines and facing one another.

- Farmers have complained about sheep going missing in the area. They beg the player characters to investigate the cause and stop the loss of livestock.

Whatever the method used, the GM can find some way to encourage the party to head toward the location of the anthill. Once there, they find the body of a man wearing leather armor lying a few hundred yards from the anthill. The man is on a small island of rock in the center of the Oldrock River. His body is bloated and red, and his armor is heavily damaged, almost as if it were partially melted by some type of acid. A partially melted shortsword is gripped in his hand, and he wears a belt pouch that contains a journal.

*Speak with dead* or perusal of the journal reveals the following details. Paraphrase to suit the manner that the characters get the information.

This man and his friends were hired by a wizard to retrieve giant ant eggs—in fact they were offered 500 gp, with a 500 gp bonus should they get a royal queen egg. They fought their way into the nest but soon realized they could never cut their way through the entire nest of ants. Their druid used his magic to make them invisible to the ants, and that seemed to protect them. While working their way down into the egg chambers, they discovered a series of cut caverns and worked stone tunnels and chambers. There they found a strange vault of carved stone covered with ancient, mystic writing. For some reason, the druid's magic failed, as did that of their wizard and their priest, and the ants returned with a vengeance.

They tried to run, dropping most of their equipment in an attempt to run faster. The man was stung several times by warrior ants, but he made it out and sought refuge in the river, where he hoped the ants would not follow. The pain of the ant stings became unbearable, and he hoped a short rest might restore his vitality. Instead, he died from the poison.

The journal also notes that the worker ants seemed docile enough at first, and the warriors, while aggressive, were slow moving. It also contains a rough map, indicating that they got into the anthill through the entrance leading to Area 2.

The anthill itself rises 40 feet above the plain. Multiple entrances can be seen, some with ants moving in and out of them. Careful inspection reveals that the ants are not active outside at night. The area around the anthill is almost completely stripped of vegetation in a radius of approximately one mile. Creatures that approach the anthill during daylight hours are investigated by **3d6 workers, 1d6 warriors, and 1 bomber ant**.

## Giant Ants and the Hive Mentality

Before I go into the adventure itself, the GM should understand certain general information that governs the whole of the ant lair. Members operate without a power hierarchy or permanent leader. Colonies are decentralized, with workers that individually know little making combat decisions that nonetheless prove effective at the group level without oversight—a process called swarm intelligence. Different varieties of ants are described, different conditions that exist depending on player character (or random event) actions that occur, as well as the type of terrain (e.g. the portion of the hive) that encounters with ants could occur in all play a factor in their behavior.

During the course of the adventure, the player characters can encounter five different kinds of ants: workers, warriors, drones, bombers, and the queen.

## OF ANTS AND MEN

### Giant Ant, Worker

These are sterile females, approximately 2-3 feet long, which do the bulk of the heavy lifting, hive construction and expansion and food gathering for the colony. The workers present in this colony are not particularly aggressive, and absent pheromones being released indicating that “the hive is in trouble,” generally will not attack a creature that enters the hive, *unless it is an ant from another hive*. Lacking a poison sting, these ants typically approach any intruders and “smell them” using their antennae. While it may seem at first that a player character is being attacked, these ants will not aggressively bite anything moving about unless attacked first. In combat, these ants typically grab a leg or an arm and hold on while the warriors attack the held opponent. There are 900 workers in this hive. Each week 10d6 more join the hive to replace slain comrades.

#### GIANT ANT, WORKER

**XP** 100 (CR 1/2)

Unaligned Small beast

**Initiative** +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 13 (natural armor)

**hp:** 39 (6d6 + 18)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled. The worker ant can't bite while it maintains a grapple.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14 (+2), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 16 (+3),

**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 8 (-1)

**Languages:** None

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, gang (3–6), or hive (10–100 workers, 7–18 warriors, 2–8 drones, 1–4 bombers, and 1 queen)



### Giant Ant, Warrior

These ants are 5-6 feet long and much more aggressive than their worker sisters. In addition to a nasty bite, these ants have a poison sting that can be used three times per day. Also sterile females, these ants are the organizers of colony-wide resistance and attack. Attack groups typically are organized into groups of 1 warrior with 6 workers that attack single opponents as a group. The probability of attack depends on several factors if a warrior ant is approached within 50 feet. Fortunately they are fairly slow moving. There are 120 warriors in this hive. Each week 4d6 more join the hive to replace slain comrades.

#### GIANT ANT, WARRIOR

**XP** 450 (CR 1)

Unaligned Medium beast

**Initiative** +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14 (natural armor)

**hp:** 45 (6d8 + 18)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 25 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

*Hit:* 2d8 + 2 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned. A poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns; a successful save ends the poisoning.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14 (+2), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 17 (+3),

**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 8 (-1)

**Languages:** None

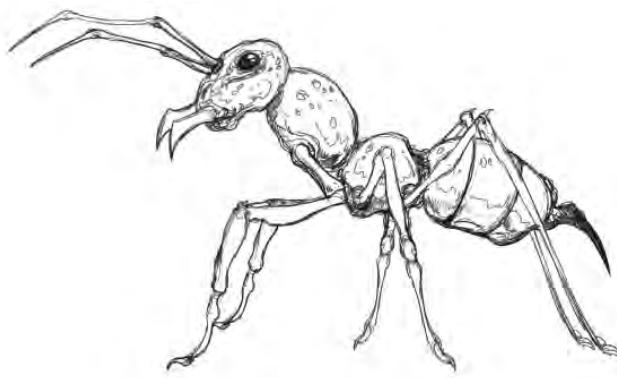
**Skills:** Perception +3

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, gang (3–6), or hive (10–100 workers, 7–18 warriors, 2–8 drones, 1–4 bombers, and 1 queen)



### Giant Ant, Drone

These winged male ants are fairly rare outside of the queen's chamber, and quite short lived (she eats them). They exist only to procreate, only mobilizing to fight if the hive is attacked. They are slightly bigger than warriors, but their poison is weaker. There are 16 drones in this hive. Each week 1d6 more join the hive to replace slain comrades.

#### GIANT ANT, DRONE

**XP** 200 (CR 1)

Unaligned Medium beast

**Initiative** +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14 (natural armor)

**hp:** 76 (9d8 + 36)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 3d8 + 3 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16 (+3), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 18 (+4),

**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 8 (-1)

**Languages:** None

## QUESTS OF DOOM: BUGS AND BLOBS

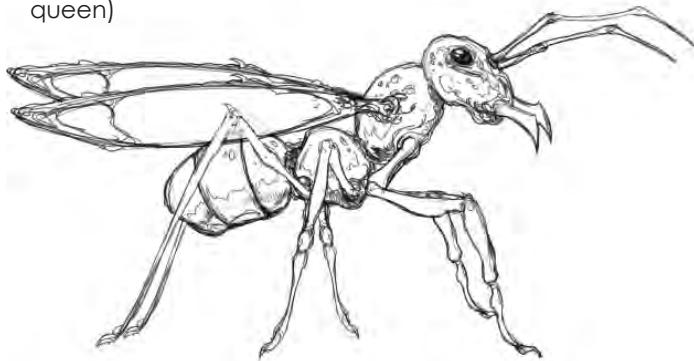
**Skills:** Perception +3

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, gang (3–6), or hive (10–100 workers, 7–18 warriors, 2–8 drones, 1–4 bombers, and 1 queen)



### Giant Ant, Bomber

These ants look like workers with large hind ends. Really large hind ends. These Sir Mix-a-lot inspired critters have a terrible special attack. They are basically suicide bombers that unleash a caustic poison in a 10-foot burst, covering everything near them in a more deadly version of the ant warrior's poison. These creatures are fairly rare in the hive, and are non-aggressive unless directed by a warrior to attack or if they sense the hive is threatened through release of pheromones. There are 60 bombers in this hive. Each week 2d6 more join the hive to replace slain comrades (attrition is high among bombers).

#### GIANT ANT, BOMBER

**XP** 450 (CR 1)

Unaligned Medium beast

**Initiative** +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14 (natural armor)

**hp:** 45 (6d8 + 18)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). **Hit:**

2d8 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled. The bomber ant can't bite while it maintains a grapple.

**Area Attack—Poison Burst:** automatic hit (10-ft. radius sphere; creatures in the sphere). **Hit:** 1d8 +3 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned. A poisoned creature takes 1d6 poison damage at the start of each of its turns, then repeats the saving throw; a successful save ends the poisoning. Also see Poison Burst, below.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14 (+2), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 17 (+3),

**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 8 (-1)

**Languages:** None

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

#### TRAITS

**Poison Burst:** The bomber ant's poison burst is a one-time attack that destroys its abdomen (the large, hindmost portion of its body). A bomber ant takes 20 force damage when it uses this attack. They can use the attack whenever they want, but typically, bomber ants fight

for a few rounds first and don't detonate their poison-filled abdomens until they have fewer than 15 hit points remaining and are likely to die soon anyway. The bomber ant always tries to position itself among the densest group of enemies before triggering the poison burst. However, the poison burst can be set off two ways by other creatures. First, an attack that does 25 or more points of force, lightning, piercing, or slashing damage to a bomber ant triggers its poison burst instantly. Second, a bomber ant that's killed before it uses its poison burst has a 1-in-3 chance (roll 1 or 2 on 1d6) of setting off the burst instantly with its last, dying spasms. Other giant ants are immune to this poison.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, gang (3–6), or hive (10–100 workers, 7–18 warriors, 2–8 drones, 1–4 bombers, and 1 queen)



### Giant Ant, Queen

Her Majesty resides in her throne chamber, and basically sits there, mating with drones and making eggs. The queen is the center of colony life because she reproduces. She does not lead troops (although she is quite dangerous in close combat) or organize labor. There are always several queen eggs hidden in other chambers, in case she is slain or dies. While she lives, queen-bearing eggs are brought to her to be devoured. The queen is always accompanied by 3d10 workers and 2d6 warriors, and they fight fanatically to protect her. There is ever only one queen in a colony. If she is slain, another is born within 1d2 days, growing to full size in six weeks.

#### GIANT ANT, QUEEN

**XP** 700 (CR 3)

Unaligned Large beast

**Initiative** -1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15 (natural armor)

**hp:** 105 (10d10 + 50)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Multiaattack:** The queen ant bites once and stabs with her claws once.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

**Hit:** 2d8 + 4 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw or become poisoned. A poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns; a successful save ends the poisoning.

**Melee Attack—Claws:** +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

**Hit:** 2d6 + 4 piercing damage and the target is grappled. The queen ant can't attack with her claws while she

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maintains a grapple, but a grappled creature takes 2d6 + 4 piercing damage automatically at the start of the queen ant's turn.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18 (+4), **Dex** 8 (-1), **Con** 20 (+5),  
**Int** 6 (-2), **Wis** 14 (+2), **Cha** 14 (+2)

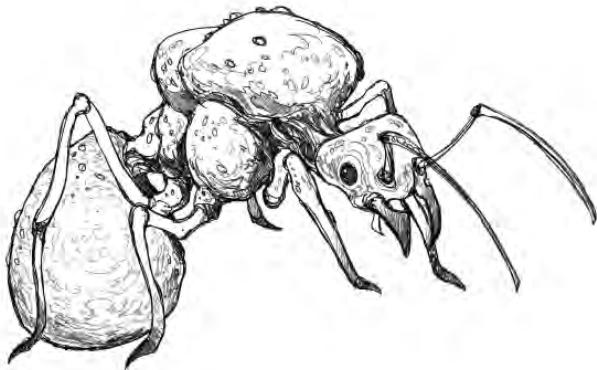
**Languages:** None

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** hive (10–100 workers, 7–18 warriors, 2–8 drones, 1–4 bombers, and 1 queen)



## Hive Conditions

Certain conditions can determine how the hive reacts to instruction by outsiders, such as the player characters. These include:

### The Hive is At Peace

This is the standard condition of the hive. Normal attack chances occur if any intruders are present. The worker ants touch and sniff anything within reach, but do not physically attack unless attacked or directed by a warrior. Drones and bombers just ignore intruders unless a warrior is present and hostile. The warriors' base chance of attacking anything within 50 feet is 20%, modified as follows:

+5%	1 player character within 20 feet
+20%	2-3 player characters within 20 feet
+40%	4-5 player characters within 20 feet
+60%	6 or more player characters within 20 feet
+90%	Hive in trouble! One or more ants have been killed within 500 feet of the hive
+100%	A "foreign" giant ant (e.g., polymorphed PC)
+30%	Within 200 feet of queen's chamber
+100%	Within queen's chamber
-40%	Silence spell on character
-40%	Invisibility spell on character
-30%	Character made successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check
-30%	Character tosses sweet food (honey, sugar, aphid jelly)
-50%	Character is coated in giant beetle guts (50% chance if not attacked that a warrior sprays the character with pheromones, making it "one of the gang" unless they attack an ant or enter the queen's chamber)

<b>-75%</b>	Character slays an ankheg or bulette (50% chance if not attacked that a warrior sprays the character with pheromones, making it "one of the gang" unless they attack an ant or enter the queen's chamber)
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### The Hive is in Trouble!

This occurs if one or more ants are slain within 500 feet of the hive. The slain ant releases pheromones that indicate the hive is under attack. Note that instant kills, such as by *cloudkill*, *fireball*, etc., do not allow the ant to release this warning. Should this occur, all outsiders are treated as hostile, and the ants organize and attack.

While some of the workers that first reach the attacking force try to delay or subdue the intruders, another group does not join the fight immediately, but instead returns home, leaving an odor trail behind. When they arrive home, they warn their nest mates by moving their bodies back and forth, and touching the antennae of the other ants with their own antennae. This gathers 6d6 workers, 3d6 warriors, and 1d6 bombers as reinforcements to join the fight. If they are slain or losing, another batch of the same numbers arrives every ten minutes thereafter.

Another cause of war is one colony (basically anything that is or resembles a giant ant) entering the territory of another.

### Famine!

This situation occurs if the aphid nest or the fungus garden is destroyed, after a one-week delay. In this case, workers attack at the same probability as soldiers. All the remaining ants remain unchanged.

**A note on using area of effect or "kill the hive" spells:** Use of spells such as *fireball* and *lightning bolt* in dirt tunnels can be very dangerous. Any use of large destructive spells within a tunnel or chamber has a percentage chance of causing a collapse within its area of effect equal to the points of damage done by the spell (assuming no save). This area has a 25% chance to expand to one-and-a-half times the spell's area of effect. For example, if a *fireball* is cast in a 60-foot chamber and does 32 points of damage, the 40-foot area centered on the burst has a 32% chance to collapse (because the spell did 32 points of damage). If a collapse occurs, there is a flat 25% chance that it will expand from 40 feet to 60 feet in diameter (because 40 feet x 1.5 = 60 feet).

"Kill the hive" spells such as *cloudkill* can wipe out a large number of ants. Keep in mind the area of effect and duration of the spell. The vast size of this place would only allow a small portion of the hive to be killed. One good effect of spells that cause instant death is that they prevent ants from releasing "The Hive is in Trouble" pheromones.

## Four Areas—One Hive

Nearly all of the hive area is un-numbered areas. These tunnels and chambers are full of random ants, and little else. Numbered locations are described specifically at the end of this section. Movement through the hive absent the map in Area 2 is rather random, because it is a huge, trackless maze. Each minute, roll on the following chart to determine what the player characters find. Encounters are dictated in each level description. Following the map (or using a *find the path* spell or equivalent) uses 60 of these features (as selected by the GM, but always including Areas 3, 5, and 6, and always terminating in Area 8).

d20	Hive Feature
1	Pathway up to the surface; requires crawling (1-9) or can be walked (10) out of (into keyed areas 1 or 2). Applies only in the Upper Hive; otherwise it moves the party up one level.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: BUGS AND BLOBS

d20	Hive Feature
2-4	Tunnel continues 100 feet, flat
5-6	Tunnel continues, but reduced in size (Medium-size characters must crawl)
7-8	Opens into a chamber 10d10 feet in diameter. There are 1d3 exits from the chamber.
9-10	Opens into a chamber 5d10 feet in diameter. There are 1d3-1 exits from the chamber.
11-12	Dead end.
13-14	Opens into a numbered area (select randomly).
15-16	Tunnel continues 100 feet, but slopes up or down steeply
17	Obstacle blocks path (1 = deep deadfall, 2 = sheer cliff of 10-60 feet, 3 = partial blockage requiring crawling, 4 = collapsed tunnel). This requires the GM to improvise to some degree, and allows player characters to use skills.
18-19	Tunnel leads down to the next level.
20	Tunnel leads deep into the earth, out of the hive (GM's choice of where this leads).

## Entrance and Upper Hive

The entrance and upper levels of the hive consist of dirt tunnels and chambers dug out by the tireless labor of the workers. These tunnels typically are 6-10 feet in diameter and are composed of hard-packed earth. There are eleven surface entrances leading down into the hive, and these lead into chambers full of workers and the occasional other ant. Only the entrances leading to Areas 1 and 2 are passable by anything larger than a halfling unless one crawls. If using the map, this area requires 20 minutes to traverse.

In this area, wandering monster checks must be made every minute by rolling on the table below.

1d20	Encounter
1-9	1d3 worker ants
10-11	1 warrior and 1d6 worker ants
12	1 drone
13	1d6 warriors, 1 bomber, and 2d6 worker ants
14-19	No encounter
20	Intruder!

**Worker Ants:** These ignore all beyond 20 feet (roll 6d6 for distance), otherwise they behave as described above. They typically carry leaves and sticks or other food items.

**Warrior Ants:** These behave as described above.

**Drones:** These ignore intruders unless commanded to attack by a warrior.

**Intruder!:** This is either 1d6 ankhegs (50% chance), 1d6 giant beetles (35% chance), or a bulette (15% chance) here to eat ants and anything else they find. They attack anything they encounter. Note that covering oneself in beetle guts or defending ants against the larger predators can have positive consequences. Any intruder encounter automatically draws an encounter as if 13 was rolled after five rounds of combat.

## Keyed Areas in the Upper Hive

### 1. Are Those Big Grasshoppers?

The tunnel entrance at this location seems devoid of ants. The walls and ceiling of this 20-foot-diameter hole are made of the same compacted earth as the rest of the entrances, but the floor seems freshly dug and soft. Careful inspection of the floor reveals that various bits and pieces of ants (legs, a thorax or two) are mixed in with the soft dirt piles, the odd leg or antennae sticking out of the piles.

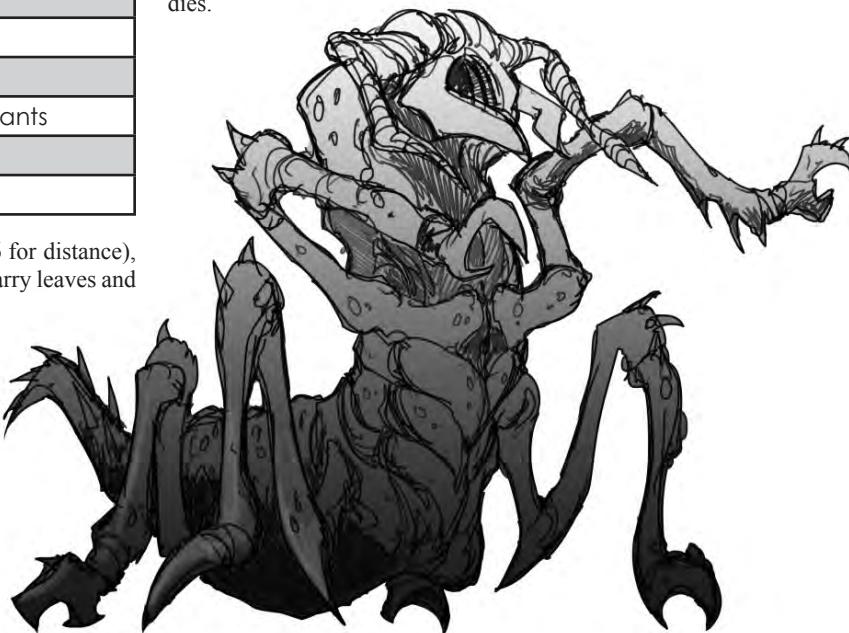
The tunnel leads to a chamber 60 feet across, with large piles of rock and earth blocking all other exits. Four rounds after the chamber is entered, **11 ankhegs** break through the floor and attack anything in the chamber (unless it was entered by someone under magical *silence*). This in turn draws one battle group of ants every minute, starting on the fifth round of combat. A battle group consists of **3d6 workers, 1d6 warriors, and 1 bomber ant**.

The ants have largely abandoned this entrance, blocking access from below after deciding that losses were too high to defeat the ankheg nest. That being said, should sounds of battle emanate from here, the ants join in the fray. Player characters who are carefully observant notice that the ants attack the ankhegs viciously, but they pay no attention to the player characters. If any player character attacks an ant, they are sprayed with a pheromone indicating they are hostile—and all ants automatically attack them for 1 hour.

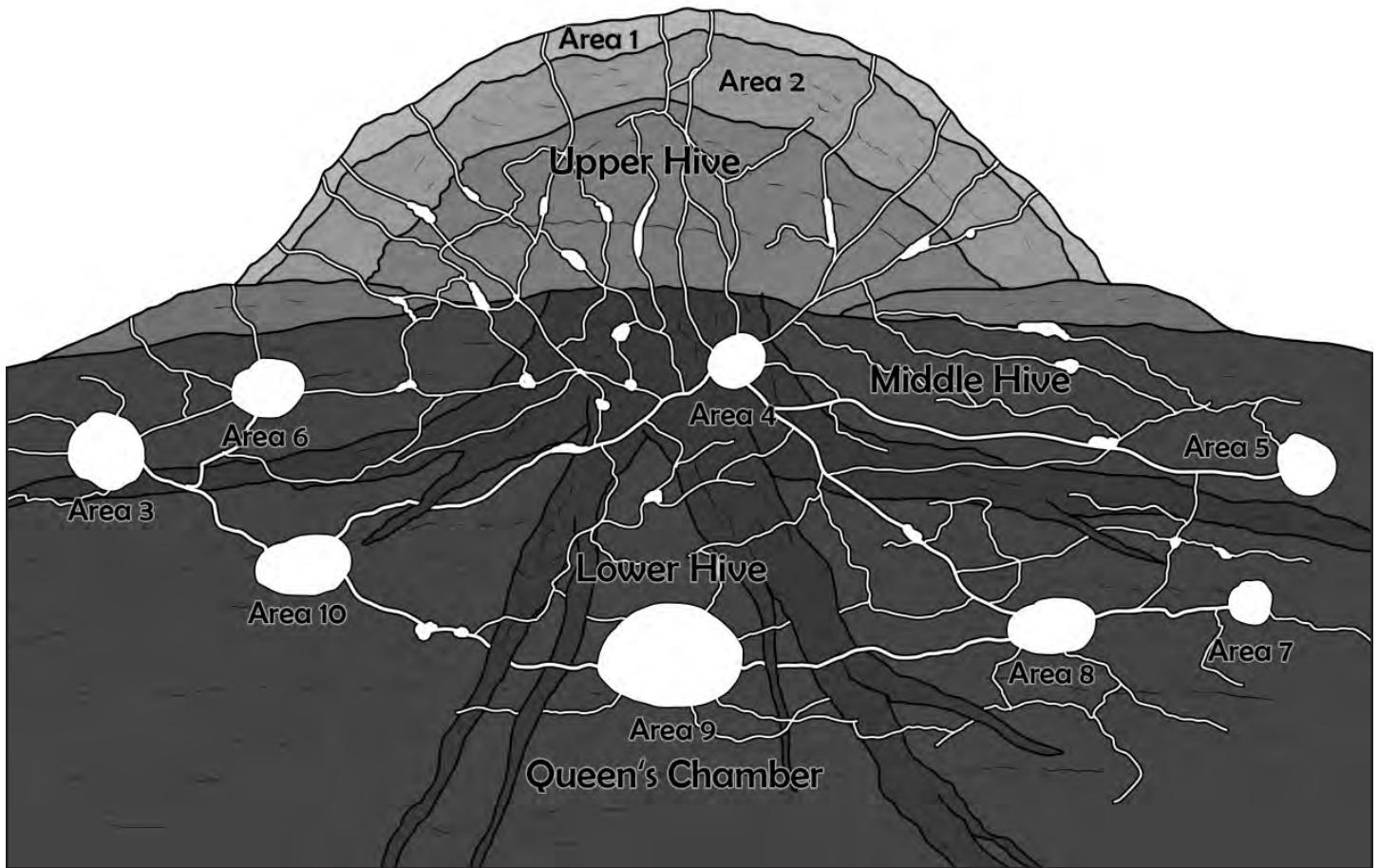
**Ankheg Tactics:** Ankhegs gain automatic surprise on the first round of combat except against someone with mining skills or a dwarf. They burst through the ground and attack using their bite immediately. Each round thereafter, an ankheg has a 25% chance of spitting acid and a 75% chance of attacking physically. If wounded over 50%, an individual ankheg retreats underground and burrows away.

**Ant Tactics:** The ants attack individual ankhegs in groups of 6 workers and 1 warrior, with extra warriors or workers aiding their “allies” (the player characters) until a total of 7 creatures are on a single ankheg. The bomber ant heads toward the biggest group of ankhegs before exploding on them.

**Afterward:** Should the player characters help the ants defeat the ankhegs, any surviving warriors (roll for each) has a 50% chance of approaching one individual player character (it seems aggressive, but is not) rear-end first and spraying a pheromone on them. This spray lasts 1 hour, and prevents the individual player character from being attacked by any ants unless the queen’s chamber is entered or the player characters is within 10 feet of an ant that releases an enemy-labeling pheromone as it dies.



# The Hive



**(Ankheg:** AC 14, 39 hp; +5 to hit, 2d6 + 3 slashing damage plus 1d6 acid damage and the target is grappled [bite]; 30-ft. line, 3d6 acid damage, or half damage with a successful DC 13 Dex saving throw [acid spray, recharge 6]; the ankheg has tactical advantage on bite attacks against a creature it has grappled)

**(Giant Ant, Worker:** AC 13, 39 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled)

**(Giant Ant, Warrior:** AC 14, 45 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [bite]; a poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and a successful save ends the poisoning)

**(Giant Ant, Bomber:** AC 14, 45 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled [bite]; 10-ft. cone, 1d8 + 3 poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [poison spray]; a poisoned creature takes 1d6 poison damage at the start of each of its turns, then repeats the saving throw, and a successful save ends the poisoning)

## 2. Dead Dudes

This large tunnel entrance (8 feet in diameter) leads 40 feet down at a 10% slope and opens into a 40-foot-diameter chamber. During daylight

hours it contains **3d6 worker ants**. It is abandoned during the night. The far wall is spattered with blood and bits and parts of non-edible adventuring equipment. Present in the chamber are the following:

- A spear head, 2 daggers (1 is bent and corroded), a mace head, a completely destroyed suit of plate armor, a shredded (and very bloody) suit of chain armor, a metal shield (missing its leather straps)

- An iron box containing two potion bottles (*potion of flying* and *potion of levitation*)

- An ivory scroll tube containing a map of the best path through the middle levels leading to the worked stone area and the sword vault. Travel using the map takes 1 hour to reach the stone tunnel area. Ants and other creatures encountered on the map path include wandering monsters as well as Areas 3, 5, and 6.

No organic or body parts are here, as everything edible was picked clean by worker ants.

**(Giant Ant, Worker:** AC 13, 65 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled)

## Middle Hive

Dozens of tunnels and chambers fill this area, most full of workers. This creates a maze that makes it almost impossible to follow without a map or spell indicating the correct way to go. This area contains the “cow farms” of giant aphids. Random wandering through this area likely leads to certain doom, as eventually the player characters will be attacked by a warrior, forced to defend themselves, and will either be killed or will kill

## QUESTS OF DOOM: BUGS AND BLOBS

an ant (creating a “Hive is in Trouble” situation). If using the map, this area requires 30 minutes to traverse.

In this area, wandering monsters check must be made every minute by rolling on the following table.

d20	Encounter
1-9	1d3 worker ants
10	1 bomber
11	1 drone, 1d2 warriors, 1 bomber, and 1d6 worker ants
12-19	No encounter
20	Intruder!

Roll 8d6 to determine the distance in feet between PCs and ants at the start of an encounter.

**Worker Ants:** These ignore all beyond 20 feet, otherwise they behave as described above. They typically carry chunks of dirt or rocks, aphid jelly, or other food items.

**Warrior Ants:** These behave as described above.

**Drones:** These ignore intruders unless commanded to attack by a warrior.

**Intruder!:** This is either 1d4 ankhegs (35% chance), 2d6 giant beetles (50% chance), or a bulette (15% chance) here to eat ants (and anything else they find). They attack anything they encounter. Note that covering oneself in beetle guts, or defending the ants against the larger predators, can have positive consequences. Any intruder encounter automatically draws an encounter as if 11 was rolled after 5 rounds of combat.

## Keyed Areas in the Middle Hive

### 3. The Aphid Nest

This chamber is 200 feet in diameter and is filled in the center with torn up bits of plants and branches covered in leaves. At any given time there are **3d6 worker ants** present here, running aphid puke out of the chamber to soldiers and the queen at regular intervals. This area represents the primary delivery area for outside vegetation brought in by the workers each day. In addition to all the greenery, there are approximately **200 giant aphids** roving about the chamber munching way on the leaves and branches. The aphids ignore intruders unless touched (or attacked), in which case they regurgitate a sticky, sweet substance on the ground (gallons of it) and squeak and retreat from the one contacting them. The aphids are harmless.

These giant aphids are herded like cows by the ants. The aphids secrete a sweet substance called honeydew, prized as food by ants. This substance consists of partially digested, highly concentrated plant sap and other wastes. These aphids have a symbiotic relationship with the ants that resembles the relationship of domestic cattle to humans; hence the name “ant cows” for aphids. The ants tend the aphids, transporting them to their food plants at the appropriate stages of the aphids’ life cycle and sheltering the aphids. The aphids, in turn, provide honeydew for the ants.

Should all the aphids be slain, the ants go into “famine” mode as described above. Note that the aphids do not release ant pheromones, nor do the worker ants react to aphids being killed.

**Treasure:** Careful digging around in the dirt piles reveals a few pieces of plate armor. One of these (a breastplate) is inscribed with the family crest of the dead noble slain in battle (see adventure hooks). One could also obtain a bunch of honeydew that could be used to pacify warrior ants (1 gallon pacifies an ant if offered prior to attack), if containers are available.

**(Giant Ant, Worker:** AC 13, 39 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled)

**(Giant Aphid:** AC 10, 12 hp; no attacks)

### 4. Bombs Away!

This area is the nesting area for the hive’s bomber ants. At all times, **6d6 bomber ants** are present here. They are generally non-aggressive and slow-moving. The ants segregate them to avoid “accidents” should they accidentally pop. The ants only bother intruders if attacked or if the hive is on alert due to famine or war pheromones. If any player character has hostility pheromones, this area is very dangerous. Otherwise the bomber ants just sit still, resting, and don’t even sniff or investigate any intruders (it’s tiring carrying around that big butt!).

**(Giant Ant, Bomber:** AC AC 14, 75 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled [bite]; 10-ft. cone, 1d8 + 3 poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [poison spray]; a poisoned creature takes 1d6 poison damage at the start of each of its turns, then repeats the saving throw, and a successful save ends the poisoning)



### 5. Eek! It’s a Mushroom

This chamber is also made of packed dirt, and spans an area of roughly 100 feet in diameter. It is completely covered with hundreds of mushroom growths used as food by the ants, some as small as a few inches high and some as large as a man. In the center. There are always **3d6 worker ants** present here. In the center of the cave are several species of very large fungus. Two of these are of note.

1. Grayish, 4-foot-tall mushrooms are present in a 10 foot area. Careful inspection from afar reveals that the dead and rotted bodies of several worker ants are present in a decaying state near their base. These are a form of **violet fungus**; there are 6 here. They move and attack any that come within 10 feet. The ants are oblivious to the danger they pose.
2. Two large silver-and-red mushrooms stand in a small wet area near the center of the cavern. These are shriekers. If approached within 10 feet,

## OF ANTS AND MEN

they sound off, causing a wandering monster check with +12 on the roll (ants are used to the noise, but other creatures see this as a dinner bell!).

Should the fungus all be destroyed, the famine condition described above applies to the colony.

**(Violet Fungus:** AC 5, 18 hp; +2 to hit, 1d8 necrotic damage [rotting touch]; attacks 1d4 times)

**(Shrieker:** AC 5, 13 hp; shrieks loudly when a creature approaches within 30 feet)

### 6. Raid!

This is more of a fixed encounter than it is a room.

At some point in the exploration, the player characters encounter a mass melee between ants and giant slicer beetles (see *Fifth Edition Foes*). In the melee when the player characters encounter this are **12 workers, 2 bombers, and 7 warrior ants** and **10 giant slicer beetles**. These beetles have developed a taste for giant ant, and have burrowed here to get a meal. Similar to the ankheg encounter, this encounter provides an opportunity for the player characters to become “one of the gang” with the ants for a short period of time and facilitate passage through the hive. Once again, the ants do not attack the player characters unless attacked, treating them as allies in this fight.

**Beetle Tactics:** Being far larger than the ants, the beetles try to quickly kill anything non-beetle that they can and move onto the next victim. Anything killed by a beetle, should they win the combat, is taken and devoured.

**Ant Tactics:** The ants attack individual beetles in groups of 6 workers and 1 warrior, with extra warriors or workers aiding their “allies” (the player characters) until a total of 7 creatures is on a single beetle. The bomber ants head for the largest groups of slicer beetles before exploding.

**Afterward:** Should the player characters help the ants defeat the beetles, any surviving warriors (roll for each) has a 50% chance of approaching one individual player character (it seems aggressive, but is not) rear-end first and spraying a pheromone on them. This spray lasts 1 hour, and prevents the individual player character from being attacked by any ants unless the queen’s chamber is entered or the player characters is within 10 feet of an ant that releases an enemy-labeling pheromone as it dies. Anyone smeared with beetle guts is treated as if they had the friendly pheromone for 1 hour as well.

**(Giant Ant, Worker:** AC 13, 39 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled)

**(Giant Ant, Warrior:** AC 14, 45 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [bite]; a poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and a successful save ends the poisoning)

**(Giant Ant, Bomber:** AC 14, 45 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled [bite]; 10-ft. cone, 1d8 + 3 poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [poison spray]; a poisoned creature takes 1d6 poison damage at the start of each of its turns, then repeats the saving throw, and a successful save ends the poisoning)

#### GIANT SLICER BEETLE

XP 700 (CR 3)

Unaligned Large beast

Initiative +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural armor)

hp: 42 (5d10 + 15)

#### OFFENSE

Speed: 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +8 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 2d10 + 5 piercing damage. If this attack scores a critical hit, see Vorpal Bite, below.

#### STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), Dex 10 (+0), Con 16 (+3), Int 2 (-4), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 9 (-1)

**Languages:** None

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

#### TRAITS

**Vorpal Bite:** The mandibles of a slicer beetle are extremely sharp. It scores a critical hit if the attack roll is a natural 19 or 20. If a slicer beetle scores a critical hit on its attack roll, the affected creature must make a DC 10 Dex saving throw. Failure indicates the slicer beetle severed one of the opponent’s extremities (roll 1d8: 1–4 = arm, 5–8 = leg; even = right, odd = left).

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Temperate forests

**Organization:** Solitary or cluster (2–5)

## Lower Hive and Queen’s Chambers

This area features more aggressive warrior ants as well as several areas central to the adventure. The soldier and drone ants here are always aggressive (+30%), and usually attack anything not coated in beetle guts or friendly pheromones. One ant always runs immediately to the queen’s chambers to warn the ants of intruders there, even if the intruders have the correct smell. If using the map, this area requires 10 minutes to traverse.

In this area, wandering monsters check must be made every minute by rolling on the following table.

1d20	Encounter
1–7	1d6 worker ants
8–10	1d6 soldier ants
11–15	1d6 warriors, and 2d6 worker ants
16–19	No encounter
20	Intruder!

**Worker Ants:** These ignore all beyond 20 feet (roll 8d6 for distance for all encounters (in feet)), otherwise they behave as described above. They typically carry aphid jelly.

**Warrior Ants:** These behave as described above.

**Drones:** These ignore intruders unless commanded to attack by a warrior.

**Intruder!:** This is either 1d4 ankhegs (15% chance), 2d6 giant beetles (35% chance), or a bulette (50% chance) here to eat ants (and anything else they find). They attack anything they encounter. Note that covering oneself in beetle guts, or defending the ants against the larger predators, can have positive consequences. Any intruder encounter automatically draws an encounter as if 11–15 was rolled after 5 rounds of combat.

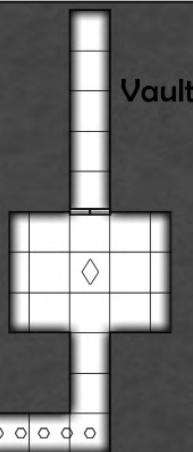
## Keyed Areas in the Lower Hive

### 7. The Queen’s Chamber

This 200 by 200 foot square chamber is constructed of cut stone, and has been commandeered by the ant queen as her throne chamber. There

## QUESTS OF DOOM: BUGS AND BLOBS

**One square = 10 feet**



are nine exits leading out of the room at various places, none of which is large enough for anything larger than a halfling to crawl through, except the stone passageway that leads to Area 8. The ceiling is 20 feet high and also made of cut and mortared stone. The room is filled with thousands of eggs, as well as pools of honeydew and choice tidbits of animal flesh, plant matter and fungus. There are always **2d6 warriors**, **1d6 drones**, and **3d10 worker ants** here, as well as the **queen**. The warrior ants here are elite, so they have 60 hit points instead of the usual 45.

As the center of intelligence for the any colony, the queen directs the soldiers to position themselves in front and on her sides. She does not order them to immediately attack, preferring to wait until she sees how they react while 2d6 workers scurry off to gather reinforcements. A total of 1d3 battle groups (**3d6 workers** and **2d6 warrior ants**) arrive each minute after the first. No bombers come to this chamber.

This room can be either a boon or a death trap. Note that pheromone spray of any kind does not fool the queen. She recognizes intruders for what they are. Tactics that can be employed here are to either 1) present an offering of sweet food to the queen, then back off slowly and leave or 2) cast *speak with animals* or comparable magic and converse with the queen. Any other tactic or action results in the entire hive coming down and attacking intruders. The queen is suspicious, but should the player characters have beetle guts or pheromones indicating they have helped the hive, she likely lets them pass along, if they are suitably deferential.

As long as the characters persuade the queen that a) they mean no harm and b) are not stealing eggs, they are either left to wander (if they have fought the ankhegs, beetles, or bulette) or attacked and eaten. It is possible that the queen would send them (under threat of death) to deal with the bulette in Area 10, as she has lost too many soldiers attempting to rid her hive of it. If asked for eggs, she indicates that if the bulette is killed, she would grant a boon of 10 royal eggs (she eats them anyway, as a new queen is a potential rival and not tolerated). If this is the case, she sends a warrior ant to guide the player characters to Area 9 and allows them to take 10 eggs. Roleplaying with the queen and the player characters can be an enjoyable and amusing experience for everyone; have fun with it. She is haughty and surprisingly clever (despite her low Intelligence score), but in an alien, buglike way. She knows nothing of the sword vault, and has directed her minions to avoid the area as many were killed in examining it.

The queen has no treasure.

**Giant Ant, Queen:** AC 15, 105 hp; +6 to hit, 2d8 + 4 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw or become poisoned [bite]; a poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and a successful save ends the poisoning; +6 to hit, 2d6 + 4 piercing damage and the target is grappled [claws]; the queen ant can't attack with her claws while she maintains a grapple, but a grappled creature takes 2d6 + 4 piercing damage automatically at the start of the queen ant's turn)

**Giant Ant, Worker:** AC 13, 39 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 piercing damage and the target is grappled)

**Giant Ant, Warrior:** AC 14, 60 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [bite]; a poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and a successful save ends the poisoning)

**Giant Ant, Drone:** AC 14, 76 hp; +5 to hit, 3d8 + 3 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage [bite])

### 8. Tunnels of Stone

Eventually, either by luck or by use of the map from Area 2, the player characters will find this area. The dirt and mud tunnels suddenly change to a mud-brick, mortared stone complex. This area is obviously constructed by men, not ants. The entrance to these tunnels is where the ants dug to, and the room here is 30 feet square, with exits straight ahead (to Area 7) and the left (to the Dungeon of the Sword). The left tunnel runs 60 feet straight and ends in a staircase going down.

### 9. Royal Eggs

This chamber consists of dirt, as does most of the ant hive. The chamber is 40 feet in diameter, and has no other exits. There are always **6 elite warrior ants here**. Only the warrior ants are allowed to transport royal eggs, and these stand guard in case the queen is killed, in which case a drone is summoned to fertilize three of them. The eggs are allowed to hatch, and the infant queens then fight a three-way duel to the death, with the survivor becoming the new queen. There are 30 royal eggs here.

**Giant Ant, Warrior:** AC 14, 60 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage plus 1d8 poison damage, and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or become poisoned [bite]; a poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and a successful save ends the poisoning)

### 10. Bite the Bulette

The solid stone tunnel leading to this area is nearly devoid of ants, with only a half dozen workers at 30 foot intervals along its 180 foot length. The workers stand motionless, not even bothering to sniff any intruders unless the **bulette** makes an appearance. The end of the tunnel opens into a stone and dirt walled chamber 100 feet in diameter. Unlike the other chambers in this place, this one has a stone ceiling, covered with stalactites, although its floor is dirt. Bits of the fallen limestone cover the floor in small piles, and water drips down, making the floor somewhat muddy and slippery.



There is a 20% chance that the bulette is asleep here, a 40% chance it is out hunting, and a 40 % chance it is awake and lying in wait in the ground. The bulette has reached an uneasy truce with the ants, neither wanting to give up its lair nor wishing to continuously fight these nasty-tasting, acid-filled insects. Unlike the ankhegs and beetles, the bulette does not particularly enjoy ant as a meal. Likewise, the ants, after initially trying to drive the beast off, quickly realized that its thick armor and devastating attacks were more than a match for them, and decided to leave guards posted and well enough alone.

**Tactics:** The bulette seeks meals elsewhere, but thanks to its ability to track prey by vibrations, quickly realizes something tastier than ants is coming down the tunnel. Its favorite tactic is to keep its nose just above the ground (it looks like a rock) and attack by crawling up and out of the ground, surprising opponents. The bulette attacks any within the chamber, ignoring dwarves but pursuing halflings throughout the corridors leading to this chamber.

At the first sign the bulette is active, the worker ants retreat to get help. Unlike combat with the ankhegs and beetles, the ants (while 1 battle group arrives per minute) stand back from this fight, scattering away from the bulette unless he approaches the queen's chamber.

**Afterword:** Should the player characters defeat the bulette, any surviving character is approached by an ant warrior (it seems aggressive, but is not) rear end first and sprayed with pheromones. This spray lasts 1 hour, and prevents the individual player character from being attacked by any ants unless the queen's chamber is entered or the player characters is within 10 feet of an ant killed (releases a counter pheromone that labels the individual an enemy) by the player characters or an ally.

(Bulette: AC 17, 94 hp; +7 to hit, 4d12 + 4 piercing damage [bite]; the bulette can jump 15-30 feet and land in a space containing other creatures, which take 3d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage plus 3d6 + 4 slashing damage and are knocked prone, or take half damage and are pushed 5 feet with a successful DC 16 Str or Dex saving throw [deadly leap])

## Dungeon of the Sword

The ant colony found a very easy way to expand its hive recently. While tunneling, they came across a long-buried, worked stone dungeon. Defeating everything residing there, they used the worked stone corridors and rooms as new space without having to dig. This uncovered a vault area that killed many of them, and now they give that place a wide berth. This area begins where the stairs connect down from Area 8. The downstairs area is off-limits to the ants, and none come here. There are no wandering monsters on this level.

## Keyed Areas within the Dungeon of the Sword

### II. Ants Don't Build Traps!

At the base of the stairs, the corridor continues 60 feet and turns to the left. The floor is filled with desiccated and crushed remains of ants, perhaps a dozen or so. Bits and pieces of these are smashed flat in places, where other parts seem basically intact. Careful inspection reveals the floor to be composed of 1 foot by 6 inch rectangular bricks surrounding 2 foot wide hexagonal bricks spaced 3 feet apart. The hexagonal bricks are all pressure plates—each triggers a release mechanism that unleashes a heavy spring, thrusting the 2 foot wide hexagonal columns into the ceiling. Anyone contacting a hexagonal section of the floor is thrust up into the ceiling and smashed flat. Moving safely through a section of hexagonal bricks requires a successful DC 5 Dex (Acrobatics) check. Triggering one of these causes 6d6 damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Dex

## QUESTS OF DOOM: BUGS AND BLOBS

saving throw. There are 20 such sections in the 60 foot hallway. Once the corridor turns, there are no more hexagonal plates.

### 12. Something Wicked This Way Comes

The corridor continues another 30 feet and opens into a 30 foot by 40 foot room. A large, stone double door is present on the far side, opposite the corridor. In the center of the room is a diamond-shaped stone of pure blue marble, 5 feet per side, sharp in contrast to the other reddish brown mud brick of the place.

#### The Door

In the center of the door is a large keyhole, with a cup-shaped depression 3 inches deep encircling the hole for a key. The cup is surrounded by a series of small (1/4 inch) holes. The door is carved with mysterious runes and hieroglyphs. No magic of any kind functions within 10 feet of the door. (Be sure to read the description of the new magic item below before proceeding, as magic items fail within 10 feet of the door, and may in fact be permanently destroyed.)

*Comprehend languages* (if cast more than 10 feet from the door) allows a character to read the runes and hieroglyphs on the door. A character who spends 10 minutes studying the door and makes a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check can puzzle out enough of them to get their general meaning, but the information will be fragmentary. They pronounce a general curse in an ancient tongue against all wizards and priests, calling them “deceivers and villains” and stating that “all of them will die in lakes of fire and blood.”

The door is locked with an extremely intricate lock, requiring thief's tools and three consecutive DC 15 Dexterity checks to unlock. Any single failed check requires a restart of the three checks. Further, the first failure breaks a hidden vial and releases a poison/acid gas; anyone within 5 feet is automatically affected, and it fills the entire room in 3 rounds. The glass vial can be detected with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, but it can't be removed, as it is 3 inches inside the door frame. If the players ask exactly how far in they see the glass object, be very clear on the distance, as this may come into play when they use the key-scepter found in the coffin, as described below. The gas dissipates in 1 day. A character who starts his or her turn in the gas takes 4d6 acid damage and 4d6 poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Constitution saving throw. The gas only triggers once.

#### The Blue Diamond

The blue diamond in the center of the floor is a stone slab. It is not set with mortar as are the other bricks that make up this room. Prying it up requires a prybar or similar lever, and can be accomplished easily by someone with such an implement, but is almost impossible without the tool (automatic success with a prybar; requires a successful DC 25 Strength check without a tool; if a weapon is used as a prybar, a DC 15 Strength check is needed, and the weapon breaks if an odd number is rolled on the die).

Beneath the stone is a 5-foot-deep, 3-foot-wide, 5-foot-long vault, containing what appears to be a coffin or a mummy case. Contrary to characters' suspicions, there is no undead within the coffin. What it does contain is the terrible menace of **4 scarab swarms**. A scarab swarm is identical to a standard swarm of beetles, but it replaces that swarm's bite attack with the following attack.

**(Scarab Swarm:** AC 12, 22 hp; +5 to hit, 4d6 piercing damage and the target must make a successful DC 11 Dex saving throw or 2d6 scarabs burrow into its flesh [scarab bite, see Burrowing Scarabs below]; half damage if swarm is below half hit points; can occupy the same space as another creature)

**Burrowing Scarabs:** Each surviving scarab in the creature's flesh causes 1 piercing damage at the start of the scarabs' turn. A scarab in a creature's flesh can be killed automatically by stabbing it (creature takes 1d3 piercing damage), by smashing it (creature takes 1d4 bludgeoning damage), or by burning it (creature takes 1d6 fire damage). If killed this way, each scarab must be killed separately. All the scarabs burrowing

### New Magic Item— The Two-Edged Sword

Very Rare Weapon (requires attunement)

This longsword is an antimagical sword made of Osmium, one of the rarest metals in the world. It radiates a constant antimagical effect that prevents the use or functioning of any magic within 60 feet of the sword. Spells, spell-like abilities, and magic items are entirely ineffective within this radius. Spell areas of effect stop when they reach the sword's antimagic field. Magic items brought within the area must make a successful saving throw or be permanently disenchanted. The DCs for the saving throws are as follows:

**Potion:** DC 20

**Scroll:** DC 19

**Ring:** DC 17

**Rod, Wand:** DC 14

**Staff:** DC 13

**Miscellaneous Magic Item:** DC 12

**Armor or shield (add magical bonus to saving throw):** DC 11

**Miscellaneous Weapon (add magical bonus to saving throw):** DC 10

**Sword (add magical bonus to saving throw):** DC 9

Saving throws must be made upon first entering the aura effect each day; only one saving throw is needed per item per day. A successful save doesn't mean the magic item works in the aura, only that it isn't destroyed.

Artifacts and relics are never destroyed by the antimagic field, but they also must make a successful DC 3 saving throw or their powers are negated while in the field.

The sword's antimagic effect can't be nullified or turned off in any way.

The only way to destroy the *two-edged sword* is to melt it in nonmagical fire at 3300 degrees K (5480 degrees F).

Osmium is a hard, brittle, bluish-white metal in the platinum group that is found as a trace element in alloys, mostly in platinum ores. This is probably the largest piece of pure Osmium in the world. Osmium is the densest naturally occurring element; the sword is so heavy that anyone with a Strength below 13 has tactical disadvantage on their attack rolls with it.

into a creature can be killed at once by casting *lesser restoration* or comparable disease-curing magic on the creature. After the third round, burrowing scarabs can only be killed with magic; they've gone too deep to be affected by stabbing, crushing, or burning.

The swarms burst out of the coffin 1d3 rounds after the diamond plate is removed, or immediately upon opening the coffin. It attacks the nearest opponent, then moves toward the next closest target.

**Treasure:** Inside the coffin is a golden rod worth 2,500 gp along with the bones of a man. The scepter is 3 feet long, and has a large knob on one end, and a large knob with a 4-inch, keylike protrusion of the other end. It is carved with entwined snakes baring large fangs, their heads facing the end with the extended key. If used to open the door, the end with only a knob works like a key and opens the door. The end with the key protrusion does likewise, but using it also triggers the gas trap as described above (the “key” extension is just long enough to strike and shatter the vial containing the gas). If anyone asks, be clear that the key would hit the glass object visible in the keyhole, if it's been noticed.

### 13. The Sword Vault

Once the door is opened, a corridor leads 50 feet, ending in a blank wall. No magic of any kind functions in this corridor. Careful searching (a successful DC 15 Intelligence [Investigation] check, with one check

## OF ANTS AND MEN

allowed per 10 minutes of searching) will locate a single brick that is not mortared, near the floor in the center of the back wall. If this brick is pried loose, a keyhole can be found. Not surprisingly, the keylike protrusion on the golden rod fits it perfectly.

Opening the lock without the rod is possible, but highly difficult; doing so requires thief's tools and a successful DC 20 Dex check made with tactical disadvantage.

Once the lock is opened, a rumbling can be heard, and the bricks and mortar start to crack and fall apart. At this point, the floor below starts rising toward the ceiling. In two rounds, the floor will be flush against the ceiling and anything still in this corridor will be squashed to jelly between them. The only escape is to race out of this area and back to Area 12 before the end of the second round. Anyone who foolishly hesitates or refuses to run is dead.

In fact, it was not just the "floor" that was rising, but the entire vault beneath it. The vault is composed of the same blue marble as was the diamond in Area 12. In its center lies a sword wrapped in dusty red cloth. The cloth falls apart if touched. This is the *two-edged sword*.

## Escape!

The obvious problem with getting away with the sword is that no magic or magical abilities can be used. If the party used tricks such as becoming *invisible* or *speaking with animals* on their way in, none of that will work on the way out. If the player characters have befriended, or at least not offended, the ant hive, it should be possible for them to escape. In any case, characters must navigate their way out the same way they came in, which means spending 60 minutes running the gauntlet of the tunnels. Getting out can prove to be even more difficult than getting in was. Remember—possession of that sword is "two-edged."

# Demons & Devils

# The Pit of Despair

By Bill Webb and Clark Peterson

Designed for a party of at least 13th level, this module details an adventure to recover the *sword of Karith*, a +3 holy avenger longsword. Not the straight-forward hack-and-slash treasure hunt your players will be expecting, this adventure is instead a trap laid by the forces of evil to corrupt and destroy their greatest enemies: paladins.

At the direction of Orcus, the demon-god of undead, a nalfeshnee demon named Caanara misappropriated the *sword of Karith* and hid it in a desert temple, called the Temple of the Justicars. Adding to his villainy, Caanara also replaced the *sword of Karith* with an *unholy sword*, which Orcus heavily enhanced to mimic the *sword of Karith*. Knowing paladins simply cannot resist a holy quest to recover a lost, magic sword, the forces of evil have created a win-win situation. Up-and-coming paladins attempting to find the temple and recover the sword will either be killed outright during their quest or be utterly corrupted when they inadvertently recover the *unholy sword*, believing it to be the *sword of Karith*. This adventure, then, has two possible outcomes: either the PCs all die or they recover an Evil and corrupting *unholy sword*. Cruel treatment of the characters, you say? Evil? Wicked? Dastardly? Exactly.

GMs thus must be at their most deceptive, skirting that thin line between gunning for your players and running a complex deception fairly. GMs must run this adventure with an understanding that it was crafted by extraordinarily intelligent deity-like demons whose goals are deception, corruption and slaughter. For instance, do not refer to this adventure as **The Pit of Despair**. Instead, call it **The Temple of the Justicars** or **The Quest for the Sword of Karith**. Do nothing to tip off the do-gooding heroes to the presence of the trap.

The party's initial trip to the Temple of the Justicars most likely results in their defeating the demon guardians and recovering the false *holy sword*, thus corrupting the party's paladin. This unlucky soul will then need to perform an act of *atonement* to cleanse himself of his unwilling sins and recover his paladinhood once he realized his corruption. Learning that the destruction of the false *holy sword* is the only means of atonement, the PCs no doubt attempt a second trip to the temple, where they return with the *unholy sword* in an attempt to destroy it along with the demon Caanara, and recover the true *sword of Karith*.

GMs should feel free to replace Orcus, the demon-god of undead, and Thyr and Muir, the god of Law and the goddess of virtue and paladins, respectively, with those gods most appropriate to their campaign.

## The Legend of the Holy Sword of Karith For the Players

PC paladins are familiar with the legend of Karith — a heroic paladin of old who roamed the lands as a champion of Good, wielding a wondrous sword of great power. Consulting a sage or casting a *legend lore* spell reveals the true history of Karith and his holy sword.

Many years ago, a paladin of great renown, named Karith, roamed the world, righting wrongs, slaying dragons and protecting the innocent. The

deeds of this great man border on the unbelievable. In fact, most common folk consider them great exaggerations, if not outright myth. In truth, Karith was less famous than he should have been, having done deeds far greater than even the most superstitious or pious would believe.

Karith wielded the mighty sword, *Entrancacor*, which in the ancient dwarven tongue means “slayer of demons.” The finest dwarven smiths and enchanters forged this sword for the Holy Order of the Justicars — the paladins of the goddess Muir — over 1,000 years ago. Legend holds that no greater weapon was ever forged, before or since. Tales tell of demon armies recoiling from a lone man wielding this sword. The sword was passed from grandmaster to grandmaster within the holy order over many generations, and Karith was the last grandmaster of the Justicars.

As Karith neared the end of his life, the gods of Good bade him wait patiently for his successor to appear. However, no paladin of the order then living was sufficiently worthy of bearing the sword and becoming grandmaster. Some held promise, yet none sufficiently distinguished himself from his peers. The high priests of the temple of Thyr and Muir — the god of Law and the goddess of virtue and paladins, respectively — *communed* with their gods and were instructed to have faith. After several years passed with no worthy successor appearing, a female celestial of Muir visited the priests. In angelic splendor, the celestial instructed the high priests to relinquish the sword into her keeping. She revealed her plan to set the sword in a temple, hidden in a valley deep within a distant desert, where it would await discovery by a paladin worthy to retrieve it and bear it forth again. By its recovery, the celestial told the priests, they would know the new grandmaster of paladins. Legends call the resting place of the sword the “Temple of the Justicars.” Though many brave paladins have attempted the sword’s recovery, to this day, none has succeeded.

## For the GM

The avatar mentioned above, who retrieved and hid the sword, was unrelated either to Thyr or Muir, and was instead Caanara, a nalfeshnee demon, sent by Orcus to steal the sword and place it beyond the reach of those serving Thyr and Muir. A master of deception, Orcus also gave his demon a false sword, called *Entranhumi* (“slayer of humans”), with which to dupe and despoil any paladins who successfully locate the hiding place of *Entrancacor*. Orcus bound his demon to the sword’s resting place and commanded him to guard it. GMs should remember that nowhere in the legends are these demons mentioned; instead, convince any questing paladin that his god’s avatar took the sword. The PCs should expect a “quest to find a sword belonging to the good guys” adventure, not an evil trap set by the worst enemies of Law and Good.

The methods by which the PCs discover the exact location of the Pit of Despair are up to the GM. The *holy sword*’s hiding place is a well-kept secret. Because demons do not want a powerful enemy running around slaughtering their kind with so powerful a weapon, even they go to great pains to keep the location a mystery — however fond they are of using the ruse to destroy up-and-coming paladins. And there are never any survivors of failed quests to question — their deaths mistakenly attributed to the paladin’s excess pride or arrogant belief in his own worthiness to bear the sword. When in reality he was yet another victim of Orcus’ and Caanara’s treachery and deception.

Consultation with a sage is, perhaps, the best way to set the adventure in



motion. The sage could direct the PCs to a secluded sect of Muir's priests. Those priests, should they deem the party's paladin worthy, provide him with a copy of a map to the Valley of the Temple of the Justicars — the rumored hiding place of the sword of *Karith*. They also inform the paladin that the legends reveal that "only someone devout and who sees with the true eyes of faith can find the entrance to the Temple."

Other methods of discovering the location of the Pit of Despair include a treasure map, a holy text found secreted away in a vast library, a message scratched into an abandoned shield or breastplate, a divinely bestowed vision, or consultation of the oracle at *Rappan Athuk*.

## Traveling to the Temple of the Justicars

After learning the location of the Temple of the Justicars, as described above, the PCs must travel to the edge of the desert and beyond to the Valley of the Temple. GMs should make this an arduous journey fraught with danger to provide the right "feel" for a holy quest. In the *Lost Lands* campaign setting by **Frog God Games**, the lost Temple of the Justicars lies in the mountains ringing the desert plateau known as the Sacred Table. The ruins of the holy city of Tireople still stand upon this plateau across the desert from the Crusader Coast.

To reach the general location of the Pit of Despair, the party must travel through a wilderness stretching 180 miles beyond the last human settlement. The first 120 miles involve traveling to the edge of the desert and should be dangerous, though not overly so. Once the PCs reach the

edge of the desert, they must then travel an additional 60 miles through it until they reach the Valley of the Temple.

GMs wishing to avoid a prolonged wilderness trek can proceed directly to the section entitled, "**The Entrance to the Pit of Despair**," below. However, GMs are encouraged to run wilderness encounters as the PCs travel to the Valley of the Temple. This increases the "epic quest" feeling of the adventure, making the PCs more likely be duped when they recover the false *holy sword* after their major battle in the Pit. Otherwise, the PCs might get suspicious if the quest is too easy.

## The Entrance to the Pit of Despair

The PCs have traveled miles through the desert and have finally reached this forsaken place — the Valley of the Temple. Their map guides them into a cleft in the red-rock wall. They travel the narrow path in the shade of the looming walls for over an hour, and emerge from between the two large walls of rock into a small canyon, open to the sky.

The canyon ends in a worked wall of red stone, similar to that of the surrounding rock. The floor of the canyon is sand. Worked-stone entrances are set into the wall at various heights. The entrances all have the same general appearance: a 10-foot-high archway flanked by bas-relief statues of knights in mail. There is no detail that distinguishes one from the other. To access the entrances — which do not have ledges in front of them — the PCs must find a way to climb the face of the canyon wall, which is nearly vertical. They can do this by climbing, which requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics)

## THE PIT OF DESPAIR

check, or by using magic such as *dimension door*, *fly*, *levitate*, or *teleport*.

Climatic conditions in the Valley of the Temple run to extremes: unbearably hot during the day (exceeding 110° at noon) and freezing cold at night (dipping below 0° from 1 am to 3 am). This inhospitable region offers no source of water and no natural source of shade to shield the PCs from the sun. Strong winds also plague the valley. Check once every hour on 1d20 with the following results: 1–10: no wind, 11–15: moderate wind, 16–17: strong wind, 18–19: severe wind, 20: windstorm. The winds in the canyon only last for 3d10 minutes. Any time strong or severe winds arise, there is a 50% chance that a dust storm accompanies them. In addition, any windstorm is always accompanied by a dust storm. The winds themselves, of extreme temperature, do nothing to reduce the effects of heat or cold.

**Wandering Monsters:** Aside from the weather, one other danger threatens the PCs. There is a 1 on 1d10 chance per hour during the hours of darkness that **1d6 giant scorpions** descend into the canyon to attack the PCs. There is an endless supply of these scorpions. They infest the surrounding hills.

**Giant Scorpion:** AC 15, 52 hp; the scorpion attacks twice with claws and stings once; +4 to hit x2, 1d8 + 2 bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled [claw]; +4 to hit, 1d10 + 2 piercing damage plus 4d10 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 12 Con saving throw [sting]]

**False Entrances:** All of the obvious entrances are false entrances, leading to caves and passages but not to the Temple of the Justicars. Each such cave has a 50/50 chance of being occupied by **1d4 giant scorpions**, which immediately attack intruders. Each cave also houses a sarcophagus of marble, carved to represent a knight in mail on the stone lid. Each such sarcophagus has a 2-in-3 chance of containing the remains of a knight in full plate armor with a sword (of random type) and shield. If remains are present, there is a 1-in-6 chance for each that the armor or the sword is enhanced. If enhanced, roll 1d6: 1–5 = the item is +1, 6 = the item is +0 but has another miscellaneous effect. These remains are, in fact, the corpses of paladins killed during their quest to recover the *sword of Karith*. The demons have “entombed” the remains to look like the final resting place of revered heroes. The demons find this false reverence very entertaining.

**The Real Entrance to the “Temple of the Justicars:**” The actual entrance to the Pit of Despair is hidden from mortal eyes. Only a paladin under the effect of a *true seeing* spell or comparable magic has a chance to see the entrance. Such a paladin must still make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to see the entrance; one check can be made per 15 minutes of searching. Powerful magic prevents any other means of detecting the entrance, short of a *wish* or a divine miracle. Even *find the path* does not reveal the entrance. If there is no paladin in the party, any Lawful Good character will do; if there’s no Lawful Good character, this requirement can be dropped (but what are you doing running this adventure for these characters?).

Once the real entrance is exposed, that paladin can thereafter see the entrance as plainly as the false ones and can direct others to the entrance.

The GM should make it very difficult — though not impossible — to locate the true entrance. Let the party search for several days and suffer the temperature extremes and begin to despair and contemplate abandoning the quest. After no fewer than three days’ searching, the GM might take pity on the party and give it the following clue: between midnight and 2 am, someone notices a faint glow from the portion of the cliff face where the true entrance is located. This clue doesn’t let the PCs see the actual entrance; it just gives them a hint about where to concentrate their intensive search. They still need to cast *true seeing* on a paladin to see the real entrance. If the PCs still can’t find the entrance, prod them to the proper solution by reminding them of the words of the priests that “only someone devout and who sees with the true eyes of faith can find the entrance to the Temple.”

Once located, the entrance threshold may be crossed at will. There are no doors, locks or traps on the entrance. A winding, 10-foot-diameter, roughly worked tunnel leads 120 feet to **Area 1**.

**Note:** Because the Pit of Despair is a source of conflict between Good and Evil deities, any spells, such as *commune*, *divination* or *find the path*, cast in an attempt to learn the location of the entrance or the consequences of future actions will have no result or only confusing results. GMs might imply that Thyr and Muir want the PCs to find and recover the *sword* on their own

merits, without guidance. Remind them: this is a test of faith and virtue, which can only be surmounted by noble, unguided, individual action. In reality, Orcus himself is watching the PCs and actively disrupting any contact with their Good-aligned deities; he cannot, however, interfere with *miracle* spells.

## The Pit of Despair

Three areas comprise the Pit of Despair. The first, a large underground amphitheater resembling a temple to Thyr and Muir, functions as the false “Temple of the Justicars.” The second area, the pit itself, contains a false avatar of Muir (really an altered nalfeshnee) and the *unholy sword*. The final area, an Evil altar room, contains an unholy shrine to Orcus, with the *sword of Karith* encased in blackest stone. The first two areas are enhanced with a strong magic that masks true alignments by projecting a Lawful Good alignment. This enchantment does not mask the alignment of the demons (though the *unholy sword* masks Caanara’s alignment). Additional shields prevent detection of the third area.

### i. The “Temple of the Justicars”

The entrance room is a large temple, designed to resemble an amphitheater. Three tiered series of pews lead down to a flat central area that features an altar. A recessed area at the far side of the room is lined with columns, ending with a statue of Muir. The recess contains a large pit, 30 feet across, around which mists swirl, obscuring view within. The only inhabitants of the chamber — fifteen robed priests of Muir — chant and dance around the pit. The walls of the amphitheater and the pillars are worked with images of knights in full armor.

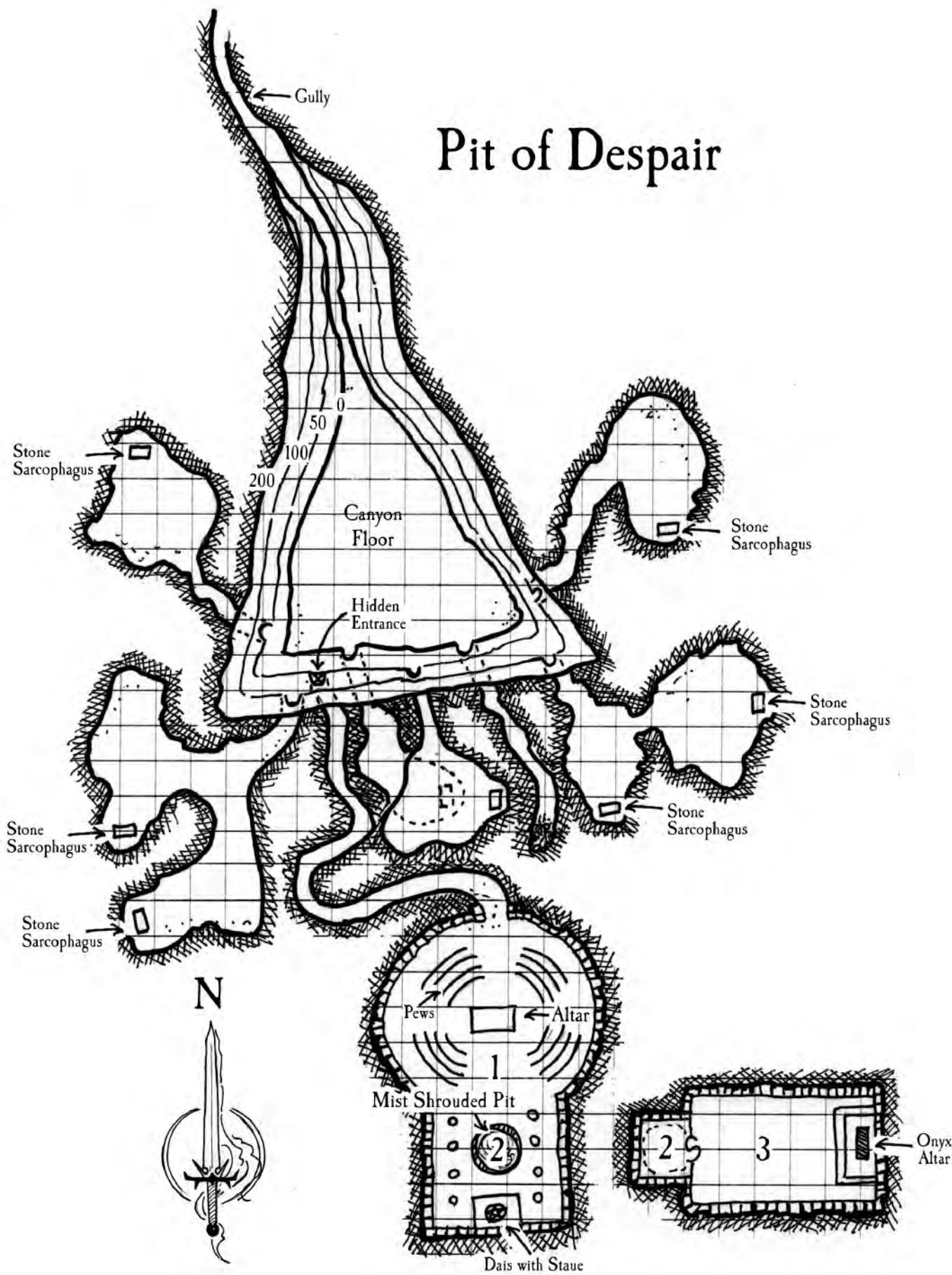
#### The First Visit

At first glance, the room resembles a temple of Muir — austere and dignified with clean, white marble columns, altars and statues. Holy runes and glyphs cover the walls. Careful inspection and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals subtle defacement of the holy images, vaguely suggesting an evil presence. The room detects as Good; however, the dancing priests clearly detect as Evil — because they are, in fact, **5 vrocks** dancing their Dance of Ruin, attended by **10 dretches**. They attack as soon as they detect the PCs’ presence.

If characters manage to observe the demons surreptitiously, a PC who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that although all the priests appear human, five of them are a little too tall to be human and ten are a little too short. Anyone who makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check realizes that the priests’ dance is not of any known ritual in the worship of Thyr or Muir but resembles the abyssal Dance of Ruin.

**Dance of Ruin:** The Dance of Ruin is an abyssal ritual unique to vrocks. If a vrock dances the Dance of Ruin for three consecutive rounds, the dance concludes at the end of the third round when a crackling wave of energy explodes from the vrock, doing 5d6 points of lightning damage to all creatures within 100 feet, or half damage with a successful DC 14 Dex saving throw. Each additional vrock involved in the dance increases the damage by 2d6 and increases the DC of the saving throw by +1, to a maximum of 11d6 when four or more vrocks dance (the DC keeps climbing with additional vrocks, but damage does not). The dance immediately ends and must be started anew if any of the participating vrocks are slain, stunned, or otherwise prevented from dancing. With five vrocks dancing here, the burst of energy will do 11d6 lightning damage and the saving throw has a DC of 18.

**Vrock Tactics:** When PCs first enter the amphitheater, the vrocks, disguised as robed priests of Muir, are gathered in a circle dancing around the pit and chanting. They started their dance when the party passed through the hidden entrance, completing it the first round the party is fully within the room — which becomes the first round of combat. If the characters have not yet grown suspicious of the dancing priests, the explosion of lightning when the Dance of Ruin ends should quickly convince them. Once the Dance of Ruin effect occurs, the vrocks attack viciously. All five of these vrocks have the variant ability to summon other demons, however, and they take



## THE PIT OF DESPAIR

turns making the attempt for the first five rounds of battle. They summon dretches only if all 10 vrocks have already been destroyed; they prefer to summon another vrock. PCs killed in the Pit have their souls taken directly to the Abyss where Orcus himself feasts on them. They cannot be retrieved or raised without divine intervention, or by a *wish*.

**(Vrock:** AC 15, 104 hp; the vrock attacks once with beak and once with talons; +6 to hit, 2d6 + 3 piercing damage [beak]; +6 to hit, 2d10 + 3 slashing damage [talons]; 15-ft. cloud, creatures in cloud must make a successful DC 14 Con saving throw or become poisoned; poisoned creatures take 1d10 poison damage at the start of their turn and repeat the saving throw, and a successful save ends the poisoning [spores, recharge 6]; 1/day, vrock can screech, causing all nondemon creatures within 20 feet of it to make a successful DC 14 Con saving throw or be stunned until the end of the vrock's next turn [stunning screech]; has tactical advantage on saving throws against magic)

**Dretch Tactics:** Dretches are pathetic, expendable pawns. The dretches try to keep melee combatants away from the vrocks while those far tougher demons concentrate on killing spellcasters.

**(Dretch:** AC 11, 18 hp; attacks once with claws and once with bite; +2 to hit, 1d6 piercing damage [bite]; +2 to hit, 2d4 slashing damage [claws]; 1/day can emit a cloud of gas in 10-ft. radius [fetid cloud]; creatures that start their turn in the gas must make a successful DC 11 Con saving throw or be poisoned until the start of their next turn; poisoned creatures are limited to a single action or bonus action on their turns, and can't take reactions)

**The Arrival of the “Celestial”:** Caanara, the nalfeshnee demon, bides his time at the bottom of the pit (**Area 2** on the map). He monitors the battle between the PCs and the demons. If the characters kill three vrocks and it seems likely they will kill the remaining two, Caanara assumes the form of the female celestial of legend and ascends from the pit, bearing the *unholy sword* (see below). If, however, the PCs are losing the battle, Caanara might intervene on their behalf, emerging from the pit as “divine intervention.” To maintain the charade, give the PCs a chance to defeat several demons, if possible.

Once Caanara ascends from the pit, the room brightens with a blinding, holy light. The demons freeze. Blasting away the mists covering the mouth of the pit, a beautiful, shimmering female figure wearing white robes rises from the pit, as if freed from ages of captivity. She levitates above the pit and holds in her hand a brilliant silver sword, encrusted with gems and inlaid gold and glowing with a holy light.

The vrocks and dretches slink away from her holy presence. Though she does not speak, each of the PCs hears a voice, so melodic and otherworldly it is almost painful.

“May the goddess bless you for freeing me from my captivity,” the celestial says. “Many ages ago I built this temple to house the Sword of the Justicars. When I returned to these halls to await the coming of the next grandmaster, hordes of demons and evil priests overcame me, imprisoning me in that pit. Your presence distracted them, allowing me to break free.” She turns to the paladin in the party. “To you, great champion, I bestow this mighty weapon. Borne last by the great hero, Karith, and by all Justicar grandmasters before him, you are now chosen to succeed them. Hail to you, Grandmaster! May the lady of virtue bless you! Go forth and use this weapon to bring just retribution to creatures of evil and win glory for our lady’s name.”

Her great task completed, the celestial disappears in a blinding flash. The vrocks, party to Caanara’s deception, recoil from “her” in

pretended fear. They do what they can to make the paladin and his party believe that they have, in fact, won the *sword of Karith* and can return to the world, carrying with them an *unholy sword*, thereby despoiling one of the world’s more promising paladins. When Caanara “disappears,” he really just *teleports* himself to **Area 3**, where he remains. Remember that Caanara has genius-level intelligence; play him as though he really were Muir’s female celestial. The party should have no clue that this is a ruse — unless one of their number has *true seeing* (the *true seeing* on the paladin required to find the entrance should have long since worn off). If his ruse is discovered, Caanara *teleports* to **Area 3**, and any other remaining demons flee to that area if they can.

Once Caanara *teleports* away, the vrocks make no attempt to fight whoever has the *unholy sword*, instead resuming their attacks against easier foes. They flee from the paladin, acting as though afraid of him. If the paladin attacks them with the *unholy sword*, it seems to cut through the vrocks like butter. They pretend to die after they are struck by the sword — although they won’t dissolve into ichor as demons typically do when slain, which should clue in characters who’ve fought demons before that something is amiss. They aren’t afraid to “die” to further this ruse, since death outside the Abyss is no more than a free ticket home for demons.

**Conversion:** At this point, the GM might choose to have the *unholy sword* tempt the paladin, suggesting his conversion to the cause of Evil. The sword tells the PC that if he converts right now to the cause of Chaotic Evil, accepts Orcus as his god, and joins with the demons in slaying his companions, then the sword will instantly advance him by two experience levels. In addition, the sword promises the PC demon servants of great power, a suit of +2 armor and a +3 shield.

These offers are almost entirely lies. If the character accepts the sword’s offer, he becomes an oathbreaker paladin. None of the other benefits are delivered: no increase in level, no demonic servants, no magic armor. The sword has accomplished its goal of perverting a paladin.

If the PC refuses to convert, the sword’s magic causes him to forget what just transpired, removing any memory of the solicitation from the wielder’s mind. Of course, attempting this conversion tips off the paladin’s player that the sword is not a *holy sword* and something is terribly amiss. Only attempt this conversion with a trusted roleplayer who will not reveal the sword’s secret or act on information the character doesn’t have. This scenario should be roleplayed away from the main group so that no one else is privy to what’s happening. If other players ask questions, suggest that the sword was communicating privately with its new wielder, explaining its powers. Or you could skip the conversion attempt for now and wait until the paladin leaves with the sword, as detailed below.

## Return Visit

At some point in the future, when PCs return to the Pit of Despair to destroy the *unholy sword*, they find **3 vrocks** waiting for them, scattered about the room. The vrocks immediately attack the party. These also have the variant ability to summon more vrocks or dretches.

## 2. The Pit of Despair

With the demons finally destroyed, the mist shrouding the mouth of the pit dissipates. In the well below lies a massive treasure hoard. The pit, 40 feet deep and carved of stone, has no apparent exits.

### The First Visit

Initially, the pit is shrouded with mists that serve no purpose save hiding Caanara from view. He lurks in the bottom of the pit, monitoring the battle above. If any PC is crazy enough to jump into the pit during combat, he encounters Caanara, who, if not expecting this action, will be in his original form. If Caanara suspects a PC might enter the pit before defeating the demons, he changes into his celestial guise before his arrival and pleads with the PC to slay the demons so that “she” might be free and thus bestow the sword on the paladin. If seen in his normal form, Caanara engages the PC in melee. If the melee goes poorly, Caanara *teleports* to **Area 3**. Otherwise, Caanara acts as outlined above

## QUESTS OF DOOM: DEMONS & DEVILS

under "The Arrival of the 'Celestial.'"

**(Caanara [Nalfeshnee]):** AC 18, 184 hp; Caanara can use horror nimbus and make two claw attacks and one bite attack on its turn; creatures within 15 ft. of Caanara must make a successful DC 15 Wis saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute or until it makes a successful Wis save [horror nimbus; recharge 5, 6]; +10 to hit, 5d10 + 5 piercing damage [bite]; +10 to hit x2, 3d6 + 5 slashing damage [claw]; can teleport up to 120 ft. as an action; has tactical advantage on saving throws against magic

**Treasure:** 6,200 gp, 36,000 sp, a gold cup set with emeralds worth 7,000 gp, inlaid masterwork harp of silver and elven hair worth 4,000 gp, *amulet of inescapable location* (cursed; appears to be an *amulet of proof against detection and location*; wearer has tactical disadvantage on saving throws against divination), *bracers of defenselessness* +3 (cursed; appear to be +3 *bracers of armor* and act as such until the wearer is attacked by a creature with a CR at least equal to the wearer's level; then they lower the wearer's AC by 5, and do so until removed) and a *periapt of foul rotting* (cursed; appears to be a *periapt of health*; its owner loses 1 point of Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma every week). Unless a *wish* is used, the cursed nature of the items cannot be detected while PCs are within the pit.

**Secret Door:** The secret door to **Area 3** is very difficult to locate, having been concealed with powerful magic. No magic short of a *wish* makes it obvious. A *true seeing* spell reduces the DC to find the door from 35 to 25.

The secret door consists of an entire 40-foot section of the wall. When opened, the door swings upward 90 degrees, triggering a trap — a *symbol of death* inscribed on the reverse side of the door — and sealing the pit's mouth.

### False Ending

If the PCs do not find the secret door, the GM should smile, solicit feedback on how challenging the adventure was, and congratulate the players on a job well done. Remark how incredible it was that the PCs defeated five vrocks conducting the Dance of Ruin to recover the *sword of Karith!* Then take a break, quit for the night, or start the next adventure. The *unholysword* will show its true colors later. Wait until the next playing session before beginning corruption of the paladin. See "**Atonement**," below.

### Return Visit

Returning to destroy the *unholysword*, the PCs find the Pit of Despair empty. Any treasure left by the party during its previous visit has been moved to **Area 3**.

## 3. The Altar of Evil and Good

If the PCs find, open, and survive the *symbol of death*-trapped secret door, they enter a large room. The secret wall, however, swings up and seals the pit's mouth with a foot-thick lid of stone. The large room houses an evil altar carved from onyx set upon an ebon dais. Strangely, the onyx, partially transparent, reveals the fabled *sword of Karith*, pulsing with a holy white light, sealed within the altar.

At this point, the demons re-enter the picture, attacking the PCs en masse. Their sole purpose: preventing retrieval of the *holysword*. The forces of darkness include Caanara the nalfeshnee, as many vrocks as survived the initial encounter in **Area 1** above and two more vrocks if this is a return trip to the Pit of Despair. The party will also have to contend with the dretches that survived the initial encounter. Unlike before, all demons now concentrate their attacks on whoever wields the *unholysword*. They interpose themselves between the PC and the altar, preventing contact at all costs.

During combat (but most likely after combat), the paladin can destroy

the altar and *unholysword*, thus freeing the *holysword*, by striking the altar with the *unholysword*. The impact shatters both objects instantly! Destruction of the evil altar and *unholysword* nets each PC a 5,000 XP story award in addition to any combat experience.

**Tactics of Caanara the Nalfeshnee:** When encountered in this room — whether by a resourceful party on its first visit to the Pit of Despair or by a party returning to the pit to undo his treachery — Caanara uses all his powers to slay all PCs. As soon as the secret wall is opened, he tries to summon 1d3 hezrous (50% chance of success). He uses his horror nimbus as often as possible, and only fights hand-to-hand as a last resort. If reduced to less than 30 hit points, Caanara *teleports to Area 1* (above the pit, which is now sealed off by the open secret door). Defeating Caanara should be a feat that all of the surviving PCs brag about for years.

**Treasure:** The *holysword*, *Entrancacor* is inside the stone altar. See the **Appendix** for more information. The sword can be moved from the altar block either by casting a *wish* spell on the altar or by striking the altar with the *unholysword*, *Entranhumani*, as described above. Doing so shatters the altar and the *unholysword* and frees the *holysword* (the party can't have both!). No other way to remove the sword exists.

## Atonement

If the characters are duped into believing they have recovered the *sword of Karith*, there is a strong chance that the paladin will fall under the evil sword's sway. The PCs should have no encounters on their return trip. Returning to an area with a large (over 50) population of humans, the PCs might begin to note changes in the sword wielder. The sword waits until a good-sized group of low-level victims are available and, in the presence of a few of the paladin's comrades, tries to seize control and force the character into a killing spree! Consider the common room of an inn or tavern, late in the evening after most PCs have retired and the paladin is telling the story of the sword's recovery to some locals, an appropriate venue. Or, more despicably, wait until the paladin visits the local church to pray. The sword tries to take control of the character every day when a ripe opportunity presents itself, and erases the memory if the attempt fails.

GMs can find this highly entertaining. Any PC paladin succumbing to the will of the sword and committing atrocities loses his paladin status and cannot continue as a paladin without doing atonement. Any PC attempting to rid himself of the sword discovers that it continually *teleports* itself back to him.

The sword, of course, suggests an alternative. After the PC's paladinhood is lost, the sword tempts the paladin into becoming an oathbreaker, with the temptations described above under "**Conversion**." The only catch: he must slay all of his Good- or Lawful-aligned companions.

As GM, decide who might properly suggest *atonement* for such vile deeds. For example, require that the PC return to the priests of Muir from whom he obtained the map to the Temple of the Justicars. There, he can relate the story of the quest and its consequences. After much prayer and communing with the paladin's deity, the priests describe what must be done to restore paladinhood: the paladin must destroy the *unholysword*! There is only one way for this to be done: it must be smashed upon the altar on which it was forged. That altar, the PCs are informed, is hidden within the Temple of the Justicars, but no one knows exactly where. When this is done — the PCs are promised — not only will the *unholysword* be destroyed, but they will also free the true *sword of Karith*. This act also restores the fallen paladin's status.

Most likely, amid feelings of doubt, hope and regret, the party gears up for a return trip to the Pit of Despair. Plan an appropriate number of wilderness encounters if it travels overland. Perhaps now the PCs might *teleport* to the canyon containing the temple's entrance. Once the PCs arrive at the Pit of Despair for the second time, GMs should refer to the above sections in **Areas 1 and 2** entitled "**Return Visit**" for details on how the Pit of Despair is different the second time around. Who knows? Maybe they will even succeed ...

# Appendix: Entrancacor and Entranhumani

## Entrancacor (Holy Avenger)

### Very Rare Weapon (requires attunement)

Entrancacor is a sentient, Lawful Good +3 *holy avenger* longsword. In addition to the standard abilities of a *holy avenger*, it has Int 14, Wis 13, and Cha 17. It can communicate telepathically with its owner and has hearing and darkvision out to 60 feet. It can cast the spells *dispel magic* (3/day, +6), *see invisibility* (at will), *heal* (1/day), *true seeing* (2/day), and *banishing smite* (1/day, on itself).

Entrancacor is noncorporeal except when it is held or carried by a Lawful Good paladin, ensuring that no one but a Lawful Good paladin can even pick it up, much less use it.

## Entranhumani (Unholy Reaver)

### Very Rare Weapon (requires attunement)

Entranhumani is a sentient, Chaotic Evil +3 *unholy reaver* longsword. It does an extra 2d6 damage to targets of Good alignment, but a wielder who is not Chaotic Evil has a -1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks made while Entranhumani is drawn. It has Int 14, Wis 13, and Cha 17. It can communicate telepathically with its owner and has hearing and darkvision out to 60 feet. It can *teleport* into its owner's hand as a bonus action. Entranhumani can cast the spells *forget* (3/day, on its wielder only; removes all memory of the last 5 minutes; no saving throw), *feeblemind* (2/day, save DC 14), and *harm* (1/day, save DC 14).

Entranhumani is noncorporeal except when it is held or carried by a paladin of any alignment, ensuring that no one else can even pick it up, much less use it.

The only way to destroy Entranhumani is to strike the altar on which it was forged while a holy sword is encased inside the altar. This altar lies in the Pit of Despair.

All attempts, magical or mundane, to discern the nature of Entranhumani identify it as a Lawful Good +3 *holy avenger*.

# Giants & Dragons

# Dread Dragon Temple

By James M. Ward

*Dread Dragon Temple* is a 5th Edition adventure designed for four to six characters from level 5 to 7.

## History of the Dread Dragon Temple

This information isn't essential for players to understand, but it will enhance their enjoyment of the adventure and provide them a few clues on how to proceed. If you play this adventure as a one-shot, you can read the following aloud to players to get things started. If the adventure is being folded into an ongoing campaign, it's best to break this information into smaller chunks and present it gradually over many gaming sessions as legends and folk tales the characters hear in roadhouses or read in ancient books and scrolls found in treasure hoards.

In the mountainous country of Norss there is a stone temple shaped like a dragon. This is no ordinary temple; the structure is shaped like a massive dragon, and it stretches across 15 miles of mountainside! At that size, it can be seen for many miles. Everyone in the surrounding countries has heard of it, though many people who've never seen it doubt that such a thing could exist. Those who have seen it, leave it alone. Such a structure is no place for mortals to go messing about.

One legend that persists, however, is of a magical staff hidden deep inside the temple. If the legend is true—and it probably isn't—this staff could transform a person into a massive red dragon. As with all great treasures, the staff is guarded by ferocious, terrible monsters. Other, lesser treasures also fill the corridors of the dragon temple—but how could chests filled with diamonds and platinum compare to a device that could transform you into them mightiest of all creatures?

Over the centuries, great warriors and formidable wizards dared the temple for a chance at the legendary dragon staff. Every one of these heroes came to the same end: none were ever seen again. In one such tale, an egotistical king and his crew of dwarven engineers worked for ten years building a ramp to the temple's entrance at the dragon's mouth. When they finished, 500 dwarven, human, and elven warriors and wizards, every one a legend in his or her own time, climbed the ramp to invade the temple. Many never made it inside the temple. Those that did, never came out. The great ramp was burst asunder and tumbled down the mountainside. What caused such tremendous destruction, no one knows, but the temple has never been challenged on such a massive scale again.

## Adventure Hooks

If the lure of unimaginable wealth isn't enough to overcome the characters' fear of insurmountable danger, here are some other hooks to try.

- Two years ago, a blue dragon moved into the mountains 10 miles south of the temple. One year ago, a red dragon appeared in the mountains north of the temple. Obviously, something major is afoot, and the king (or

the dean of the wizards' consortium) wants to know what it is. Someone is willing to pay a handsome reward to anyone willing to set foot inside the ancient dragon temple. It must be less dangerous than confronting two living dragons.

- Characters could find a crude, simple sketch of the temple (essentially, the map accompanying this adventure, minus the scale and other labels) drawn on a flap of dragon hide, along with cryptic clues such as "Giant rattlesnakes here" and "Watch out for lizardfolk!" Most importantly, it would include a clue concerning how to get inside ("Present a dragon here" or "Ask politely, but loudly"). Additional clues could mysteriously appear on the map the nearer characters get to the temple.

- The temple can be seen from miles away—many days' travel, in clear weather. If characters know nothing about it, just seeing it in the far distance should pique their curiosity, if they have any.

## Reaching the Temple

Simply reaching the temple is challenging. The mountains around it are rugged and exposed to severe weather.

But this isn't an adventure about mountain climbing. There's no need to throw geographical obstacles in the characters' paths. Just let them know that climbing to the "head" of the temple is going to take  $1d4 + 3$  days of hard climbing.

The easiest and best route to the mouth, however, is by climbing up the tail and marching across the temple's "back." If no one thinks of that on their own, let the characters attempt DC 15 Int (Nature) checks or Wis (Survival) checks; those who succeed recognize, while inspecting the temple from miles away, that the roof of the temple is like a paved highway compared to the rest of the mountains. This route cuts the climbing time down to  $1d3 + 1$  days to reach the tip of the tail, plus one more day of relatively easy marching 15 miles across the temple's roof to the head.

**Reaching the Temple:** For each day of climbing, every character must make a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check or gain one level of exhaustion. There are no random encounters in this part of the mountains; dangerous creatures seem to avoid the area around the temple.

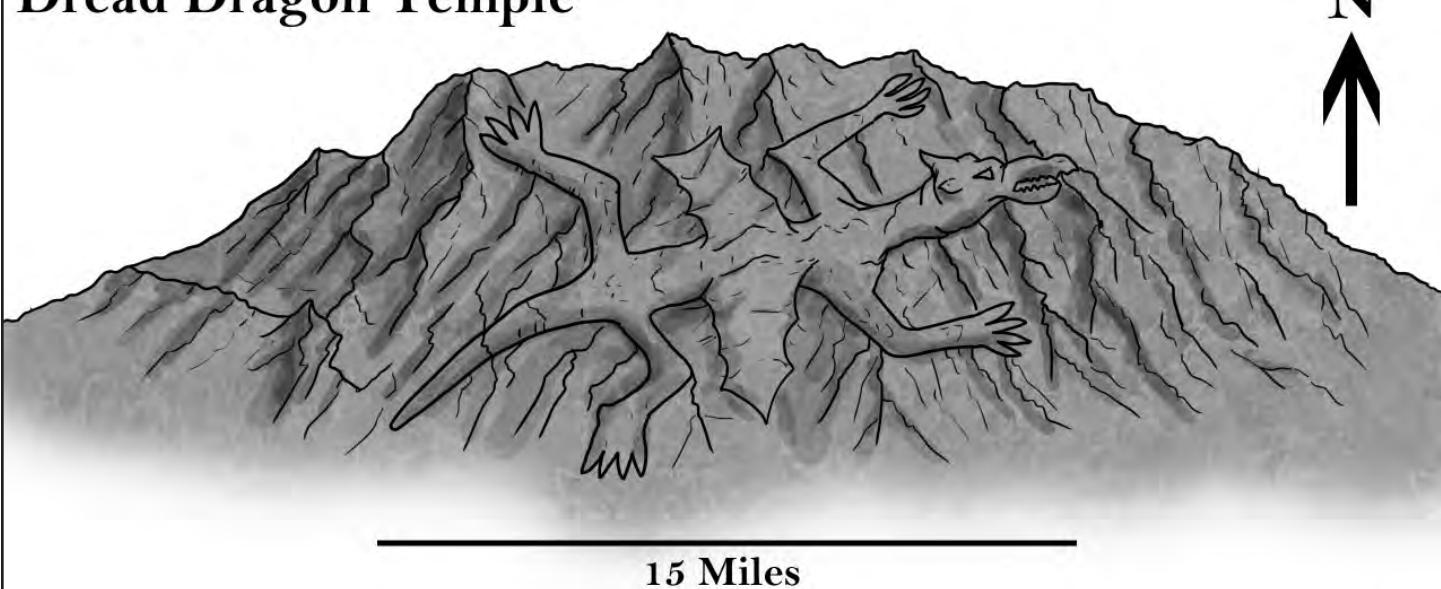
**Getting Onto the Temple:** At the tip of the temple's tail, anyone with a Dexterity modifier of +2 or higher or with training in Athletics can easily scale the surface and find a place to attach a rope so others can follow without making Strength checks.

**Atop the Temple:** The outside of the temple is carved to resemble truly gigantic dragon scales that would be tiring to walk on, but a narrow, smooth path extends from the tip of the tail, up the spine of the temple, right to the head. This path can't be seen from the ground, but it's obvious to anyone who ascends the tail (or the head).

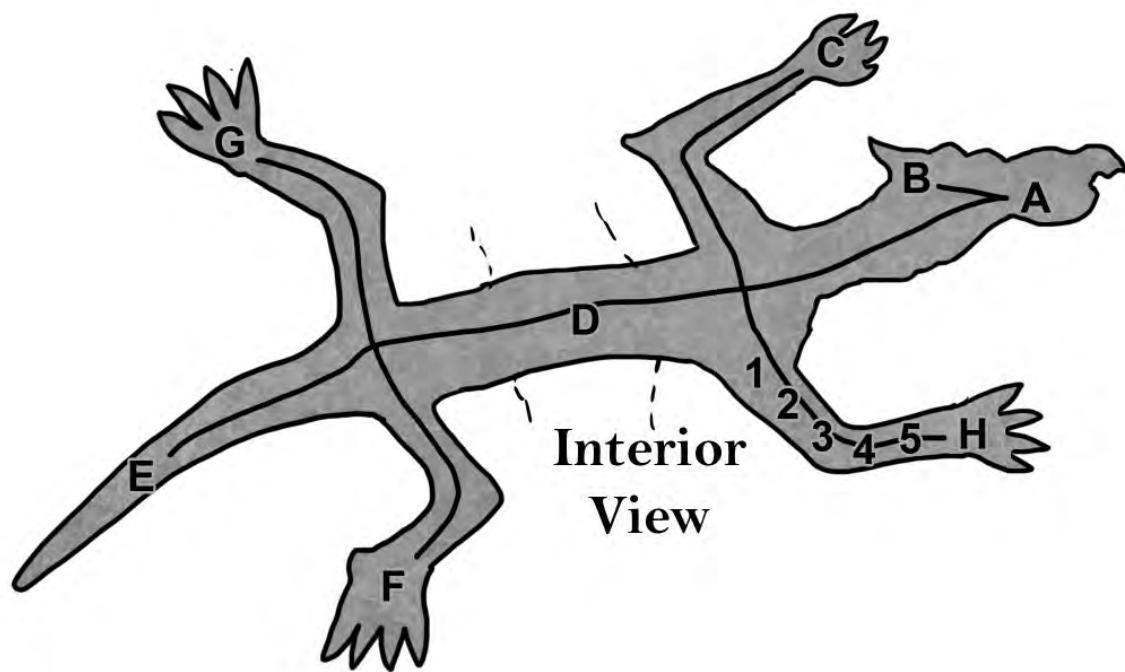
Breaking through the wall or roof of the temple is impossible, either by mundane digging and mining or by magic. The structure is unlike anything characters have encountered before, and its origin is a complete mystery.

The only danger on this part of the trek is a troop of **six lizardfolk** that are met marching in the opposite direction somewhere around the middle of the temple. Both groups should make Wis (Perception) checks, using the best score in the group (+3 for the lizardfolk) and with tactical advantage to represent multiple sets of eyes; the group with the highest result spots the other group first at a distance of  $(1d4 + 1) \times 100$  yards, and can make whatever preparations it wants. The lizardfolk use the spines and scales of the structure for cover to set an ambush for the characters, if they have surprise.

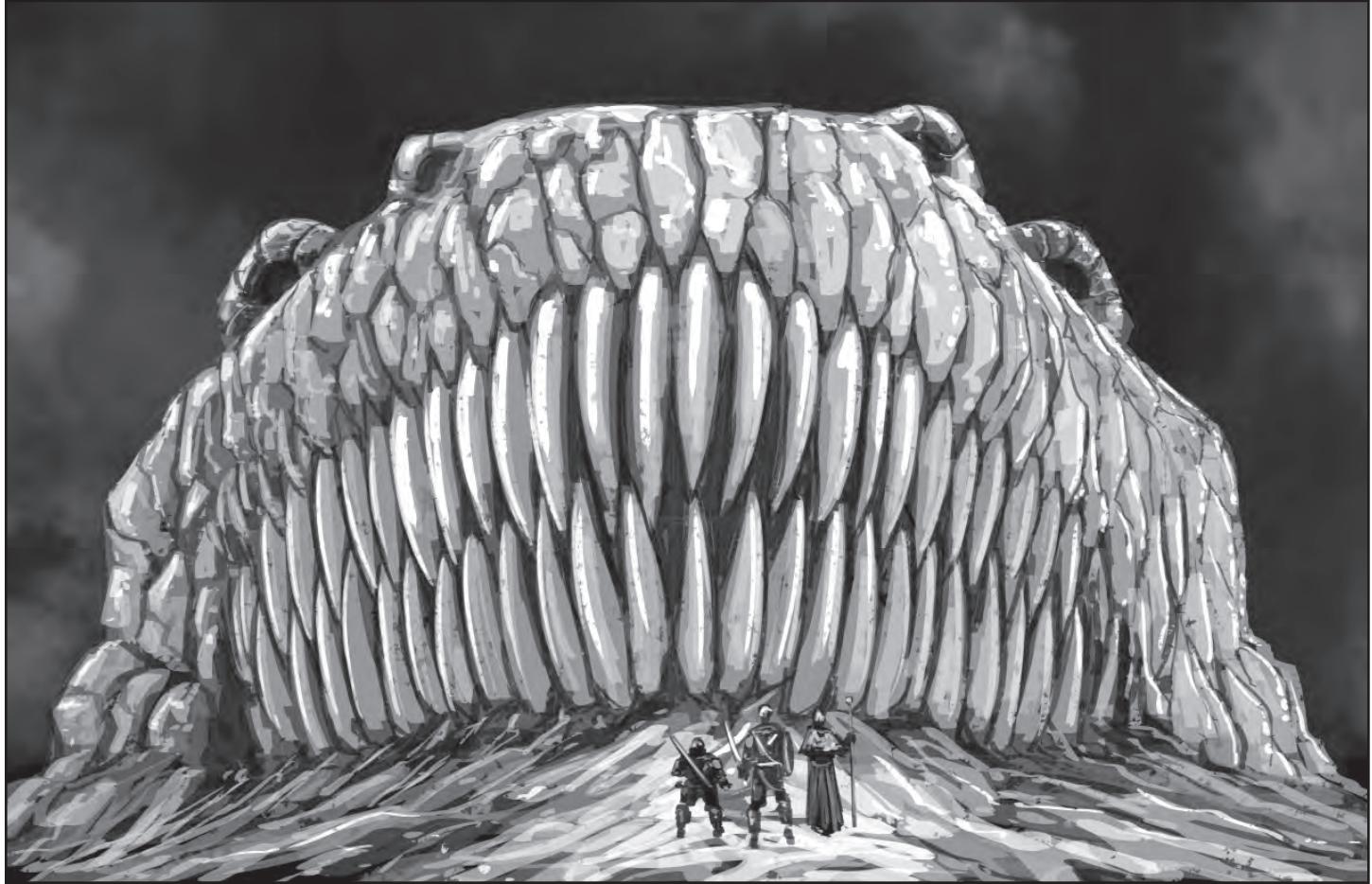
## Dread Dragon Temple



15 Miles



## DREAD DRAGON TEMPLE



**(Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

### A. The Mouth of the Dragon

The apparent entrance to the structure is built and carved—it's hard to tell which, really—in image of the head of an ancient red dragon. The head is 150 feet wide, 60 feet tall, and the snout alone is 120 feet long. There is flat ground around the head of the dragon, but it's only about 20 feet wide; beyond that, the mountains plunge away steeply.

The disintegrating bones of dozens of dwarves, elves, and humans are mingled with bits and pieces of rotted military gear. In some places, only red dust remains to show where a sword has rusted away to nothing. As wind howls around this mountain face, it occasionally brings the scent of blood swirling out from the temple mouth.

Each of the granite fangs of the dragon is at least 30 feet tall. There's enough space between fangs to see that a cave extends down the throat of the dragon, but not enough space to squeeze through. This must be the entrance to the temple, but there's no apparent way to get past the massive teeth.

There are three simple ways to get into the stone mouth.

1. If characters shout loudly and in unison, asking the mouth to open, the jaws part far enough for a Medium creature in armor and with a full pack to walk through.

2. "Showing" the temple a dragon of any type causes the jaws to open. It can be a live dragon, a carving of a dragon, or even just a drawing, including the sketch of

the temple on dragon hide mentioned above under "Adventure Hooks."

3. Magically shrinking or becoming gaseous lets characters slip between the stone fangs.

Don't feel constrained by these three methods. If players come up with a creative solution, give it a chance to work; the more creative, the higher the chance.

Once past the fangs, characters are inside a stony reconstruction of a towering dragon's mouth, carved in remarkable detail. They walk past rows of teeth along a stone tongue. Characters might expect a long echo from such a tunnel, but sounds are surprisingly muted.

The characters aren't alone here. **Ten giant poisonous snakes** have made their den in this "cave." As characters advance down the throat, let any character who's alert for traps or danger make a DC 12 Int (Nature) check to recognize that they're walking into a snake den. If no one makes a successful check, the snakes get to attack with surprise.

**(Giant Poisonous Snake:** AC 14, 11 hp; +6 to hit, 1d4 + 4 piercing damage plus 3d6 poison damage; successful DC 11 Con saving throw halves poison damage)

### Inside the Temple

The layout of the temple is simple. It consists of a single, long corridor that extends from the entrance to the tip of the tail. The main corridor crosses two four-way intersections where secondary corridors split off to extend through the dragon's front and rear legs. A much smaller, tertiary corridor extends from the "throat" (beyond the mouth) up into the dragon's head.

The main path through the temple, from the entrance to the tip of the tail, is 15 miles long. From the entrance to the first four-way intersection is a distance of 4 miles; the distance between the intersections is 6 miles; and from the second four-way intersection to the final chamber in the tail is 5 miles. Each of the four arm corridors is 5 miles long. Different sections are dressed in different-

## QUESTS OF DOOM: GIANTS & DRAGONS

colored stone corresponding to the five colors of chromatic dragons—black, blue, green, red, and white—giving characters some clue as to what lies ahead.

All of the corridors are semicircular in section; they have a flat floor 70 yards (210 feet) wide beneath a smoothly arching, semicircular roof that peaks 35 yards (105 feet) overhead. The walls and floor of these corridors are carved to resemble dragon scales. The rough surface deadens sound, so noise doesn't travel far or echo in the temple—very much the opposite of what experienced dungeon and cave explorers would expect.

The corridors are so large that any normal torch or lantern can't illuminate more than a tiny portion of the floor. The ceiling is completely lost in darkness if the light source is more than a short distance from a wall. The circle of light from a torch or lantern is 60 feet in diameter—barely one-fourth of the distance from wall to wall in these corridors.

If characters move out of sight from a wall, the swirling pattern of scales on the floor makes it impossible to keep walking in a straight line. Characters who try to walk down the middle of the corridor quickly find themselves heading toward a wall. The wall didn't curve; their footsteps did.

What's more, a magical property of this structure deadens light. A torch or lantern should remain visible as a point of light for miles in pitch darkness such as the inside of this temple. Instead, a light fades rapidly as it moves away from the viewer, until it disappears entirely at a distance of just 200 feet. Two characters holding lanterns and standing near the walls along opposite sides of the corridor can barely see each other's lights! They look miles away, not less than a hundred yards.

### Lizardfolk

The temple is not, as is widely thought, uninhabited. A community of lizardfolk lives here, serving the dragon gods, tending to the temple, and protecting it against intruders. Groups of patrolling lizardfolk will be met in specific areas of the temple. Feel free to create random encounters with patrols, too, but not too many—it's important that the vast space inside this temple feels mostly empty.

Dead bodies of slain adventurers will also be found in some parts of the temple. The lizardfolk consider every slain explorer to be a sacrifice to the dragon gods. Lizardfolk never move or even touch these bodies; doing so would defile the sacrifice. Lizardfolk never talk to characters, either. In their minds, all strangers inside the temple are unwelcome intruders who should be killed.

Lizardfolk can find their way around in the pitch dark of the temple easily after years of living here. They never carry light sources, meaning they will usually spot characters' lights well before they are spotted in return.

### Resting in the Temple

Because of the size of the temple and the many dangers it holds, it's almost guaranteed that characters will take at least one long rest inside, and possibly two or more. When they do, their dreams will be haunted by the ghosts of dragons. See the section "Dragon Dreams" at the end of the adventure for information about what happens when characters rest inside the temple.

## The Dragon's Throat

Past the dragon's mouth, you've entered what appears to be its "throat." The structure no longer resembles the actual insides of a dragon, though. You don't know how wide the corridor is; it's so big, your light can't reach from wall to wall. The floor is flat and dressed in tight-fitting black stone carved to resemble dragon scales that are each the size of a large shield. The swirling, whorled pattern makes it difficult to walk a straight line if you drift too far away from a wall. The roof is beyond the limit of your light, which seems less effective than usual in this blackness. This darkness seems more intense than a simple absence of light.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: GIANTS & DRAGONS

Dwarves discern a slight downward slope to the corridor automatically. Other creatures can detect the slope only if they look for it specifically and make a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. Normal tests, such as a marble on the floor, won't work here because of the uneven, scaled texture carved into all the surfaces.

Dwarves also marvel at the fitting and masterful carving of the stone dragon scales. If the same level of craftsmanship is maintained throughout, then the amount of work that went into building this structure surpasses anything they've seen before.

About a quarter-mile down the throat, a side passage branches off the main corridor. The main corridor continues on to the southwest, but the side passage veers sharply to the northeast and ascends noticeably. This passage is much smaller than the main passage, being only about twenty yards wide. You can actually make out the ceiling just 30 feet overhead in the side passage. It's a smooth, semicircular arch curving gracefully from the floor on one side to the floor on the other side.

The branch to the northeast leads to area B, while the main corridor leads to the first (forelegs) crossroads. All of the stonework in this part of the temple is black.

## B. Black Dragon Chamber

The corridor goes on for a mile before suddenly opening into a chamber. At least, you assume you're in a chamber; once again, it's far larger than your light can reach. Unlike the areas you've walked through, this area looks like a natural cavern; it's broken up by many stalactites and stalagmites.

Not far ahead, you can see a 20-foot-long carving of a young black dragon. The dragon's back is flattened to form a platform about five feet high, and on the platform is a pile of green, lightly glowing crystals.

On the floor in front of the statue is a tangle of human body parts. You count four heads, and the number of arms, legs, and torsos seems to confirm that this was once four bodies. Tatters of what once were fine robes are mingled with the bodies. The scent of dung hangs over the pile.

Suddenly, the scratching of claws on stone breaks the silence.

Stalactites and stalagmites cover the area. The bodies are the remains of four wizards who came looking for the staff. Characters who search the bodies before scouting the rest of the chamber are automatically surprised by the **basilisk**.

**(Basilisk:** AC 15, 52 hp; +5 to hit, 2d6 + 3 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage; creatures that start their turn within 30 ft. of the basilisk and able to see it must make a DC 14 Con saving throw; if the save fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified; if the save fails by 4 or less, the creature is restrained and repeats the saving throw at the end of its next turn; if the second saving throw fails, the creature is petrified; if the second saving throw succeeds, the restraint effect ends; an unsurprised creature can avoid this effect by averting its eyes, but until the start of its next turn, it treats the basilisk as an unseen target)

The basilisk keeps fighting until there's no one left in its den to fight. Its nest is on a deep shelf above the entrance to the chamber. The creature won't follow retreating characters.

The four dead wizards have equipment useful to experienced adventurers. One wears a *ring of protection* +1 on her toe, under a blood-soaked boot. A total of 57 gp and 22 sp can be gotten from purses and

## DREAD DRAGON TEMPLE

pouches. Each figure was equipped with a shortsword and four throwing daggers. Each also has a scroll tube. Altogether, the tubes contain scrolls of *fireball*, *expeditious retreat*, *cloud of daggers*, *misty step*, *see invisibility*, *polymorph*, *dimension door*, and *stoneskin*.

Eighty-eight glowing crystals are heaped on the back of the dragon. The crystals are cut in the shape of dragon scales, and they glow with a green light. The light is too dim to actually illuminate anything, but they'd make unusual night-lights. In other words, they're worthless except as curios: they could be sold for 1 gp each in a large town or to someone with gold and curiosity. Dragons and the temple's lizardfolk recognize them as coming from this temple, however, and won't react kindly to their theft.

## East Junction

When characters reach the first crossroad, whichever wall they're following simply ends and they find themselves standing at a corner. Because of the immensity of the corridor and the limitations of their light, exploring this area to be sure of what they've encountered is a tricky business. The crossroad forms a square 210 feet by 210 feet, and 300 feet across diagonally. Unless characters take special precautions, such as setting out lanterns in a straight line as guideposts, someone venturing into the dark must make a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check to avoid becoming disoriented and heading in the wrong direction. This isn't likely to turn into a life-threatening situation. It can test the players' ingenuity as they figure out how to accurately gauge and map their surroundings.

Once they figure out that they're at an immense, four-way intersection, read the following text aloud.

You've come to a four-way intersection in the broad corridor. Straight ahead, the black-walled corridor continues on. Corridors to the north and south are equally immense, but the northern corridor is lined with green stonework instead of black, and the air wafting from that direction is stale and acrid. The southern corridor is lined with blue stone, and the air drifting from that direction is humid.

## C. Green Dragon Chamber

If characters take the northern passage, the corridor extends north-northwest for a little over two miles, then turns west-northwest for another three miles before reaching an immense, dead-end chamber. The chamber is circular and 150 yards in diameter, with a domed ceiling that rises to 75 yards above the floor. Characters can estimate the size of the chamber by making a circuit of the wall—but that would mean entering the chamber, which they might not want to do.

The corridor opens into an immense chamber, probably inside one of the “claws” of the dragon temple. A smell of dried blood and putrefaction permeates the area. Chunks of decaying meat and bones neatly sliced apart are scattered throughout the chamber. Judging from the shattered weapons and demolished gear, it appears a group of adventurers similar to yourselves met its end here. Dried blood is splattered on the walls and collected in dark pools in low spots on the floor. Slashed armor and shredded backpacks testify to the violence of whatever happened here. Bloodstained slots in the walls, floor, and ceiling imply that some enormous, diabolical trap was responsible.

About 70 yards into the chamber stands a stylized statue of a green dragon approximately 15 feet tall and twice that long. You can see it faintly from the corridor because of the orange glow emanating from its flattened back.

There's no effort to hide the grooves in the walls, floor, and ceiling. Players should quickly realize that they're looking into an enormous trap.

The trap is triggered by stepping on well-concealed pressure plates in the floor. The plates are more numerous near the center of the chamber than near the wall. A character who stays within 10 yards of the wall has a 1-in-20 chance of triggering the trap, checked just once no matter how much they move around near the wall. A character who moves into the middle ground between the wall and the statue has a 1-in-20 chance of triggering the trap for every 30 feet they move. A character who moves within 10 yards of the statue has a 10-in-20 chance of triggering the trap for every 30 feet they move. Characters who search for the pressure plates can make DC 15 Int (Investigation) checks; a successful check doesn't find a pressure plate but confirms in the character's mind that this trap is so cunningly constructed, the only way to find a pressure plate is to trigger it.

If the trap is triggered, spinning blades swing down from the ceiling and up from the floor, and rotating blades slice out from the walls at waist height (on a human). The blades slash through the chamber for four rounds, affecting one quarter of the chamber per round. The quarters are northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest. The quarter where the trap was triggered is affected first, then the blades move clockwise around the chamber, slashing through one quarter per round. After four rounds, they retract into the walls, floor, and ceiling and reset. If someone steps on a pressure plate again, the trap activates all over.

When the trap activates, every character in the affected area takes 8d8 slashing damage, or half damage if they make a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw. Characters in other quarters have a chance to race ahead of the blades or even get out of the chamber if they act quickly, but if they dither or hesitate, they'll be caught.

The dragon-shaped pedestal at the center of the chamber has a pile of crystals on its flattened back that are shaped like dragon scales and that glow faintly with an orange luminescence. Each “scale” is about seven inches long. Close inspection reveals that they're nothing but cheap stone; the glow is magical, but the scales are worth only about 1 gp apiece to curiosity collectors.

Taking even one crystal from the pile automatically trips another trap. The trap can be noticed with a careful inspection of the platform and a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. This trap releases poisonous chlorine gas in a visible, green cloud from the statue's mouth. Characters who are still anywhere in the chamber two rounds later take 12d6 poison damage, or half as much with a successful DC 14 Con saving throw. The gas persists in the chamber for 24 hours before it dissipates.

A careful search of the remains and gear in this chamber (taking ten minutes) turns up four *potions of cure wounds* in metal flasks. Quite a few ruined scrolls can be found (sliced in half), but one intact tube still contains a scroll with two *polymorph* spells. A careful search of that same tube (or a successful DC 20 Wis [Perception] check) discovers a hidden compartment in the cap that conceals a masterfully cut red ruby worth 1,000 gp.

## D. The Dragon Throne

Once again, the already immense corridor opens into an even larger area. Barely visible in the pitch-black distance is a faintly blue-glowing object that looks like a throne carved in the shape of a blue dragon. The entire thing appears to be made of some magnificent gemstone, but it's impossible to be sure in the dim light.

The shape and apparent size of the throne suggest that a creature as large as an ogre could sit in it.

The chamber itself presents no danger. It is circular, about 150 yards in diameter, with the corridor running straight through its center. The blue-glowing throne provides a landmark that's visible from everywhere in the chamber, so characters can move around here without getting disoriented.

As characters approach the throne, they encounter ten crushed and mangled corpses strewn across the floor 10 to 20 yards from the throne. The bodies look reasonably fresh, but there's a noticeable lack of flesh on

## QUESTS OF DOOM: GIANTS & DRAGONS

them, given their apparently recent demise. If the bodies are disturbed in any way, swarms of **flesh-eating beetles** rush out of the dead bodies (one swarm per player character).

**(Swarm of Insects:** AC 12, 22 hp; +3 to hit, 4d4 piercing damage, or 2d4 piercing damage if the swarm has 11 or fewer hit points; the swarm can enter and remain in an enemy's space, and can only attack an enemy whose space it occupies)

The bodies still have some useful items, if characters take 10 minutes to search the grisly remains: *potion of invisibility*, +1 silver dagger, +1 dwarven throwing axe, 5 gems (500 gp per gem), 29 copper coins, 44 silver coins, 19 gold coins, and 11 platinum coins.

### Interacting with the Dragon Throne

Anyone who inspects the throne notes a large amount of dried blood on the arms and seat. The throne is carved from a single block of bright blue lapis lazuli that is enchanted to give it a soft glow. Veins of what look like gold and silver trace through the intricate carvings, but they are just attributes of the gem, not actual gold or silver.

Lapis lazuli is semiprecious, and this is the largest chunk of it the characters have ever seen or even heard of. Melon-sized pieces of it could be knocked off with hammers, and each would be worth 200 gp. If characters try to knock pieces off the chair, however, a **glyph of warding** (*explosive runes*) explodes, causing 5d8 lightning damage to everyone within 20 feet of the throne. Characters who make a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw take half damage. The glyph can be noticed before it's detonated with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

Damaging the throne also infuriates the band of **six lizardfolk** that are watching PCs from the shadows at the far end of the chamber. The lizardfolk immediately attack and will pursue characters if they try to retreat.

**(Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

The throne is a deadly mechanical **trap**. Anyone sitting on the throne takes 7d10 bludgeoning damage as the chair collapses into itself, folding and crushing the character. The character takes half damage with a successful DC 13 Dex saving throw. The throne then ejects the crushed victim onto the floor and magically resets.

As characters prepare to leave this chamber, an ear-numbing roar from the throat of an enormous dragon rumbles through the temple. This doesn't actually signify anything; it's just an effect magically programmed into the temple to occur once every few days. The characters have no way of knowing that, however.

## West Junction

Having already passed the first crossroad, characters shouldn't be puzzled by this second one. The crossroad forms a square 210 feet by 210 feet, and 300 feet across diagonally. Once characters figure out that they're at another four-way intersection, read the following text aloud.

You've come to a four-way intersection in the broad corridor. Straight ahead, the main corridor continues on, but the black stonework is replaced with blue stone. The air in that corridor seems somehow heavier than the air elsewhere. Corridors to the north and south are equally immense, but the northern corridor is lined with white stonework instead of black, and the air wafting from that direction seems chilled. The southern corridor is lined with red stone, and the air drifting from that direction is warm.

If characters turn north, jump to section "G. White Dragon Chamber." If they turn south, refer to section "F. Red Dragon Chamber." If they continue moving west, proceed to the next section below, "Rivals."

## Rivals

Four miles west of the second crossroad, characters encounter a quickly moving **group of rival explorers** coming up behind them. These newcomers are making a bit of noise, so they'll be noticed by characters with passive Perception scores of 15 or higher. Assuming they're not ambushed or attacked on sight, the strangers hail the player characters and ask for a parley. They are four experienced, well-equipped explorers: a wizard (mage), a cleric (priest), and two warriors (a knight and a veteran). Their names are listed with their stats, but you can give them any names you like, to suit your campaign, or even replace them with other NPCs the characters have met before if you prefer.

**(Sir Hennik [Knight]:** AC 18, 52 hp; +5 to hit x2, 2d6 + 3 slashing damage [greatsword]; 1/round as a reaction, the knight can increase its AC by 2 against a single melee attack; has tactical advantage on saving throws against fear; 1/round the knight can grant an ally within 30 ft. a bonus of 1d4 on an attack roll or saving throw)

**(Belintar the Bold [Mage]:** AC 12, 40 hp; +5 to hit, 1d4 + 2 piercing damage; spell attack +6, save DC 14; prepares the following spells: [at will] fire bolt, mage hand, prestidigitation; [1st level, x4] detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield; [2nd level, x3] misty step, suggestion; [3rd level, x3] counterspell, fireball, fly; [4th level, x3] greater invisibility, ice storm; [5th level, x1] cone of cold)

**(Sagrimor of Menok [Priest]:** AC 13, 27 hp; +2 to hit, 1d6 bludgeoning damage [mace]; spell attack +5, save DC 13; [at will] light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy; [1st level, x4] cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary; [2nd level, x3] lesser restoration, spiritual weapon; [3rd level, x2] dispel magic, spirit guardian)

**(Nardin Velox [Veteran]:** AC 17, 58 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d10 + 3 slashing damage [longsword] or +3 to hit, range 100 ft./400 ft., 1d10 piercing damage [heavy crossbow])

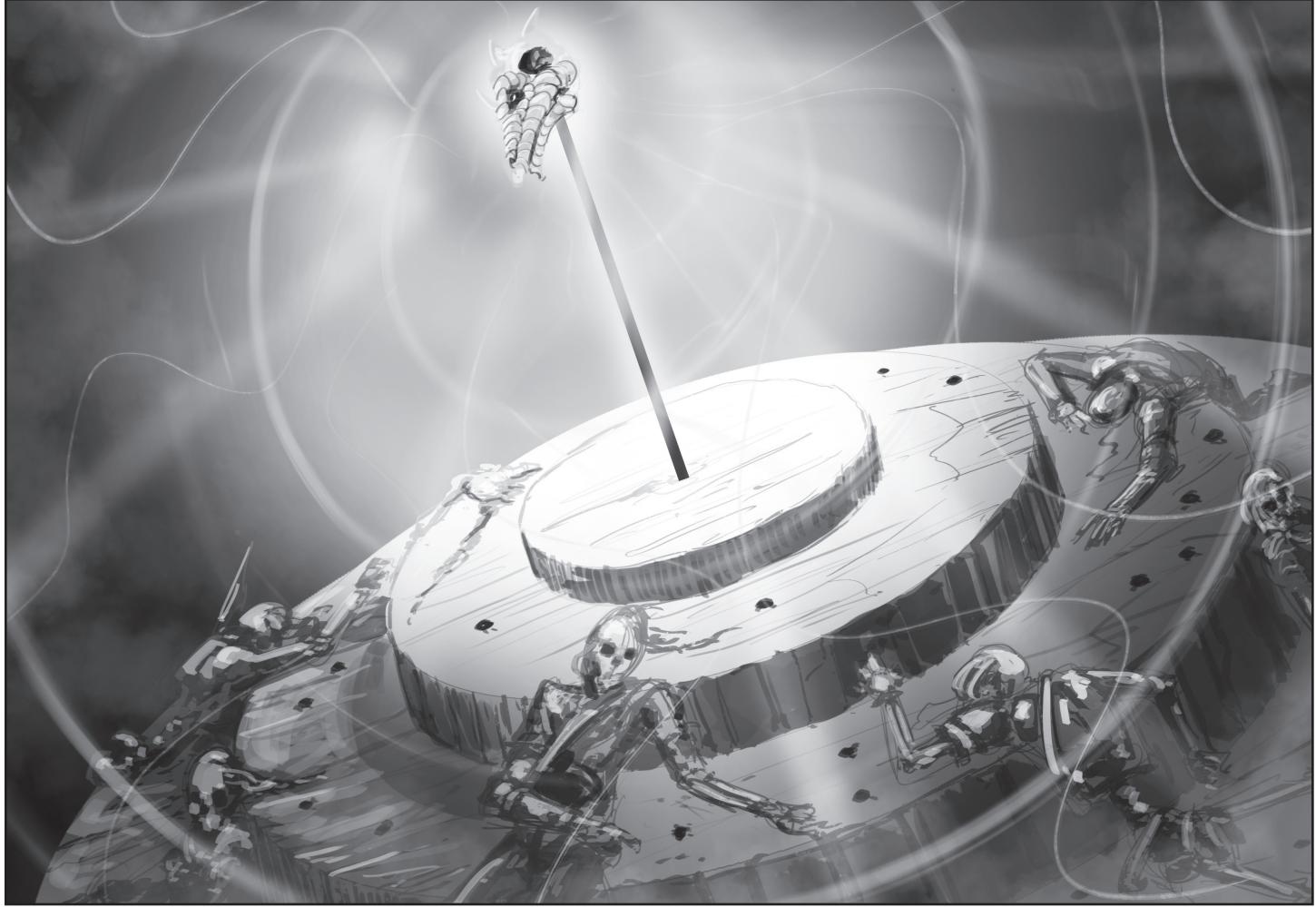
Sir Hennik (Charisma 15) does most of the talking for the strangers. They try hard to persuade the player characters that they've already explored this western corridor and found nothing of value at the end of it. Furthermore, according to the legends they've been told, the temple is visited by the ghosts of dragons when the moon is full—which it will be tonight. They intend to turn back and leave the temple, but having heard the PCs ahead of them, they wanted to deliver their warning about the ghostly dragons first.

Of course, the strangers are lying. They just want to prevent the player characters from finding whatever treasure lies at the end of this corridor before they do. If characters turn around and head back toward the temple mouth with these strangers, the NPCs will attack somewhere along the way. If characters don't buy this story and refuse to leave, the strangers attack right away. They fight until one of their number is slain; then the remaining three retreat into the darkness. They'll lurk nearby, however, looking for a chance to strike again when the characters are weakened or distracted.

## E. Pyramid of the Staff

The blue corridor runs west for 5 miles before opening into another circular chamber 210 yards in diameter.

## DREAD DRAGON TEMPLE



In the middle of this immense chamber is a platform with seven steps. Each of the steps glows a different color: from bottom to top, they glow red, green, white, blue, yellow, purple, and orange. Each step is two feet tall and six feet deep, and the top is 18 feet wide, making the whole pyramid 14 feet high and 90 feet across at the base. On the top level of the platform, a glowing staff with a headpiece carved to resemble a gold dragon rests on an ornate stand.

Ten long-dead bodies are sprawled at various places on the steps. Their equipment indicates that they were adventurers of a variety of classes. Although they're all in an advanced state of decay, the bodies don't appear burnt, frozen, or torn apart; they appear to have just fallen dead at random spots on the pyramid. Along with the bodies of the dead adventurers, the dried husks of hundreds of beetles as long as a human thumb cover the first step.

The beetles can be identified as swarming, flesh-eating beetles with a successful DC 10 Int (Nature) check.

The staff at the top of the platform is the *Staff of the Dragon*. It contains one charge per player character in the group. The first character to touch the staff automatically understands how to use it: each charge can transform one character into a young dragon of whatever type they choose, for as long as they want to use that shape.

A character climbing the pyramid takes 10 damage the first time he or she sets foot on each step. The steps do the following damage, in order: acid (red), cold (green), fire (white), lightning (blue), poison (yellow), fire (purple), and lightning (orange). If the characters fly above the steps or step only on the dead bodies, they can reach the top safely and probably

only take lightning damage from the top level of the platform.

The staff is resting loosely in a holder at the center of the top platform. It's not secured to the stand, so it could be lassoed from the floor and pulled down safely. Even levitation might do the trick, if characters think up a clever way to maneuver using ropes, gusts of wind, or some other method.

The bodies of the dead adventurers have useful equipment. The safest way to retrieve it is to lasso the bodies and pull them to the floor. Their gear includes a +1 shortsword, staff of striking with 11 charges, +2 shield, displacer cloak, potion of protection from dragon breath, a scroll of protection from lightning, and a +1 greatsword. Their backpacks also include all the usual, mundane things found in adventurer's kits such as candles, canteens, blankets, clothes, needle and thread, whetstones, hammers, and spikes. If characters pull bodies off the steps onto the floor, however, they are attacked by **four swarms of insects** (flesh-eating beetles) and **two carrion creepers** that were lurking in the darkness, hoping for an easy meal.

**(Carrion Creeper:** AC 13, 51 hp; +4 to hit, 2d4 + 2 piercing damage [bite] and +8 to hit, 1d4 + 2 poison damage and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or be poisoned and paralyzed for 1 minute [tentacles]; paralyzed creature repeats saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and both paralysis and poisoning end with a successful save)

**(Flesh-eating Beetles [Swarm of Insects]:** AC 12, 22 hp; +3 to hit, 4d4 piercing damage, or 2d4 piercing damage if the swarm has 11 or fewer hit points; the swarm can enter and remain in an enemy's space, and can only attack an enemy whose space it occupies)

## QUESTS OF DOOM: GIANTS & DRAGONS

# Red Corridor

The red stones of the corridor seem to reflect the unusual warmth of the area, and it grows warmer the farther you travel along the passage. Eventually, after traveling several miles, metal weapons are becoming uncomfortably hot to the touch, and metal armor is almost unbearable to wear. Then, as if the perpetual, choking darkness isn't bad enough, you see a wall of steam roiling at the edge of your light: steam so thick you can't see more than a few yards into it.

Hidden in the steam and enjoying the heat is a squad of **six lizardfolk** with halberds. The steam doesn't bother the lizardfolk; it makes them more aggressive. They use the obscurement provided by the steam to set up an ambush on the characters. They won't pursue if the characters retreat.

**(Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

If characters run from the battle, there's a good chance they'll get turned around in the steam and unintentionally "retreat" south toward Area F instead of back the way they came. Make a DC 12 Wis (Perception) check for each character. Those who succeed know which way is north and which is south. Those who fail got mixed up in the fighting and have the directions reversed. It's important that you roll these checks, not the players; otherwise, they'll know immediately that the people who rolled highest have the right direction. If characters have a reliable way of determining direction, such as a compass or arrows chalked on the walls behind them, they can avoid going in the wrong direction.

## F. Red Dragon Chamber

The steam seems to go on forever, making it hard to judge distance or whether the corridor curves. Just breathing is hard, let alone keeping track of where you are. But suddenly, the steam clears away to reveal a large chamber, hundreds of yards across and lit by flickering flames rising from a pool of lava that covers the entire area of the circular chamber.

At the center of the pool is a pedestal of some stone that's impervious to the heat. Atop the pedestal is a statue of a red dragon carved from red crystal. The statue is twenty feet long and almost as high. Its back is flattened, and on it is a pile of dully glowing white crystals.

It's a relief to be out of the blinding, choking steam, but the heat of this area is nearly unbearable.

Characters wearing armor are in a great deal of discomfort from the heat by the time they reach the lava chamber. Those in heavy armor take 6 fire damage per minute (1 per round) spent in or near this chamber. Those in medium armor take 3 fire damage per minute (1 per 2 rounds) spent near the lava, and characters in light armor or no armor take 2 fire damage per minute (1 per 3 rounds). Entering the lava or trying to walk on it causes instant death. Flying over the lava at any height causes 4 fire damage per round (heat is concentrated under the domed ceiling).

There are 33 white crystals on the back of the dragon. A character who possesses such a crystal automatically succeeds on one saving throw against white dragon breath, then the crystal turns dark and has no further effect.

When characters approach within 10 feet of the lava pool, **two fire elementals** rise from the lava. They don't attack unless attacked; they want to talk to the characters. The elementals tell a story of forced labor

keeping the lava hot in this pool. They want to go back to their home on the Elemental Plane of Fire. If characters take the ruby eyes out of the dragon statue and throw them into the lava, the spell binding the elementals will be broken and they'll be able to leave. The elementals offer four *potions of fire resistance* if the characters help them.

The rubies can be blasted out of the statue by 20 points of bludgeoning or force damage, if there's no concern about damaging them. They're large, spectacular gems, however, worth 600 gp each. Each one can be removed without damage by using a prying tool and making two successful DC 15 Dex (Sleight of Hand) checks. If the check result is 10 or less, the ruby is gouged and its value is halved. The elementals attack immediately if they realize characters intend to take the rubies with them and not destroy them, because destroying them in this lava pool is the only thing that will set the elementals free.

The elementals aren't interested in fighting for no reason. If characters attack them, the elementals simply sink back into the lava and the entire chamber becomes even hotter, inflicting ten times as much damage per minute as usual.

**(Fire Elemental:** AC 13, 102 hp; +6 to hit x2, 2d6 + 3 fire damage and a flammable object ignites, taking 1d10 fire damage at the start of its turn until an action is used to extinguish flames; enemies that hit the fire elemental with melee attacks from 5 feet away take 1d10 fire damage; can enter and remain in an enemy's space, causing 1d10 fire damage and igniting flammable objects as above)

## White Corridor

The white stones of the corridor would seem to represent the influence of a white dragon. The temperature in the corridor drops steadily as you move north, eventually reaching the freezing point, and below.

After several miles, the corridor opens into a large cavern over a hundred yards in diameter. At the center is a statue of a rearing white dragon at least thirty yards tall and long. A portion of its back is flattened into a platform; gems of many colors are heaped on it.

The extreme cold numbs your feet and hands.

While in the white dragon chamber, characters take 2 cold damage every minute. The extreme cold slows characters down to half speed while they're in the chamber and for ten minutes after they leave it.

The gems on the platform are all worthless glass. The real treasure of the chamber is the white dragon statue. It's a live **young white dragon**, frozen so it can't leave the chamber. In its current state, the dragon looks like a statue of ice, but characters who touch it, knock on it, attack it, peer into its eyes, or interact with it in other ways can attempt a DC 15 Int (Nature) or Wis (Animal Handling) check. Success indicates the character realizes this is a living creature, not a carving.

The magic keeping the dragon frozen is broken if the dragon is taken out of this chamber. Moving the dragon is easier than it sounds, thanks to the icy floor. It can be moved automatically by characters whose combined Strength modifiers are 8 or higher, or by someone who makes a successful DC 25 Str (Athletics) check. Even so, the process isn't quick; sliding the dragon out of the chamber takes 10 minutes of effort.

The creature begins thawing the instant it's out of the chamber, and within a minute, it is fully restored and willing to talk with the characters. Its name is Noustatoren, and it relates a long story detailing how it came to like humans and how, for centuries, it aided northern tribes. When Noustatoren helped the tribesmen kill a marauding black dragon, other dragons banded together and cursed it to spend eternity frozen in this temple.

Noustatoren is so grateful for its freedom that it gives each character who helped free it a ring made of ice. If the wearer whispers a request for

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aid to the ring, the dragon will hear it, no matter where it is, and will come as quickly as it can. It will do this once for each character with a ring. It won't stick around in the temple, though, because it fears the dragons that cursed it might find it here and imprison it all over again. The tunnels are big enough that the dragon can get out of the temple quickly.

**(Young White Dragon:** AC 17, 133 hp; +7 to hit, 2d10 + 4 piercing damage plus 1d8 cold damage [bite] and +7 to hit x2, 2d6 + 4 slashing damage [claws]; 30-ft. cone, 10d8 cold damage [cold breath, recharge 5, 6], or half damage from cold breath with successful DC 15 Con saving throw)

## Green Corridor

The corridor grows warmer and more humid the farther you travel. It never becomes too hot, but the humidity eventually becomes so thick that your clothing and the padding in your armor are drenched in sweat.

After a few miles, everyone must make a successful DC 12 Con saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion. This exhaustion can be removed by taking a short rest in a dry area (the main corridor will suffice) and getting into dry clothing, but resting in the blue corridor won't help.

## H-1. Lizardfolk Nests

A few miles into the tunnel, the corridor suddenly widens into a vast chamber. There are sconces on the walls holding flickering torches, and the light lets you see that the hall is circular and about 200 yards in diameter. The corridor continues southward from the opposite side.

Between you and the exit, however, are scattered perhaps a hundred or more shapes that resemble heaps of mud and reeds. The room reeks like a swamp.

The mounds are lizardfolk nests. Each nest is little more than a heap of mud and rotting swamp grass about 10 feet in diameter, crudely shaped into a shallow bowl. Fewer than half have full or partial roofs of woven reeds.

The nests near the entrance to the chamber are empty, but by the time characters move 30 yards into the chamber, they encounter nests with lizardfolk sleeping in them. It's impossible to tell how many of the nests contain lizardfolk without checking each nest.

These lizardfolk stay asleep if there's no commotion in the area. Any loud noise wakes **20 lizardfolk** who immediately throw javelins at the intruders, then charge. There is no retreating for these lizardfolk. They are serious temple guards filled with the importance of their duty. If characters run, the lizardfolk follow them until the intruders have been killed or



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chased out of the temple.

Each of these reptilian warriors wears a large bandoleer bearing a silver disc the size of a saucer on its chest. The silver ornament carries an image of the dragon temple in the mountains. The workmanship is crude and the silver is low-grade, so each disc is worth just 10 sp but weighs as much as 100 sp.

**Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

### H-2. Lizardfolk Pool

Several hundred yards down the corridor past the lizardfolk nests, the corridor widens again to reveal a pool of water that's several hundred yards in diameter. The water is murky, and this chamber also smells like a swamp. The pool doesn't fill the chamber; there's a "dry" stone walkway between 15 and 25 feet wide all the way around the chamber's circumference. The corridor continues on through an archway at the far side of the chamber.

Glowing shapes swim in the water. When one of them swims close, you see that it's not a single creature but a school of fish. Each one glows faintly, but together, they cast a fair amount of light. They seem agitated.

**Fifteen lizardfolk** are hiding under the murky water. The creatures are waiting for the characters to proceed one way or the other around the pool. They are what is agitating the fish, since they're the chief predators in this pool. When characters advance 100 yards into the chamber (about a third of the way to the far corridor), the lizardfolk rise far enough out of the water to throw their javelins. Each has three in hand, but they have plenty more stashed in the water; it takes them one round to swim down and grab three more and another round to return to the surface. The lizardfolk don't follow the characters or even get out of the water, but they do roar out a warning that echoes faintly down the corridors in both directions.

**Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

At the southern end of the chamber are several crudely-made stone benches and weapon racks. Fifteen halberds of excellent construction are leaning on the rack.

### H-3. Lizardfolk Dining Area

After walking another mile, another 200-yard chamber opens in the corridor. It must be lit magically, because you don't see any source for the soft glow that fills the area. Near the far side, the carcasses of ten large crocodiles have been gutted and hung on meat hooks. Square stone blocks must serve as butchers' tables, because they're covered in blood. Many larger, rectangular stone tables, also covered in dried blood, must be where the lizardfolk consume their raw food.

At the far left side of the chamber, **four lizardfolk** who heard the characters approaching are hiding behind stone tables. They intend to wait until the characters have nearly passed through the chamber, then toss javelins into the intruders' backs. They follow the group and keep attacking if the characters don't stay and fight.

**Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

### H-4. Lizard King's Chambers

Half-a-mile down the corridor, you discover two doors set in the wall. The doors are made of boiled and cured leather, and appear quite sturdy.

The door on the left opens into a large chamber where a bigger-than-average lizardfolk (a **lizard king**) is using a halberd to chop some type of meat on a large chopping block while **five lizardfolk** watch. The chamber contains a nest and a stylized statue of a green dragon near the back wall. Characters don't have time to see any more before the lizard king and his lizardfolk guards raise their halberds and charge! All six fight to the death and pursue if characters try to flee.

On and around the green dragon statue at the back of the chamber are five holy relics made of gold and encrusted in jewels. Each item is worth 3,000 gold pieces. The items are a large bowl, a chalice, a small sphere of silver with embedded gems, a bejeweled gold box, and a small gold bell with a tiny hammer attached by a fine chain.

The door on the right opens into a large chamber with the skulls of many intelligent races mounted on the walls. The chamber has a nest at its center, a stylized dragon statue at the back, and a large chest near the statue. There is nothing living in the area. This is the chamber of the lizardfolk shaman who is the real leader of these creatures. The shaman is currently away from the temple, gathering herbs and other supplies in a nearby swamp.

The leather-bound bound chest is locked and trapped. The lock is quite simple; it can be opened with a set of lock picks and a successful DC 10 Dex check. The trap is trickier; it can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check, but the only way to prevent it from going off is to unlock the chest with the proper key (which is on the lizardfolk shaman's belt, many miles away in a swamp) or to score 25 or higher on the Dex check to unlock the chest. A character who spots the trap can tell that, lacking the proper key, opening the chest without setting off the trap will be nearly impossible.

If the trap is triggered, it fills the chamber with poison gas identical to a young green dragon's breath weapon (12d6 poison damage, or half damage with a successful DC 14 Con saving throw).

The chest contains the lizardfolk shaman's "treasure," but most of it has little value to the characters other than three *potions of cure wounds*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, and a *potion of meld into stone*.

The chest also has a secret compartment that can be spotted with a successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) check, but only if the chest is pulled away from the wall before being examined (the compartment is a drawer at the back of the chest). Inside the secret drawer is a bronze holy symbol representing a bronze dragon; the shaman captured this item from a slain cleric. Once per day, a cleric equipped with this holy symbol can reroll one saving throw against dragon breath. Emeralds set into the dragon's eyes are worth 5,000 gp, but the holy symbol's magic is destroyed if they're removed.

**Lizard King:** AC 15, 78 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d8 + 3 piercing damage [trident]; can also throw trident with range 20 ft./60 ft.; 1/turn, the lizard king can inflict an extra 3d6 damage with its trident and gain an equal number of temporary hit points)

**Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

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# H-5. Lizardfolk Hall of Honor

Another humid, sweat-drenched mile of hiking brings you to another chamber. This one is like the others you've seen, but it's lined with mounted heads and bodies of dangerous foes the lizardfolk have fought in and around the dragon temple. There are more than 100 trophies here, with all intelligent races represented and a few monsters, including three hill giants and a tyrannosaurus rex. Against the back wall stands a fifteen-foot-tall stone statue of a lizard man with a brass club in his hand.

There's nothing dangerous about the mounted and stuffed creatures in the chamber. The danger is the stone golem in the form of a gigantic lizardfolk. If characters do anything here other than proceed directly to the exit at the far end, the golem steps off of its pedestal and attacks.

There is little of value in the hall, except for a pair of *boots of elvenkind* worn by a mounted drow.

**(Stone Golem:** AC 17, 178 hp; +10 to hit x2, 3d8 + 6 bludgeoning damage [slam]; each target the golem can see must make a successful DC 17 Wis saving throw or be slowed for 1 minute; a slowed target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a successful save; the golem has tactical advantage on saving throws against magic and no magic or power can alter its shape)

## H. Blue Dragon Chamber

At last, the corridor opens into a huge circular area easily two hundred yards in diameter. At the center of the chamber is a massive statue with ten dragon heads, each sculpted in a different color of stone: gold, silver, brass, bronze, copper, white, black, green, red, and blue. The statue rises fifty feet above the floor, and the body must be 100 feet long.

The dampness in this area is oppressive. With each breath, it feels as if you're inhaling as much water as air. The temperature is hot, too; not painfully so, but it's uncomfortable. The air is noticeably warmer near the statue than at the edges of the chamber.

Speaking of the edges of the chamber, that's where you see the eggs. Hundreds of them, probably, in all shapes, colors, and sizes. Every type of dragon must be represented here, many times, in this mass of eggs.

If the characters break or take any eggs, the dragon head of the appropriate color animates, swivels toward them, and blasts out the breath weapon of an adult dragon of that color. If characters attack the statue, all the heads animate and attack with breath weapons (of young dragons) in turn. To determine which head attacks each round, roll 1d10.

The statue is immune to all effects and damage except clerical spells and attacks by clerics. Magic weapons in the hands of other types of characters do only as much damage as their magic bonus: a +1 sword, for example, does 1 point of damage per attack. The statue is destroyed by 500 points of damage overall; 50 points done to a particular dragon head destroys that head. Only the heads of the statue move; it can't follow characters who retreat from the area, but it remembers who interfered with the eggs for 24 hours. All damage done to the statue heals after 24 hours.

If the characters don't touch the eggs or the statue and they aren't carrying any glowing crystals taken from other statues, they hear a loud command of "Wait!" before they leave the chamber. The gold dragon head lowers to their level and opens its mouth. Inside is a single, fist-sized

diamond worth 25,000 gp. Only one such reward is handed out by the statue per decade.

1d10	Color	Breath Wpn	Damage	Save
1	Black	30-ft. line	11d8 acid damage	DC 14 Dex
2	Blue	60-ft. line	10d10 lightning damage	DC 16 Dex
3	Green	30-ft. cone	12d6 acid damage	DC 14 Con
4	Red	30-ft. cone	16d6 fire damage	DC 17 Dex
5	White	30-ft. cone	10d8 cold damage	DC 15 Con
6	Brass	30-ft. cone	Unconsciousness (5 mins)	DC 14 Con
7	Bronze	60-ft. cone	10d10 lightning damage	DC 15 Dex
8	Copper	30-ft. cone	Slowed	DC 14 Con
9	Gold	30-ft. cone	Weakened (1 min)	DC 17 Str
10	Silver	30-ft. cone	Paralysis (1 min)	DC 17 Con

## Final Trial

If characters leave the temple with the *Staff of the Dragon* in their possession, when they step into the open outside the temple, it can be nighttime or daytime, your choice. (They may have marched as much as 60 miles, so they've been inside for a long time). The first thing they see is an ancient blue dragon soaring toward them. It's still several miles away, so they have a few minutes to prepare for battle, but it's apparent that the dragon is headed straight for the temple and has seen them.

Emphasize that this is an **ancient blue dragon**. As themselves, the characters have little chance to defeat it. As dragons, however . . .

The *Staff of the Dragon* is their only hope. With its power, they can transform into adult dragons of any color and engage in dragon-to-dragon battle with the ancient blue monster bearing down on them. That's the intended climax for this adventure. Even if characters escape from this immediate danger somehow—by teleporting away to a sanctum, for example—this blue dragon will pursue them to the ends of the earth to recover the staff.

Any protective magic items the characters are wearing when they transform into dragons, still lend their protections to the characters. Items that need to be used, however, such as wands, implements, or weapons, meld into the dragon body and can't be used. Characters heal when they transform, so they begin the fight with a dragon's full hit points. Transformed characters can't cast spells or use other class abilities; they are young dragons in every way. Characters stay in their dragon form for up to a week, or they can transform back to their normal form any time they wish. Sadly, the change back is permanent.

Once it's used, the *Staff of the Dragon* is spent. The gold and gems adorning it make the staff worth 20,000 gp. Plenty of arcane spellcasters would kill (or worse) to get their hands on it, even with its magic exhausted, and most dragons fly into a rage if they see it in the hands of mortals.

**(Ancient Blue Dragon:** AC 22, 481 hp; the dragon uses its breath weapon once, OR uses frightful presence plus one bite and two claw attacks; every creature within 120 ft. must make a successful DC 20 Wis saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute [frightful presence];

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+16 to hit, 2d10 + 9 piercing damage plus 2d10 lightning damage [bite]; +16 to hit x2, 2d6 + 9 slashing damage [claw]; 16d10 lightning damage in a 120-ft. line, or half damage with a successful DC 23 Dex save [lightning breath, recharge 5, 6]; can use 3 legendary actions [tail or wing attacks] after other creature's turns, 1/turn; +16 to hit, 2d8 + 9 bludgeoning damage [tail]; all creatures within 15 ft. take 2d6 + 9 bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone, or half damage with a successful DC 24 Dex saving throw [wing attack, costs 2 actions])

# Dragon Dreams

Early during your rest, everyone awakens to the sounds of dragons roaring in rage. The sounds are clearly coming from many dragons of many different types. In this thick darkness, huge monsters could be just a few hundred yards away and still unseen.

Suddenly a ghostly form appears near your camp. It's a ghostly dragon, and it doesn't look pleased about your presence. "Why have you come here?" the ghost roars, and you can almost feel its breath.

In this highly magical temple, the air is filled with the ghosts of slain dragons. Luckily for the characters, all these dragons have agendas of their own. If spoken to reasonably, ghostly dragons reveal what they want from the party. The characters aren't attacked if they agree to help the ghost so the creature can escape from the temple and move on to the next stage of its existence. If characters attack a ghostly dragon, it attacks with its breath weapon (as an adult dragon), then fades away, but it or others will return. Affected characters take only half damage from ghostly dragon breath, or no damage with a successful saving throw.

All of the dragons start out furious with the party. Each one threatens to kill the characters for the terrible things done to the dragon while it lived. In actuality, all these dragons really want is for someone to listen to their story. If characters talk to the ghost creature at all, they can calm it down and hear the story of the dragon.

Roll 1d12 to determine what type of ghostly dragon has appeared and what it has to say.

**1: Gold Dragon Story.** Greedy dwarves killed the gold dragon. If there is a dwarf in the party, the dragon will attack at the least provocation. A powerful, dragon-killing longsword was stolen from its hoard by the dwarves and taken to their fortress in a nearby mountain. The dragon wants the characters to go to the dwarves and recover the sword by any means. If they bring it back to the temple and present it to any of the lizardfolk guards, the dragon can help them secure the *Staff of the Dragon* located in another part of the temple. Naturally, the dwarves don't want to give up the magic sword. They will sell it, however, if enough gold or riches are offered. If the sword is brought to the temple, the ghostly gold dragon should prove extremely helpful to the party.

**2: Silver Dragon Story.** The silver dragon died under the swords and arrows of orcs. If there is a half-orc or orc in the party, the dragon attacks at the least provocation. The dragon tells a story of waves of orcs attacking its lair, slaying all of the dragon's guardian minions, and taking over the lair as their own. The silver dragon wants the characters to go to that lair, nine days away through the mountains, and wipe out the orcs. Afterward, they can help themselves to its treasure, all except a 2-foot-high statue of a silver dragon wrought from holy silver. The statue belongs here in the dragon temple. The dragon's old lair is overrun with orcs, ogres, and ogres. If the silver dragon statue is brought to the temple, the ghostly silver dragon proves very helpful to the characters.

**3: Bronze Dragon Story.** The bronze dragon died in a cave-in while excavating part of its lair. The dragon wants its skeletal head brought to this temple. The skeleton is 90 miles away in the mountain range. The

ghostly bronze dragon will actually go with the party and help them find its dead body. If the group goes on this quest immediately, the ghost also leads them to a suit of plate armor hidden in its lair that gives its wearer immunity to lightning damage.

**4: Copper Dragon Story.** The copper dragon was killed by a band of stone giants in a faraway land. It helps the characters claim the dragon staff if they free the two fire elementals trapped in the lava pool in the Red Corridor. If the group doesn't agree to this, then this dragon appears in the pyramid chamber when they try to take the *Staff of the Dragon* and attacks with its illusory breath.

**5: White Dragon Story.** The white dragon felled by the shafts of eleven arrows. If there are elves among the characters, the temperature in the area plunges to below zero. Characters won't be able to rest here at all unless they agree to the ghost's terms or drive it away. The white dragon wants the party to go to Area G and free the white dragon trapped in the cave. It doesn't know how, exactly; it only knows that the curse will be broken if the statue is removed from the chamber. The ghostly white dragon vanishes when characters agree to its quest.

**6: Black Dragon Story.** The black dragon was killed in its swamp home by lizardfolk. If the characters will hunt down and kill the lizard king and at least 20 of his minions, the ghost promises to reward them with a +2 weapon or implement (your choice—offer whatever is most likely to get a positive response from the characters). This evil creature is lying, however; it never reappears or gives them anything, no matter how many lizardfolk they kill.

**7: Green Dragon Story.** A goblin war band surprised this dragon in its lair and overpowered it. It now hates goblins and wants revenge. It offers to lead the party to its den in a forest a month's travel away. There they can find an ancient bow manufactured by elvish wizards, which does +10 damage to giants. There is also a locked case containing 11 emeralds worth 10,000 gp. The only catch is that they must first wipe out the entire tribe of goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears living in the lair.

**8: Red Dragon Story.** The red dragon died under the claws of a blue dragon centuries ago—the same blue dragon living nearby in the mountains. If characters tell it truthfully why they are here, the dragon disappears in a burst of flame, then reappears a short time later and drops the *Staff of the Dragon* at their feet. If anyone has taken anything else from the temple, however, the staff is ghostly and impossible to pick up until everything is returned to where it came from; then and only then can they pick up the staff. All it asks is that they kill the blue dragon and place its head on a high rock spire, where it can be seen for miles.

**9: Blue Dragon Story.** The ghostly blue dragon knows that if the party claims the *Staff of the Dragon*, they'll wind up using it to fight another blue dragon. It isn't happy about this, and it won't consider helping. Instead, the ghost rages at the characters, telling them never should have dared to enter this temple created for only dragons. No one can rest, and by the time the dragon fades away, it has cursed everyone; the curse has the same effect as being poisoned, and it's permanent until removed by magic.

**10: Shadow Dragon Story.** The shadow dragon is unnaturally small, only about the size of a horse. It circles the characters' camp endlessly while roaring and shouting dire threats. Occasionally it swoops through the camp; it can't hurt anyone physically, but it knocks over weapons and scatters light gear into the darkness with buffets from its wings. Characters can hear the dragon's story only if they patiently work at calming it down. There aren't many shadow dragons in the world, but there are more in the Shadowfell. This one was summoned to the Material Plane by a witch who enslaved it. The shadow dragon served the enchantress for almost a century before finally escaping from her control. Unfortunately, the witch pursued it on a roc. She caught up to the young dragon a month later and slew it out of spite. The ghostly dragon wants to make a deal. Several hundred miles away is the home of the witch and her pet roc that killed it. If the characters destroy them, the shadow dragon can make sure lizardfolk guards don't see the characters unless the characters attack first. If characters don't accept this deal, the ghost dragon fetches a group of six lizardfolk to attack a few hours later and interrupt the characters' rest.

**(Lizardfolk:** AC 14, 22 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d10 + 2 slashing damage [halberd] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage, [javelin])

## DREAD DRAGON TEMPLE

**11: Brass Dragon Story.** The brass ghost dragon was slain by gnomes. If there is a gnome in the party, the ghost demands an apology. If it gets one, it tells its story; otherwise, it attacks. The dragon tells of the gnomes offering it a huge treasure if the dragon would help the gnomes drive off three marauding remorhazes. The dragon and the gnomes were victorious in the first two battles and were on the verge of winning the third. As the dragon struck the killing blow against the remorhaz, the gnomes revealed their treachery. They attacked the weakened dragon and killed it so they wouldn't have to pay. The ghost dragon wants the characters to go to the lair of the gnomes and demand the treasure the dragon earned. The lair is only a few days away. If they return with the treasure, the dragon leads them to the *Staff of the Dragon* and advises them on how to obtain it. If the party refuses to help, the ghost attacks.

**12. Weak Ghost Dragon.** The party hears a dull roar and the tunnel shakes with the sound of an approaching creature. In the distance is a dimly glowing form coming at the party. A huge form looms out of the darkness, poised to attack. But the long-dead dragon is too weak from passing ages to affect anything on the Material Plane. It fades as it charges through the campsite, and vanishes without interacting with the party.

# Eycanthropes & Elementals

# The Darkening of Namjan Forest

By Michael Curtis

*The Darkening of Namjan Forest* is an adventure designed for the Fifth Edition of the original fantasy roleplaying game. It's intended for use by six to eight 4th-level characters. In the course of the adventure, the party explores Namjan Forest, a woodland threatened by the creeping advance of the Plane of Shadow made manifest through the presence of a rare shadow elemental. This creature, an embodiment of the gloomy substance that underlies the Plane of Shadow, escaped from a long imprisonment in an ancient artifact known as the Darkling Lanthorn. The party must investigate the phenomenon affecting Namjan Forest, trace the Darkening back to its source, and destroy the agent seeking to infect the material plane with shadow's touch.

The adventure is assumed to occur in a temperate forest region bordered by hills on the edge of a small duchy. The GM can alter the adventure to better fit his campaign world if necessary.

## Background

Namjan Forest is a modest-sized woodland in the fork between two chains of hills along the verge of civilization. The Namjan is an old wood but not a pristine one. Residents of the realm have long felled its trees, hunted its wildlife, and made charcoal within its borders. They've even gone so far as to live within the forest; a small village stands on the shore of the Fehlween River, the large waterway flowing through the Namjan. In short, Namjan Forest seemed to harbor few mysteries. This impression, however, was horribly wrong.

Eons ago, when the hills were higher and the Fehlween wilder, the land now filled by the woodland was held by a sorcerer-warlord named Dyraxl



## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

Uhl-Kal-Totten. Uhl-Kal-Totten built his fortress on an easily-defendable rise of land near the center of the hill-bordered land. From this keep, the sorcerer-warlord ruled over the farms and small villages that lay under his gaze and conducted arcane experiments to increase his magical prowess. Uhl-Kal-Totten, like many a man who carved his way to despotism, desired to expand his holdings, dreaming of an empire that spanned from distant shore to far-flung shore. Like many a would-be tyrant, Uhl-Kal-Totten's dreams never came to fruition.

The circumstances that lead to Uhl-Kal-Totten's fall are long forgotten. The few scraps of lore that survived from that distant time only record that the sorcerer-warlord's enemies breached the walls of his fortress with cataclysmic magic. Uhl-Kal-Totten fought to the last, ultimately calling down powerful sorceries onto his own head to destroy himself, his keep, and the multitude of invaders who thirsted for his blood. When the smoke cleared and the dust settled, all that remained of the warlord and his fortress were scorched bones and broken stones. His enemies returned to their homelands, and the dreams and accomplishments of Uhl-Kal-Totten were forgotten.

As the centuries rolled along, the land that had been tamed under Uhl-Kal-Totten's rules grew wild once more. Seedlings became mighty trees, the high hills wore down like old teeth, and the Fehlween grew slow and tired. Where once were tilled fields and a towering keep, now only old trees and shallow gullies remained. But this placid landscape hid a dark secret.

Not all of Uhl-Kal-Totten's dreams died in the conflagration. When his fortress fell, the rubble buried his deepest cellars and undercrofts beneath a mountain of blasted debris. Deep underground, neglected magic slumbered, long forgotten by history, guarding relics the sorcerer-warlord planned on tapping to achieve his dreams of empire. Among those forgotten objects was the Darkling Lanthorn, a lamp that threw not light, but gloom, and which contained a titanic elemental drawn from the Plane of Shadow.

The Darkling Lanthorn might have lain in quietude forever had it not been for a tree. A mighty oak sprang up in the nearly-vanished ruins above the forgotten foundation of what was once Uhl-Kal-Totten's keep. As the tree grew, its roots dug deep, burrowing through the ground to seek out nutrients and support the tremendous trunk and branches that towered over the land. One of these probing roots wound its way into one of Uhl-Kal-Totten's cellars and—perhaps by chance, or perhaps guided by supernatural powers—curled about the handle of the Darkling Lanthorn.

At the touch of life, the Darkling Lanthorn's slumbering occupant awoke. The devastation that destroyed the fortress above had long since weakened the protective barriers and wards placed around the Lanthorn, so that the shadow elemental in the lamp could easily shake off the feeble defenses that remained. With nothing left to contain it, the Darkling Lanthorn's power climbed out of its moldering prison and snaked its way into the oak above.

The once-mighty tree is now ground zero for an infectious gloom spreading throughout Namjan Forest, a plague known as The Darkening. Tendrils of darkness and wisps of misty gloom flow outward from the tree, staining everything they brush against with the touch of shadow. The Fehlween's water have turned ebony and the animals that once frolicked within the woods have changed. Hunters and loggers have disappeared in the unnaturally dark forest, and those who know those woods speak of a relentless, ever-hungry gloom intent on plunging the entire wood—and perhaps even the lands beyond it—into eternal shadow.

The power within the Darkling Lanthorn is just beginning to grow. Unless someone can root out the source of this tangible darkness, the fate of those living outside the Namjan will soon hang in the balance. It is up to a band of intrepid adventurers to find the heart of darkness before it is too late.

## Starting the Adventure

First alerted to the threat by the survivors of the Darkening of Stillwater (see **Namjan Forest, Area 4**), the local Duke sent a company of soldiers into the Forest to investigate the matter. When these well-armed veterans,

led by the ranger Egrihl, failed to return, His Grace offered a reward of 2,500 gp and the promise of a noble claim on the Namjan to whoever could discern the origin of the gloomy menace and put an end to it before it spreads across the duchy. Hopefully, an offer of that magnitude is enough to draw the player characters' attention and motivate them to finding and stopping the insidious taint that afflicts Namjan Forest.

If the adventurers are renowned adventurers, an agent of the Duke can seek them out and extend His Grace's offer to them directly. The agent can provide the information below and, if characters make a successful DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check, arrange an audience with the Duke to further elaborate on the offer.

## Gathering Information

A wise party will seek out further information about Namjan Forest and the mysterious events occurring within before beginning their investigation. Characters can investigate by questioning occupants of any nearby settlement or through the Duke or his agents. The following information can be gleaned.

1. The shadowy infestation was first noticed about a week ago, when the Fehlween turned dark. The river's discoloration was originally thought to be sediment washing down from the hills, but the water soon had strange effects on animals and people who drank it.

2. In addition to the darkened water of the Fehlween, the forest itself has grown dim. Shadows cling to branches like vines and pool in thickets, exuding an aura of menace. The sound of animal noise has diminished, and even the air has grown heavy and still, as if tainted by an invisible weight.

3. According to refugees fleeing the forest, this encroaching darkness spreads like a sickness, infecting those exposed to its touch for more than a few days. The creeping shadow drains vitality from living creatures. Those touched by the gloom either vanish utterly, fading away as if ghosts, or become transformed by the darkness. Transformed creatures become a dusky ash in color and manifest unnatural powers. Their minds become evil and they revel in violence.

4. Several areas in Namjan Forest are of special interest. There are two permanent settlements, Stillwater and Thistlehill; a low, stone-covered hill known as the Tumbles; a cave called the Gullet; and the ruins of an old watchtower of amazing age.

5. Stillwater is a human hamlet located on the western shore of the Fehlween River deep in the Forest. According to refugees, it has been overwhelmed by the Darkening. The fate of its inhabitants is unknown.

6. Thistlehill is a small gnomic community situated near the western edge of the Forest. The gnomes mine a rich quartz vein and trade the shining stones at Stillwater. No one knows if Thistlehill has been touched by the darkening or if the gnome miners are even aware of the threat.

7. The Gullet is a small cave located near the middle of the Forest. It is said to be home to various monsters. Legends conflict, and trolls, orcs, demons, and even a dragon have all been said to live within it.

8. The riverside hamlet of Stillwater is perhaps the best place for the party to begin their exploration of the Namjan. The village can be reached by paddling up the Fehlween River or by following a horse trail that runs along the east (left) bank of the River.

## The Darkening

Shadow's taint is slowly expanding across the forest, from its epicenter at the Darkling Oak (see "Namjan Forest, Area 12"). The forest map shows what portion of the woodland is already under shadow's sway and what has yet to succumb to the creeping gloom. Adventurers can rest in a hex untouched by shadow, allowing them to recover and perhaps shake off shadow's touch (see "The Danger of Shadow Inflection" below).

Once the adventure begins, the GM rolls 1d4 + 1 at the start of each day. The result is the number of hexes on the forest map that shadow spreads to. The GM determines which hexes are affected and marks them to chart shadow's progress. The GM can choose the afflicted hexes randomly

## THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

### Random Encounters

Characters are subject to random encounters while traveling through the Namjan and on the Fehlween River. There is a 20% chance of an encounter occurring at select intervals, depending on whether the party is in the woods or on the river. The GM checks for random encounters three times a day in the Forest: once in late morning, once in mid-afternoon, and once in the evening. If the party is traveling by river, a random encounter check is made every hour while on the water and once during the night. Use the following two tables to determine the type of random encounter, if one occurs.

#### Namjan Forest Random Encounters

1D8	Encounter
1	Encroaching shadow (see below)
2	1d3 Shadow-touched elk (see "Namjan Forest, Area 9")
3	1d3 Grimseems (see "Namjan Forest, Area 6")
4	1 Shadow-touched owlbear (see "Namjan Forest, Area 10")
5	1 Shadow-touched wolf (see below)
6	1 Shadow king (see "New Monsters")
7-8	1d4 Shadows

#### Fehlween River Random Encounters

1D6	Encounter
1	Encroaching shadow (see below)
2	1 Shadow king (see "New Monsters")
3	1d3 Shadow-touched alligator gar (see "Namjan Forest, Area 3")
4	1d3 Grimseems (see "Namjan Forest, Area 6")
5-6	1d4 Shadows

#### Random Encounter Notes

**Shadow-touched Creatures:** Animals and monsters that succumb to the Darkening gain frightening new powers. The GM should refer to the "New Monsters" appendix for details on converting a typical creature to a shadow-touched monster.

**Encroaching Shadow:** A long, thin finger of shadow creeps out to wrap itself around a random character. Treat the tendril as having a Stealth check result of 15. Any creature with a passive Perception of 15 or more, or who is specifically keeping an eye out for trouble and makes a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check, notices the creeping shadow before it strikes. The targeted character must make a successful DC 13 Dex saving throw to avoid being touched by the shadow tendril. If the tendril was noticed by the character or he was warned by an ally who detected the tendril's approach, he makes the saving throw as normal. If unseen, the saving throw is at tactical disadvantage. On a failed saving throw, the finger latches onto the adventurer, siphoning his energy (represented by the character gaining one exhaustion level).

The tendril continues to drain the hero on subsequent rounds, requiring the character to make a successful DC 12 Con saving throw or gain another exhaustion level. The affected character or his allies can cut the tendril with silver or magical weapons (AC 10, 5 hp) or can break free by making a successful DC 15 Str check. Once broken or cut, the tendril dissipates into sooty mist.

by whatever means she desires, or pick areas that are most dramatically appropriate and that will have maximum dramatic impact among players (the party awakening to discover shadow has surrounded them during the night and they must venture through affected territory to escape, for example).

If shadow ever claims the entire Namjan Forest, its grip become absolute. Even the destruction of the Darkling Lanthorn and its elemental defender is insufficient to break shadow's hold on the land, and further troubles are bound to affect the region (see "Concluding the Adventure" for further details and ideas).

### The Danger of Shadow Infection

The influence of the Darkling Lanthorn pervades Namjan Forest, insinuating itself into every living creature within the forest's borders. The heroes are subject to this infection as they explore the tainted woodlands and, should they fail to root out the source of the corruption quickly, may succumb to its effects.

Each day (or portion thereof) a character is within the boundary of the forest, he must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or become drained of vitality. This drain manifests as one level of exhaustion. Exhaustion gained through exposure to the Darkening cannot be relieved by taking a long rest while inside any portion of Namjan Forest that is under shadow's hold. A character suffering from vitality loss because of the Darkening can be cured only by resting in an unaffected area, regardless whether that area is inside or outside the forest. A *greater restoration* spell removes the exhaustion normally.

Characters directly exposed to the spreading gloom also lose vitality. A hero drinking the tainted water of the Fehlween River or eating the flesh of a shadow-infected creature must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw or immediately gain one exhaustion level.

A creature who acquires six exhaustion levels from exposure to the Darkening does not die, but is instead completely overcome by shadow. The creature either fades away to the Plane of Shadow (75% chance) or becomes shadow-touched (25% chance). In either event, the character becomes an NPC no longer under the player's control.

## Namjan Forest

Namjan Forest is predominately first- and second-growth trees of maple, oak, spruce, and pine. The forest floor is covered by a thick layer of rich, dark loam, which supports small plants and shrubs, as well as mushrooms, mosses, and similar low flora. Deadfalls are common away from the trails that snake through the woods; close to these paths, fallen limbs and dead trees have been cleared for firewood and charcoal-making.

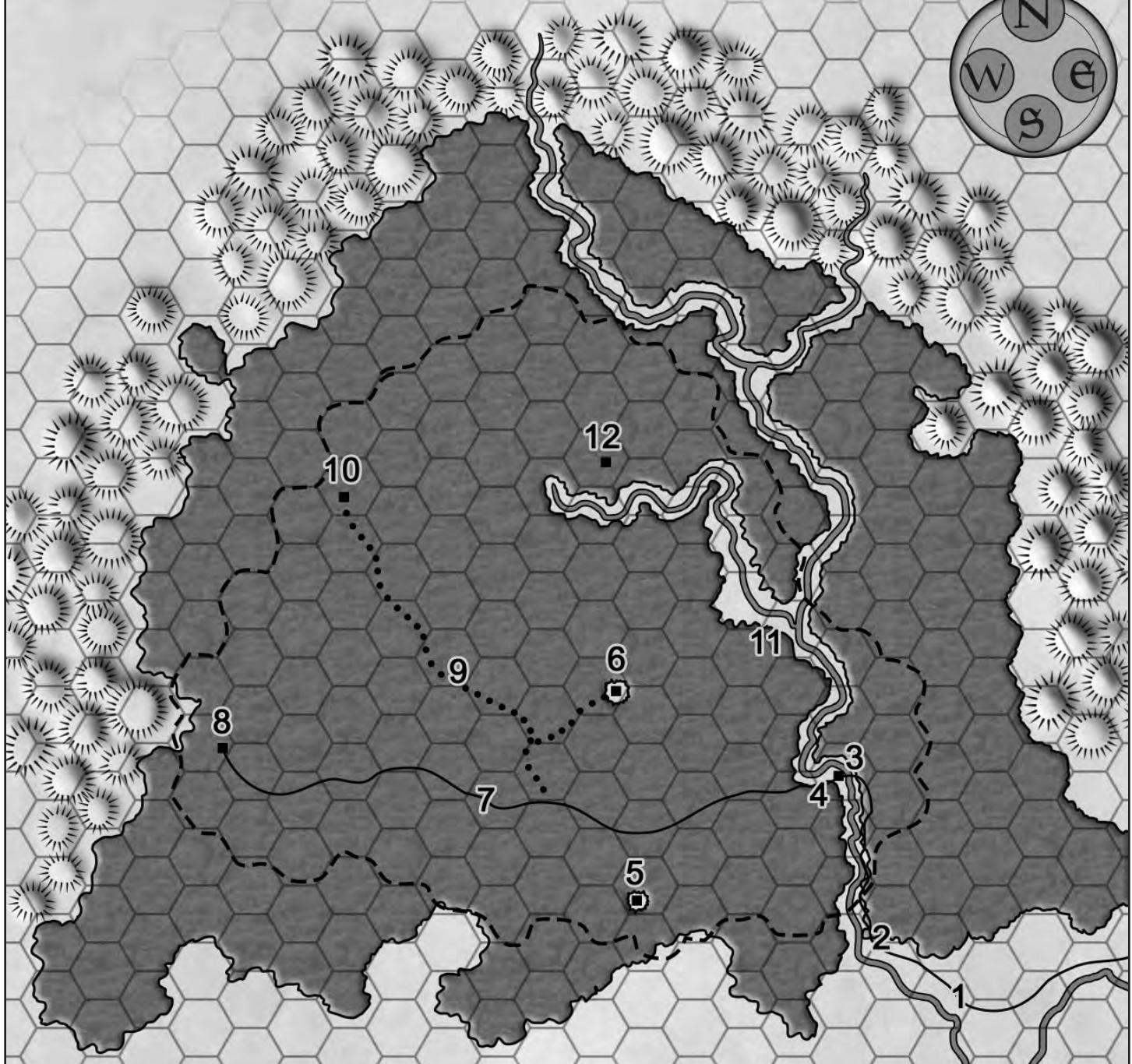
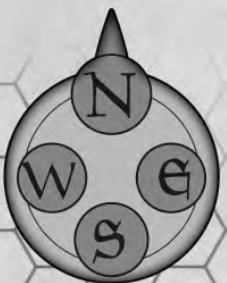
### General Features

**Atmosphere:** The forest is much quieter than a normal forest should be. Little animal noise is heard, and the few sounds that are present echo unnaturally. The air is still and oppressively stale, and travelers experience a sense of being watched from the ever-present shadows.

**Trails:** There are two types of paths through the Forest: the main trail and secondary footpaths. The trail links the settlements of Thistlehill and Stillwater with the outside world, while the smaller footpaths leave the main trail to reach smaller sites of interest inside the woodland. The main trail is wide enough to accommodate two horses and riders travelling side-by-side, while the footpaths are narrow enough to force riders into single file. The main trail is clear of forest debris, and the occasional sign points in the direction of Thistlehill and Stillwater. Footpaths lack signage and tend to be occasionally overgrown by brush.

**Illumination:** Because of the effects of the Darkening, the portions of Namjan Forest that have been infected are permanently cloaked in dense shadow. These shades are ominous and seem to almost possess a physical heft. Draperies of gloom hang like Spanish moss from tree limbs,

# Namjan Forest Map



■ Site of Interest

~~~~ Main Trail

,--- Darkening Afflicted Area

..... Foot Path

## THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

and darkness collects in drifts like fallen snow beneath the canopy. This cloaking of shadows means that even in daylight, the Forest is lightly obscured to all creatures without darkvision, blindsight, or other advanced senses. Additionally, as a result of the overall gloom, targets farther than 60 feet away from an observer are considered to be lightly obscured and to have half cover if attacked.

**Fehlween River:** The river averages between 60 and 100 feet wide and is 30 feet deep at its center. The water of the Fehlween has turned pitch black from the Darkening as shadow creeps down its length. An individual putting her hand in the water discovers the fluid has an inexplicable heft, as if filled with sediment, but there is no gritty feel to the river. In fact, the water feels almost silky, but it is a silkiness that has no place on this earth. Physical contact with the water is not hazardous, but drinking it is: see “The Danger of Shadow Infection” (above) for the consequences of drinking from the river.

### I. Shadow Attack

The sound of screams rings from the riverbank. A small boat packed with bags, tools, and similar goods rests on the shore amongst reeds and mud. A body lies sprawled beside the boat, looking curiously drained and ashen. A human male dressed in homespun stands over the body, swinging a woodcutter’s axe wildly. Looming over the panicked man is a patch of deep darkness that possesses a vaguely humanoid shape.

The woodsman and his now-dead companion were refugees fleeing the Darkening by traveling down the Fehlween River when they encountered a shadow king (see “New Monsters”). They took to the shore to try to escape the creature, but it killed one of them and is set on slaying the other.

**Creatures:** The shadow king concentrates its attacks on the woodman, killing him in two rounds unless destroyed or driven off. It then attacks the adventurers, if they intervene.

If the woodman survives the fight, he thanks the party and can provide any information listed under “Gathering Information” above, as well as directions to the various places of interest (see Namjan Forest map). He has no desire to join the party and only wishes to escape. He insists on burying his dead companion, unaware that the body will rise as a shadow in 1d4 hours. Unless *gentle repose* is cast on the corpse, it crawls from its grave as a newborn shadow, and the woodsman later becomes its first victim. If the woodsman dies from the shadow king’s attack and *gentle repose* is not cast on the bodies, the two newly-spawned shadows track down the party and attack after dark on the adventurers’ first night inside the forest (treat as an automatic nighttime random encounter).

Their boat is packed with clothes, tools, and other household goods the two owned. The only objects of value or interest are a pair of lanterns (filled with oil), a shovel, a wood axe, two daggers, a short bow, 20 arrows, a small barrel half filled with whiskey, a pipe, a full tobacco pouch, and a leather sack containing 56 cp, 24 sp, and 6 gp.

(Shadow King: AC 13, 39 hps; +6 to hit x2, 1d10 + 3 necrotic damage plus DC 11 Con saving throw or target gains a -1 penalty on Str-based attacks, saving throws, and ability checks [claws])

### 2. Forest Trail

A dirt path wide enough to accommodate two riders traveling side-by-side leads into the forest. The branches above form a tunnel of leaves that hang motionless in the still air. The hairs on your neck stand up as you view the forest, for it feels as if something inexplicable is missing from the woods.

The main trail enters Namjan Forest at this point, winding its way

through the woods until it ends at Thistlehill (see Area 8). The trail is considered normal terrain for travel speed. Characters walking or riding through the forest without following a trail move as if traversing difficult terrain.

### 3. River Bridge

A 100-foot-long wooden bridge crosses the inky water 20 feet above the river. Fashioned from rough timbers lashed and nailed together, the bridge is wide enough to allow wagons to cross. Fragile-looking railings run along the edges of the span, providing minimal protection against falling into the river below.

This bridge once allowed traffic to and from Stillwater to cross the river, but the corruption of shadow has undermined its strength. The bridge’s pilings have been weakened by shadow’s touch, and the span now is a hazard. In addition to its failing condition, a pair of alligator gar, tainted by shadow, swim around the bridge’s supports, waiting for someone to fall in.

There is a cumulative 10% chance the bridge collapses per person crossing it; i.e., the first person crossing the bridge has a 10% chance of causing a collapse, while the fourth risks a 40% chance of collapse. If a group crosses together, the chance equals the number of characters in the group plus the number that crossed individually before them, if any. A large animal or vehicle such as a horse or wagon automatically causes the bridge to fail. Roll 1d6 + 2, multiplied by 10 feet, to determine how far the character, group, or transport has progressed before the collapse occurs.

If a collapse happens, the person or creature causing the collapse as well as all others on the bridge and within 10 feet must make a successful DC 10 Dex saving throw or fall into the Fehlween River, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall.

**Creatures:** Two large alligator gar that succumbed to the Darkening now hunt in the black water beneath the bridge. Any creature falling into the river is immediately attacked by the savage animals. These alligator gar have stats identical to reef sharks, but with the addition of one shadow-touched power chosen by the GM.

**(Shadow-touched Alligator Gar x2:** AC 12, 22 hps; +4 to hit, 1d8 + 2 piercing damage [bite]; plus one shadow-touched ability chosen by the GM)

### 4. Stillwater

A cluster of small cottages stands along the western shore of the dark river. These rude huts appear dim and indistinct, their edges blurred by shadows. The structures almost seem as if they are fashioned from gossamer scraps of gloom rather than wood and plaster. The air surrounding the hamlet is also dim and heavy with darkness as if a cloud of soot and ash clings to the village with an unrelenting grip. You detect no signs of life.

Stillwater succumbed to the Darkening swiftly as both its residents and its existence depended on the Fehlween River. The hamlet is entirely corrupted by shadow and is no longer part of the Prime Material Plane.

**Creatures:** Most of the two score residents of Stillwater died from shadow’s infection, but a half-dozen emerged from the blight as servant of the Darkening. Six shadows lurk along the gloomy edges of town, striking anyone who enters the village from ambush.

**Shadows (6)**

The cottages of Stillwater are insubstantial, being nothing more than dark reflections of the Shadow Plane. Solid objects pass through them and even magical weapons and spells have no more effect than slicing a



shadow with a knife, heroes peering inside the buildings observe that the Darkening overcame Stillwater abruptly as there are half-eaten, shadowy meals sitting atop gossamer tables and signs of chores stopped in mid-task. A successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) check discerns that it appears the occupants of the buildings on the southeast end of the village seemed to have had some warning before being overcome by shadow's march, suggesting the encroachment came from the north or west.

## 5. The Charcoal-Maker's Shack

The smell of burned wood hangs heavy in the gloomy air. Before you is a small clearing containing a single hut made of timber and sod. A ring of charred wood, dead coals, and ash surrounds the clearing, encompassing the entire area within its blackened embrace.

The hut was until recently home to one of the charcoal-makers who dwell in the forest. As the Darkening spread through the woods, the charcoal-maker and his family found themselves surrounded by the encroaching shadows. Seeking to save themselves, they heaped wood in a ring around their home and set it alight to drive back the darkness. This worked well until nightfall, when the burning barrier threw more shadows than it drove away and the charcoal-maker, his wife, and son watched in horror as the Darkening reached for them. Determined not to fall to its embrace, the man killed his wife and child, then took his own life, denying shadow more victims.

The ashes surrounding the hut are cool to the touch, having burned out a few days ago. Inside the burned area, tendrils of shadow lurk in depressions in the ground and crouch by the timber and sod hut. Despite the shadows, the hut can be entered without danger.

Inside the small, two-room hut are the bodies of the charcoal-maker and his family. Clouds of blowflies fill the air in the dark hovel, and the smell is ghastly. From their wounds, it is apparent that the wife and son died from slit throats and the husband perished from a single stab to the heart. The knife's hilt juts from his chest, his hand still on the handle.

There is little to be learned from this place, but characters who don't mind pilfering from the dead find a gold wedding band (50 gp value) on the wife's finger and a carved wooden box containing 67 cp and 14 sp, if the hut is searched.

## 6. Ancient Watchtower Site

In a dark clearing stands the broken remains of an old watchtower. The structure is missing its upper floors and is gutted by fire and time, leaving only the shell of a once formidable redoubt. The ruin seems to stand like a tombstone to some forgotten age.

A crumbling relic from the days when Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten ruled the land, the watchtower survived the collapse of his rule and served as a safe refuge for travelers for centuries before falling utterly into decay. The ruin later provided shelter for woodsmen and sometimes bandits, but is now home to some of shadow's spawn.

**Creatures:** A pair of grimseems (see "New Monsters") lurks inside the shell. They prefer to remain in hiding during the daytime, but will attack if the ruin is entered while the sun is high. After nightfall, the two elementals emerge to hunt, attacking the adventurers if the party is camped nearby.

**(Grimseem x2:** AC 14, 32 hp; +5 to hit, 1d4 + 3 necrotic damage [bite] and +5 to hit, 1d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage [tentacle])

## THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

The watchtower's interior is 50 feet square and filled with mounds of fallen masonry, underbrush, and vines. A small fire pit containing cold ashes and charred wood is dug at the center of the ruin.

A forgotten treasure, overlooked by travelers, resides inside the shell. A bandit gang once buried its loot here, but internal squabbling and eventual murder ensured the trove was forgotten with the death of the bandits. A successful DC 20 Int (Investigation) check discerns a few odd scratches on a large slab of fallen stone. Lifting the stone up—requiring a successful DC 15 Str (Athletics) check—uncovers a shallow hole containing a large bundle wrapped in oilskin. Inside the parcel is a wrapped stack of 10 beaver pelts (2 gp value each), an ermine-trimmed coat (25 gp value), a pair of silver candelabras (15 gp value each), a longsword scabbard adorned with semiprecious stones and wrapped with gold wire (200 gp value), a sack containing 27 sp and 15 gp, and a glass vial filled with a *potion of vitality*.

## 7. The Soldiers' Fate

The faint glimmer of steel is visible on the narrow trail that winds through the gloom. A closer look reveals it to be several chain mail shirts, metal shields, spears, and swords strewn about the path. Mixed in among the discarded arms and armaments are tunics, breeches, and boots. It is as if the wearers decided they no longer wished to be encumbered by weapons, armor, or clothing, and hastily shed them.

It was on this spot that the Duke's men succumbed to the Darkening and either perished or were consumed. Those that were absorbed by shadow's grasp left their gear behind. Their equipment and clothing, however, is not all that remains of them. While some of those devoured by shadow sought out the Darkling Lanthorn (see The Cellars, Area 10), a few remained and have gorged themselves on the living energy of creatures in the woods, growing fat and fearsome in their feasting.

**Creatures:** A trio of shadow kings lurks along the path. They first devoured some of their fellow soldiers, but now subsist on the occasional animal that survives in the forest. They haunt this stretch of path until destroyed.

**(Shadow King x3:** AC 13, 39 hps; +6 to hit x2, 1d10 + 3 necrotic damage plus DC 11 Con saving throw or target gains a -1 penalty on Str-based attacks, saving throws, and ability checks [claws])

The discarded weapons and equipment along the path consist of chain mail shirts, spears, longwords, and shields for a dozen men. There are also four light crossbows and four bolt cases with 10 bolts remaining in each. In addition to the arms and armor, there are a dozen sets of traveling clothes and 12 small sacks holding water skins and three days of rations. Among the mundane supplies are pouches containing a total of 46 cp, 77 sp, 15 gp, two silver rings (10 gp value each), a gold hoop earring (5 gp value), and a small garnet (50 gp value).

## 8. Thistlehill

The ground rises slightly here, forming a 10-foot-high hillock in the midst of a gloomy clearing. In the side of the hill is a wide, low doorway bracketed by thick timber posts and lintel. A well-worn path leads to the tightly-shut door.

This is the main entrance to the gnome burrow of Thistlehill, the other settlement inside Namjan Forest. Like their neighbors in Stillwater,

Thistlehill has fallen to the spread of the Darkening. Most of its residents have been carried off to shadow or corrupted by its touch. There is a bastion of hope in Thistlehill, however. A particular vein of gemstones mined by the gnomes possesses a peculiar property of absorbing and then releasing light, and this power makes them potent weapons against shadow. More information on the gnome burrow is presented below in the "Thistlehill" chapter.

## 9. Hunter and Hunted

The sound of howling and the thump of hooves on the soft forest floor ring around you. Bursting from the cover of the trees comes a pack of wolves, their eyes bright not with fury but with panic. A moment later, another beast rushes from between the boles, branches tearing free from trees as it passes. Pursuing the pack is a large elk with fur that is a dusky ash color. Strands of writhing shados dangle from its antlers.

The elk succumbed to the Darkening, turning it fearsome and hungry for vitality. When the wolves encountered the afflicted animal, they found themselves going from predator to prey. Now they flee the elk, and their flight has brought them into the party's path.

**Creatures:** There are four wolves and one shadow-touched elk emerging from the woods. The wolves are panicked and may attack the party if the characters fail to get out of their path. The elk, seeing more vitality in the heroes than the wolves, ceases pursuit to siphon the life from the heroes.

**(Wolf x4:** AC 13, 11 hp; +4 to hit, 2d4 + 2 piercing damage and the target must make a successful DC 11 Str saving throw or be knocked prone [bite]; a wolf has tactical advantage on attack rolls if at least one active ally is adjacent to the target)

**(Shadow-touched Elk:** AC 10, 13 hp; +5 to hit, 1d6 + 3 bludgeoning damage [ram] or +5 to hit, 2d4 + 3 bludgeoning damage [hooves, against prone target only] plus one shadow-touched ability chosen by the GM)

It is possible for the wolves to be magically induced to aid the party via spells such as *animal friendship* or *dominate beast*, but the canines have tactical advantage on their saving throw due to their frenzied state. If charmed, the wolves calm down and act according the parameters of the spell.

## 10. The Gullet

Large rocks jut from the forest floor in this vicinity, leaning on one another like staggering drunks. Two especially large outcroppings form an upside-down V with a dark cave mouth visible in the gap between them. The air here smells foul and rank.

A careful inspection of the area accompanied by a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check reveals a trail of large footprints winding among the rocks. A successful DC 12 Wis (Survival) identifies the tracks as bear tracks, but a ranger with the favored enemy (monstrosities) recognizes them as owlbear tracks.

**Creature:** The cave measures roughly 30 feet square and is home to a shadow-touched owlbear. During daylight hours it remains inside its cave, emerging to hunt after dark.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

**(Shadow-touched Owlbear: AC 13, 59 hp; +7 to hit, 1d10 + 5 piercing damage [beak] and +7 to hit, 2d8 + 5 slashing damage [claws]; plus shadow-touched abilities chosen by the GM)**

There is a 50% chance the owlbear is asleep if characters enter the cave during the day. It automatically awakens if attacked, but suffers tactical disadvantage on its initiative check because of its sudden rousing. It mauls any adventurer in melee range. If the party is out of range, it uses its shadow-ripping ability for two rounds before closing the distance and fighting with beak and claws.

The cave contains bones and owlbear scat. Mixed in amongst the detritus is a rusty chain shirt, a +1 dagger, a set of ivory gaming dice (15 sp value), and a gold belt buckle with amethyst stone (20 gp value) attached to a rotting leather belt.

A crude and extremely old map is scratched on the cave wall. This map dates back to the time of Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten and depicts the region as it was then. The Fehlween River is easily identifiable and, with that as a guide, the characters can deduce the approximate locations of the Watchtower (Area 6) and the Darkling Oak (Area 12). Each of these sites is depicted as a crude tower and keep, and may hint at further locations in need of exploration to find the source of the Darkening.

## II. Shadows Merge

A small tributary flows into the Fehlween River from the west, its water just as inky dark as the shadow-rich liquid of the main river. Stands of soot-colored reeds cling in clusters to the river banks, their tufted stalks standing unmoving in the still air.

A successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check notices a punt pulled up to the northern bank of the tributary and mostly hidden among the reeds. Heroes inspecting the long, narrow boat find the bottom of the punt stained with copious amounts of blood. Lying in the gore is a human leg severed at the shin and a blood-stained fishing knife. Writing is carved into the seat of the punt, scratched into the wood by a shaky hand. The writing is in Common and reads:

"The dark crept in and touched my leg. Cut it off, but too late. I'm going, going dark and light. Came down the thinny way, out of the Tumbles. Can't st..." The scratched message ends abruptly.

The message was written by the unfortunate former owner of the severed leg who became infected by the Darkening as it crept down this narrow tributary ("the thinny way") from the tree. The infected boatman severed the appendage but shadow overtook him and his body faded away. He had just enough time to scrawl his warning before his physical body dissipated.

If characters continue upriver past the meeting of the waters, they soon see that the water of the Fehlween becomes clear, losing its dark taint. It is obvious that the source of the river's Darkening is the tributary, perhaps spurring them deeper into the forest toward the source of the shadows.

## 12. The Darkling Oak

The ground rises slightly here, forming a low island among the gloomy forest floor. This small hillock appears formed by a mass of ancient, fallen stones. Tumbled together and half-buried under centuries of forest loam, the moss-covered stones are weathered by storms and time. Sprouting among the broken masonry is a titanic oak rising 50 feet into the air. Its trunk is dusky ash in color, its leaves glossy obsidian. Hanging from the branches are thick coils of shadow that drip slowly down toward the ground like black honey.

This tree is in direct contact with the Darkling Lanturn and the conduit to shadow. It is responsible for the awakening of the relic's power and the start of the Darkening. The oak is entirely infected with shadow's touch, so that it exists only partially on this plane and partially on the Plane of Shadow. Any attack or destructive spell targeting the oak temporarily damages it, but the tree heals its massive trunk and limbs moments later as the injury is patched over with shadow stuff.

The dripping coils of shadow are dangerous, and the tree instinctively lashes out with the viscous substance at any creature approaching within 20 feet of it.

### Darkling Oak

**XP 1,800 (CR 5)  
CE Huge plant  
Initiative +2**

#### DEFENSE

**AC 16 (natural armor)  
hp: 75 (10d12 + 10)**

**Immunity:** Psychic damage; charm, fright, stun, unconsciousness

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 0 ft.

**Multiaction:** The darkling oak attacks four times with shadow coils.

**Melee Attack—Shadow Coil:** +7 to hit (reach 20 ft.; one target). **Hit:** 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage, and a living creature must make a successful DC 12 Con saving throw or gain a -1 penalty on all Strength-based attack rolls, Str saving throws, and Strength ability checks. The penalty is cumulative with multiple unsuccessful saving throws. The penalty persists until the creature completes a long or short rest. If the penalty plus the creature's normal Strength modifier reach -6, the creature dies. If a non-evil living creature dies from this effect, a new shadow king rises from its corpse 1d6 hours later.

#### STATISTICS

**Str 18 (+4), Dex 14 (+2), Con 12 (+1), Int 0 (-5), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 5 (-0)**

**Languages:** None

**Senses:** Tremorsense 60 ft.

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Shadow-infested forest

**Organization:** Solitary

The earth-covered mound of broken rubble is all that remains of Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten's stronghold. This rise of land measures 100 feet in diameter and 20 feet tall at its highest point. The Shadow Oak sprouts from the western end of the hillock. Slightly south of the tree at a distance of 20 feet, a narrow, dark tunnel mouth is visible between two massive pieces of masonry. It appears to lead to a cave or similar descent within the mound. This tunnel does indeed connect to the cellars, Area 1.

## THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

# Thistlehill Gnome Burrow

This small burrow was home to two dozen gnomish miners and woodworkers. They did a brisk trade with their human neighbors of Stillwater, selling their wares to dealers there in return for the necessities and luxuries the gnomes desired. When the Darkening spread through the Namjan, the gnomes barred their doors and hoped to withstand the infection. They failed, becoming afflicted by shadow's touch. Only one gnome remains untouched, surviving thanks to the strange properties of the sunbreath quartz the gnomes mined.

## General Features

Thistlehill is excavated out of the rocky soil beneath the forest, but it's no series of earthen caves and tunnels. The floors, walls, and ceilings of Thistlehill are lined by stout timber planks, planed smooth and pegged firmly into place. The air is dry and cool, and holds only a trace of rich, earthy scents.

**Interior Dimensions:** Thistlehill is a gnomish home, and it's sized accordingly. Ceilings stand 6 feet high and corridors are 8 feet wide at the most. Human-sized creatures can move and act without penalty inside Thistlehill, but find the place cramped and uncomfortable after longer than an hour.

**Illumination:** In better days, the interior of Thistlehill was lit by thick beeswax candles set in wall holders or hanging chandeliers. These are still present, but shadows' taint not only makes the interior of the lair a place of deep darkness but also prevents the candles from being lit. If set alight, the

flame struggles feebly for a moment, then fails. Unlike in the cellar (see below), other illumination sources function normally inside Thistlehill, providing their normal illumination.

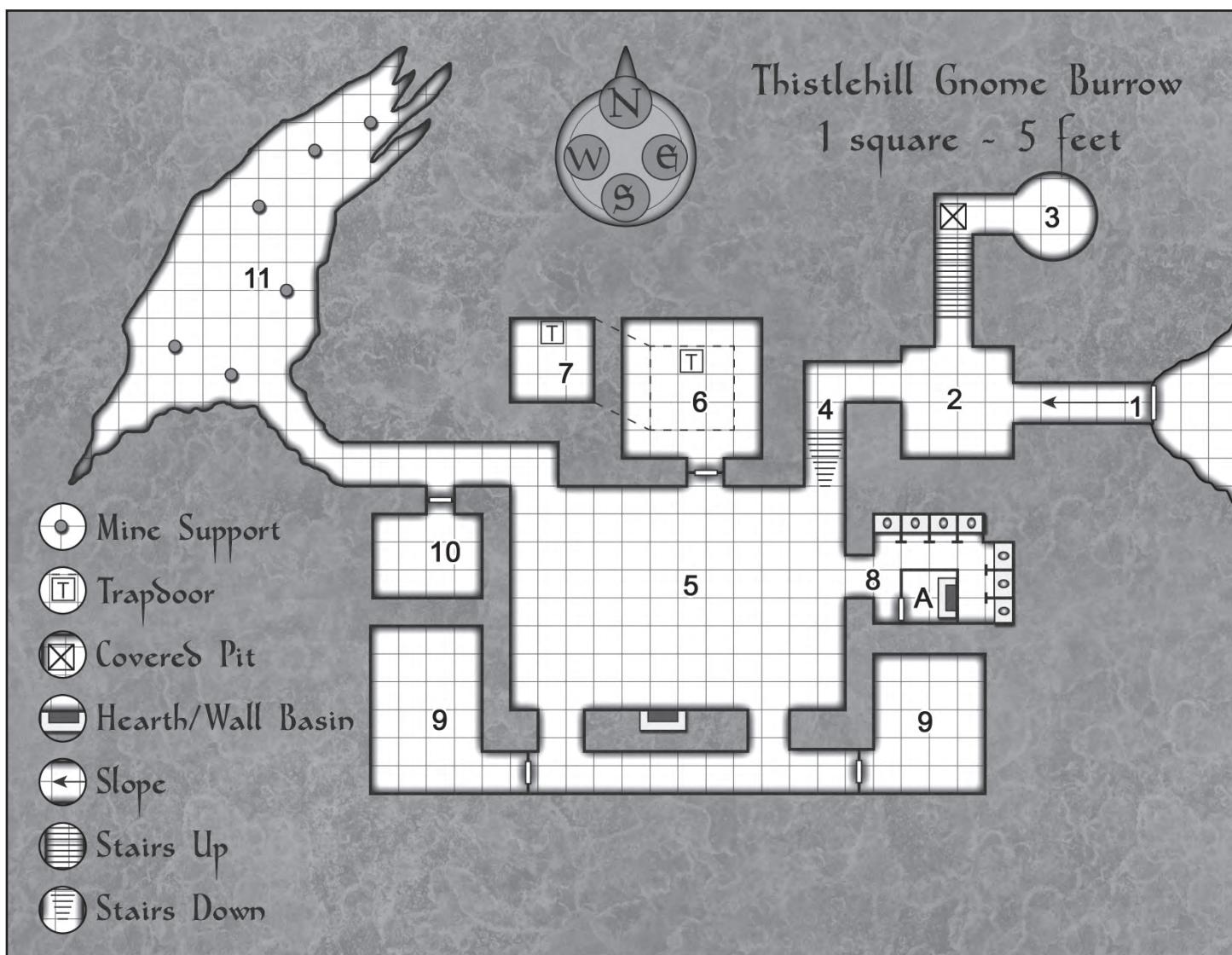
### I. Front Door

The double doors measure 6 feet high and 8 feet wide and are made from stout oak bound with iron. A small, closed peephole pierces the left-hand door, looking out at gnome-eye level. The door is barred from within, but the bar holding it is small (better to be managed by the gnomes). The door can be bashed open with a successful DC 20 Str (Athletics) check or the use of a *knock* spell.

No one is guarding the door, but if more than two attempts are made to force open the portal, the shadow gnomes at Area 2 are alerted and prepare to attack intruders.

### 2. Guard Post

A cramped square room stands at the end of a sloping, plank-lined hallway. The space holds a small table and three chairs, a little sealed barrel, and a pair of doors leading out. One door stands in the north wall, another in the west wall.



## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

**Creatures:** Three gloom gnomes (see “New Monsters”), the former guards stationed here, continue their vigil, but for hunger, not duty. If the party burst open the front door and immediately proceeded here, the guards are present and preparing to attack. If the character dallied before entering or if multiple attempts were needed to breach the front door, the shadow gnomes are merged with the gloom and attack from ambush, likely surprising the party.

The barrel contains 5 gallons of watered brandy. The doors exiting this room are closed, but not locked.

**(Gloom Gnome x4:** AC 13, hp 27; +4 to hit x2, 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage [shadow blade] or +4 to hit x2, range 30 ft./60 ft., 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage [necrotic ray])

## 3. Observation Post

A small, round room stands at the top of a narrow flight of stairs. Small observation windows are cut through the walls of the room at the eye level of a short observer, granting a 360-degree view of the forest outside. An unlit brazier filled with coal sits in the center of the room.

This place once allowed the gnomes a hidden vantage point to observe travelers approaching Thistlehill’s front door. It is no longer manned but might still present a threat to intruders.

The coal in the brazier is thoroughly infected by shadow’s touch. If set alight, the coal bursts into brilliant, deep blue flames that immediately suck the warmth from the room. Everyone in the room suffers 1d8 + 2 cold damage, or half damage with a successful DC 12 Con save. The coals continue to burn, inflicting additional damage each round to anyone who stays in the room. The brazier cannot be extinguished by mundane means; it burns out naturally after one hour.

## 4. Pit Trap

A 20-foot-deep covered pit blocks the passage here. A successful DC 20 Int (Investigation) check notices the concealed trap. Failing to detect the pit forces the first rank of the party to make a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw or plunge into the trap. A hidden switch, detectable with a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check, is located behind a knothole in the corridor’s plank walls. Throwing the switch seals the pit cover, allowing it to be crossed without danger.

## 5. Common Room

This large room holds carved wooden chairs, tables, and cupboards, each fashioned with exquisite skill. A plush woven carpet of forest green and autumn gold covers the plank floor. A wide, cold hearth stands in the south wall, and a curious, low-walled box rests beside it.

The central gathering place for the gnomes, this common room was the hub of life within Thistlehill. It is now home to the worst of the shadow-afflicted residents.

The room contains only normal furniture for the warren’s inhabitants. The curious, low-walled box is filled with straw and wood chips, and served as the badger’s bed before shadow’s coming.

**Creatures:** Four gloom gnomes dwell here, along with their former pet, a giant badger.

**(Gloom Gnome x4:** AC 13, hp 27; +4 to hit x2, 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage [shadow blade] or +4 to hit x2, range 30

ft./60 ft., 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage [necrotic ray])

**(Shadow-touched Giant Badger:** AC 10, 13 hp; +3 to hit, 1d6 + 1 piercing damage [bite] and +3 to hit, 2d4 + 1 slashing damage [claws]; plus shadow-touched abilities chosen by the GM)

## 6. Kitchen

The smell of many old and fine meals has seeped into the wooden walls of this well-kept kitchen. Clay ovens stand against the north wall, facing low tables covered with bowls, plates, and kitchen implements. A closed trapdoor lies in the floor next to the preparation tables.

This ordinary kitchen is free from danger. The table holds several bowls, wooden spoons, a butcher’s knife, cleaver, paring knives, and a pewter salt cellar. The ovens are cold and empty, but the faint odor of freshly-baked bread is barely detectable when the ovens are opened.

The trapdoor is unlocked and opens to reveal a short ladder leading down to the pantry (Area 7).

## 7. Pantry

Sacks, barrels, and boxes fill this cramped root cellar. The smell of flour, smoked meat, and earth is rich here.

This room holds enough food to feed two dozen small appetites for two weeks. The pantry holds sausages, wheels of cheese, flour, corn meal, pickled vegetables, dried fruit, and salted fish. There are four dusty bottles resting atop a high shelf, but a successful DC 12 Wis (Perception) check is necessary to see them under the dust and cobwebs without a thorough search. Each bottle holds an old gnomish fortified wine spiced with restorative herbs and flowers. Drinking the lavender wine of a full bottle acts as a *potion of vitality*.

## 8. Lavatory

This rooms served the burrow’s basic sanitary needs. Seven stalls with single-hole latrines line the walls. An enclosed bathing area (A) is used for washing. A natural spring flows into a clay basin in the bathing area. There is nothing of interest or value in this area.

## 9. Dormitories

Numerous small bunks, tables, chairs, and wardrobes fill this room, providing sleeping quarters for the warren’s occupants.

Each of these rooms holds 12 bunks and wardrobes, along with small tables and chairs for sitting and eating. The wardrobes are filled with small-sized clothing and the personal effects of Thistlehill’s miners, as well as a handful of common tools. The two dormitories are largely identical; their differences in contents are listed below.

### 9A. Gloom Gnome Ambush

A band of gloom gnomes slinks about in the darkness, waiting to

# THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

ambush the curious.

**(Gloom Gnome x4:** AC 13, hp 27; +4 to hit x2, 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage [shadow blade] or +4 to hit x2, range 30 ft./60 ft., 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage [necrotic ray])

Among the mundane contents of this room are a small pouch of six moonstones (10 gp value each), a pair of small boots with silver heels (10 gp value), 75 cp, 49 sp, and a small barrel of good brandy (10 gp value).

## 9B. Treasure!

This dormitory is free of dangerous inhabitants. There is minor treasure consisting of a silver drinking decanter (25 gp), four copper cups (5 gp value total), a pouch containing 12 freshwater pearls (10 gp value each), and 96 cp, 66 sp, and 63 gp.

## 10. Storage

This room is crammed with crates, barrels, spools of rope, boxes, and tools. The smell of grease and wax fills the air. Cobwebs dangle in the dark corners of the room.

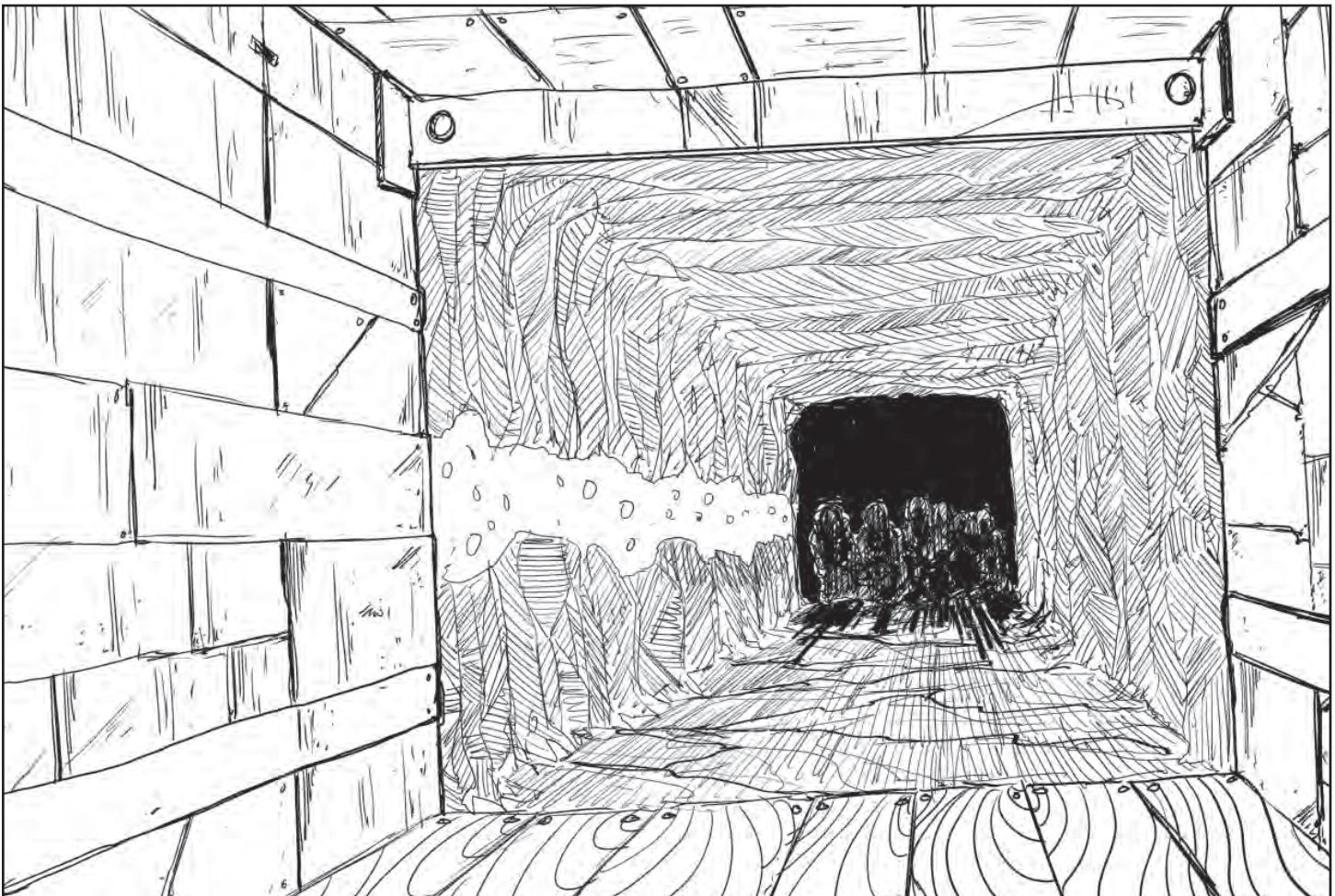
The chamber contains mundane supplies necessary for the day-to-day operations of the warren and adjacent mine. There are spare lanterns, 500 feet of rope, picks, shovels, buckets, barrels of grease, crates of candles, timbers for building mine supports, wheelbarrows, and similar items. There is no danger or treasure present.

## II. Gemstone Mine

The plank-lined corridor gives way to an excavated area hewn from the surrounding earth and stone. Timber braces support the earth and stone ceiling, creating a low, wide cavern underneath the earth. Buckets, tools, and wheelbarrows lean against the walls of the room. Flickering shadows with malicious smiles crowd around the edge of a glowing circle of light at the cavern's northeastern end. Huddled within the light is a pale, thin gnome, watching the shadows in terror. Several pools of melted wax surround the gnome.

The gnomes of Thistlehill mine a rare form of crystal known as sunbreath quartz. Although not as valuable as many precious stones, sunbreath quartz is highly desired by jewelers and tailors for its unique property. Most of the stone has been extracted, and only a small bit of the original vein remains.

**Creatures:** This area contains five shadows and Mevlyn Butteroak, the sole remaining resident of Thistlehill unaffected by the Darkening. When the Darkening spread through the community, a handful of gnomes fled to the mine where they discovered the absorbed light of the sunbreath quartz stymied shadow's encroachment. Over the past few days, most of the gnomes made a desperate attempt to gather supplies or escape the burrow, they all but succumbed to shadow's minions. Now only Mevlyn remains, and he has run out of candles to keep the sunbreath crystal illuminated. Unless rescued, the crystals' glow will soon expire and the shadows will claim Mevlyn. The shadows turn to attack the heroes, hungry for long-delayed sustenance.



## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

(Shadow x5: AC 12, 16 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 necrotic damage and the target loses 1d4 Strength [strength drain])

(Mevlyn Butteroak: AC 15, 16 hp; +4 to hit, 1d8 + 2 piercing damage [war pick] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d4 + 2 piercing damage and DC 12 Con saving throw or poisoned for 1 minute)

Mevlyn is overjoyed if the shadows are vanquished. He has been trapped in the mine for several days and is severely dehydrated and malnourished. Saddened by the loss of his friends and home, he wants nothing more than a meal and to get as far away from shadow's reach as possible. He will explain how he remained untouched by shadow for so long, telling the party of sunbreath quartz's power (see sidebar) and suggesting they take as many of the stones as possible if they are brave enough to fight the Darkening's power. Unfortunately, only 20 quartz crystals large enough to be used offensively are available.

Mevlyn tells the party that the Darkening flowed over Thistlehill from the northeast, corrupting everything in its path. If they seek the source of shadow's power, he suggests they head in that direction—deeper into the forest.

Mevlyn is traumatized by his experience and has no desire to join the party. If characters play upon his love of home and his desire to avenge the deaths of his friends, however, then a successful DC 12 Cha (Persuasion) check gets Mevlyn to swallow his fear and dedicate himself to stopping

### Sunbreath Quartz

Sunbreath quartz appears identical to clear quartz, but if it is exposed to bright light for four or more hours, the quartz glows naturally, producing illumination equal to a candle for 12 hours. The emitted light is always a pale yellow glow similar to sunlight regardless of the origin of the absorbed illumination. This property makes it valuable to tailors who adorn clothing with sunbreath quartz as well as jewelers, who use the glowing stones in their creations. A single sunbreath quartz crystal is worth 25 gp.

Sunbreath quartz can be “charged” with magical light to create an effective weapon against certain creatures. By casting *light* on a single sunbreath quartz crystal, the stone absorbs and retains the spell, becoming a form of miniature “light bomb” that can be employed against creatures affected by bright light. The magical light is retained by the crystal for up to one hour and, due to the strange properties of the stone, continues to maintain its light even if another *light* cantrip is cast by the same spellcaster (this effect supersedes the spell’s description). A spellcaster can cast the *light* cantrip on multiple sunbreath quartz stones and each retains its illumination until an hour passes or the stone is used offensively.

A charged sunbreath quartz can be thrown as an improvised weapon with range 20 ft./60 ft. If it strikes a target or hard surface, the stone shatters, releasing the *light*. The explosion of illumination has one of two effects. If the creatures possesses eyesight and is not shadow-based, it must make a successful Con saving throw (DC equals the save DC of the spellcaster who cast *light* on the quartz) or be blinded for one round. Shadow creatures, including shadows, shadow kings, shadowkin, and gloom gnomes, struck by the blast suffer 1d6 + the spellcaster’s magic attack bonus radiant damage. Regardless of effect, the explosion shatters the crystal and destroys its light-absorbing property.

A sunbreath quartz crystal can also be used to focus a *light* cantrip, transforming it into a ray attack capable of damaging shadow-based creatures. The spellcaster makes a magic attack roll while casting the *light* cantrip and holding a sunbreath crystal in his hand, aimed at the target. If the attack hits, the target takes 1d8 radiant damage. One such attack also “burns out” the crystal, destroying its light-absorbing property.

the Darkening. He gathers his possessions from Area 9A (assuming the gloom gnomes have been dispatched), which include leather armor, a short sword, a sling with 20 stones, traveling clothes, and food and water for three days, and joins the party.

## The Cellar of Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten

Buried beneath the ancient rubble and thick forest loam are the surviving catacombs of the sorcerer-warlord, Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten. It was in these chambers that he conducted his eldritch research and stored his prized magical artifacts—including the Darkling Lanthorn which is the source of the Darkening of Namjan Forest. It is here that the heroes must venture to end shadow's infection, but the task is not easy; formidable foes are arrayed against them.

### General Features

The cellar is hewn from the bedrock that underlies the forest, carved from the stone eons ago by both magical incantations and physical labor. Much of the cellar is in ruins or buried under tons of rubble, victim to both the original destruction called down by Uhl-Kal-Totten and the march of time.

**Illumination:** The cellar is dark—even more so than the lack of illumination can account for. Shadow's encroachment has veiled the entire undercroft in an unnatural gloom. Light sources that normally create bright light struggle against the gloom, casting only dim light in their area of effect. Areas that are normally considered dim light (the edges of a lantern's illumination range for example) are treated as darkness in the cellars. These shadows even affect *darkvision*. All *darkvision* range is reduced by one-third, rounded down, while in the cellar (e.g., a dwarf's *darkvision* only has a 40-foot range in the cellar).

### Wandering Monsters

Several shadowy occupants of the cellar prowl its corridors, constantly seeking to assuage their hunger and increase shadow's hold, and characters might encounter these wanderers during their exploration. There is a 20% chance of encountering a wandering monster every 30 minutes while inside the cellar. If a wandering monster is indicated, roll on the table below to determine the type and number of creatures encountered.

#### The Cellar Random Encounter Table

| 1d6 | Encounter                  |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 1   | 1d4 Shadow-touched Spiders |
| 2   | 1d6 Shadows                |
| 3   | 1d4 Grimseems              |
| 4   | 1 Miasmic Death            |
| 5-6 | 1 Shadow King              |

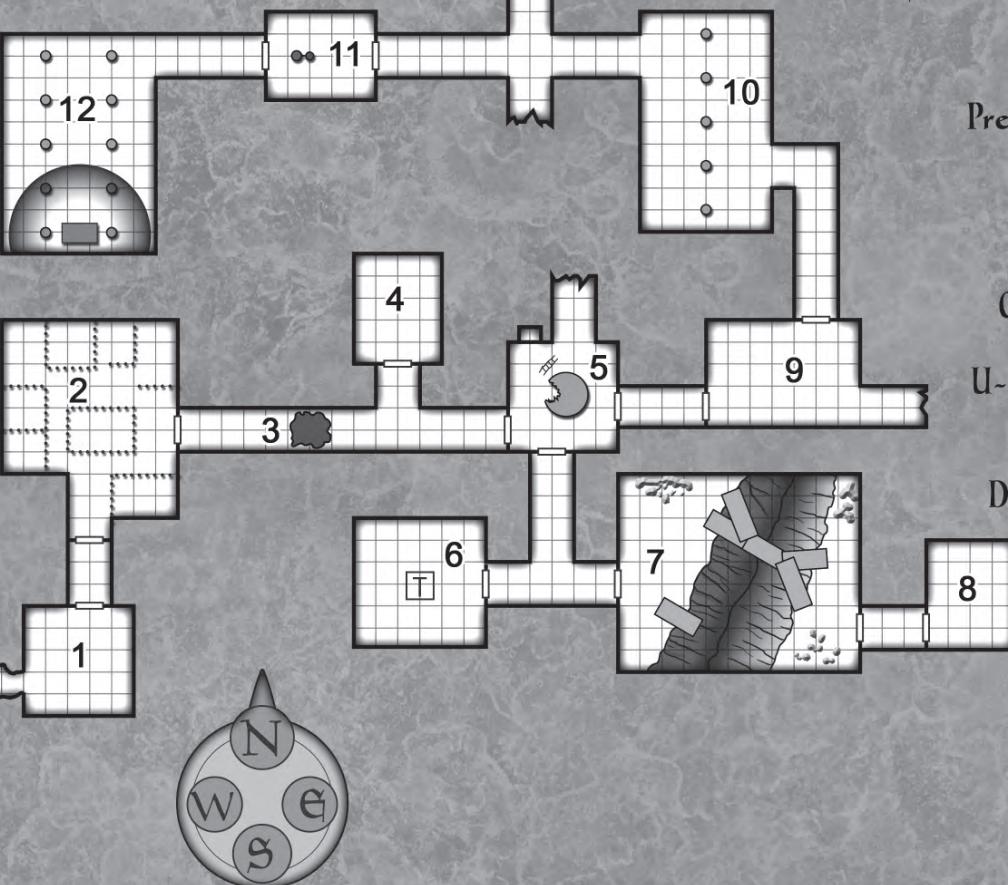
## The Cellar of Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten

The entrance to the cellar is a steep-angled tunnel filled with fallen blocks of masonry and old forest earth. It connects to the surface in the lee of the Darkling Oak, which unwittingly serves as guardian to the cellar. Once the Darkling Oak is evaded, explorers can venture down the shaft's 50-foot length to arrive in Area 1.

# THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

## The Cellar of Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten

1 square ~ 5 feet



### 1. Spider Wine

The steep shaft terminates in a dark chamber, its contents largely obscured by the almost-physical gloom that fills the space with shadows. A collapsed wooden rack and smashed barrels are vaguely discernible in the dark, and the stone floor is littered with shards of broken, dusty glass.

**Creatures:** Once a wine cellar, this chamber is now home to a pair of large, shadow-touched spiders. Ever hungry, they scuttle close to the party, seeking to ambush them from the dark.

**(Shadow-touched Giant Wolf Spider x2:** AC 13, 11 hp; +3 to hit, 1d6 + 1 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage [bite]; DC 11 Con saving throw for half damage; creatures poisoned to 0 hp are paralyzed for 1 hour; plus shadow-touched abilities chosen by the GM)

The contents of this room are in ruins; barrels and bottles that once held fine vintages from long ago are now broken and empty. The tall wooden racks are dust-caked and riddled with dry rot, so they collapse into punky wood with a touch. A careful search of the chamber accompanied with

a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check uncovers an intact bottle fashioned from cut crystal. The vessel alone is worth 50 gp, and it contains a *potion of longevity*.

### 2. Ruined Menagerie

Rusty bars form several caged-off areas of varying size in this chamber. Yellowed, moldering bones lie in haphazard fashion within the cages. Open doors on rusty hinges moan slightly, pushed by faint subterranean drafts.

Dyraxl Uhl-Kal-Totten kept his most fearsome and fascinating pets in this chamber, intent on experimenting on and crossbreeding them. The mystical creatures died during the siege, and their bones have lain undisturbed here ever since.

There are eight cages, all comprised of rusting bars, with doors ajar. Skeletal remains of great age, some nearly fossilized by mineralization, are scattered inside the cages. A successful DC 20 Int (Arcana) check identifies the remains as belonging to a bulette, a catoblepas, a gorgon, an owlbear, a peryton, and a unicorn.

The unicorn's horn is still intact and is worth up to 2,000 gp.

## 3. Snatching Darkness

This location conceals a pool of semi-intelligent darkness that is a conduit between the material realm and the Plane of Shadow. It clings to the ceiling, nearly undetectable (requires a successful DC 25 Wis [Perception] check to notice) until the party passes beneath it. At that point it strikes, lashing down with its two 20-foot-long shadow tentacles to grab living passersby. The pool cannot move from its position.

Once the pool grapples a creature, it drags the victim upward to the ceiling and pulls it inside the shadow. The pool's form exists in both the Material Plane and the Plane of Shadow, so victims pulled into it seem to disappear into the ceiling as if dropped into a dark hole between the planes. The pool is large enough to hold one Large, two Medium, or four Small victims at a time.

Remember that characters lifted into the pool are 15 feet above the corridor's floor, and the distance is likely to hamper any attempts to aid them.

The pool cannot be killed. It can only be banished by natural or magical daylight. It retreats immediately if subjected to daylight.

### Shadow Pool

**XP** 1,800 (CR 5)

Unaligned Medium aberration

**Initiative** +2

**AC** 10

**hp:** 10 (2d8 + 1) per pseudopod

**Immunity:** All damage types but radiant; all conditions

**Speed:** 0 ft.

**Multiattack:** The shadow pool can have two pseudopods at a time. Each pseudopod can either attack or lift a character into devouring shadow.

**Melee Attack—Pseudopod:** +6 to hit (reach 20 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* the target is grappled and restrained, and lifted 5 feet off the ground. Breaking free of this grapple takes a successful DC 14 Str saving throw by the grappled creature or an adjacent creature.

**Melee Attack—Devouring Shadow:** automatic hit (one creature already grappled by the shadow pool at the start of the shadow pool's turn). *Hit:* the creature is lifted into the shadow pool. A living creature must make a successful DC 12 Con saving throw or gain a -1 penalty on all Strength-based attack rolls, Str saving throws, and Strength ability checks. The saving throw is repeated at the start of each of the character's turns, and the penalty is cumulative with multiple unsuccessful saving throws. The penalty persists until the creature completes a long or short rest. If the penalty plus the creature's normal Strength modifier drop to -6, the creature dies. If a non-evil living creature dies from this effect, a new shadow king emerges from the shadow pool 1d6 hours later.

### TRAITS

**Daylight Vulnerability:** Any spell that creates daylight (not just bright light) banishes the pool to the Plane of Shadow for 24 hours.

**Shadow Substance:** The pool draws a limitless supply of shadow from the Plane of Shadow. Radiant damage can destroy pseudopods, but a new pseudopod grows to replace each destroyed one at the start of the shadow pool's turn, so it always has two pseudopods to use during its turn.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Underground

**Organization:** Solitary or patch (2-5)

## 4. Alchemy Lab

Broken glassware is strewn about this small chamber and covered by a thick blanket of dust. The floor is stained by the spills of a hundred strange chemicals and reagents. The air seems to roil and swirl, casting a rainbow of dull hues as if soap bubbles were caught in a draft.

**Creature:** The countless spilled chemicals combined with the arcane destruction called down by Uhl-Kal-Totten and now infused with shadow's touch has created a unique life form in this room—a miasmic death. The gaseous creature drains both nutrients and the breath of those it envelops, seeking to reproduce itself and spread beyond the confines of this small chamber.

**(Miasmic Death:** AC 12, 38 hp; DC 13 Con saving throw, 2d6 necrotic damage [steal breath]; gaseous)

The contents of this room are largely beyond salvage. The various alchemical instruments and materials are rusted and rotted or smashed to flinders. However, mixed amongst the debris are three iron beakers sealed with foul-smelling wax. Each beaker contains a potion, but the elixirs have undergone "magical spoilage" down the millennia. Now, each potion produces a harmless but interesting side-effect when consumed. The side effect lasts for as long as the potion is functioning.

The potions are a *potion of flying* (side effect: turns the drinker's skin a vibrant color), a *potion of gaseous form* (side effect: gaseous form throws tiny, harmless blue lightning bolts, which cause the drinker to have tactical disadvantage on Stealth checks), and a *potion of heroism* (side effect: the sound of cattle lowing accompanies the drinker wherever he goes).

## 5. Sensory Deprivation Chamber

A large spherical vessel resembling an amphora occupies this room. The 10-foot-diameter container has a large hole in its side, allowing a faint glimpse into its empty interior. The flagstone floor is stained by some ancient spillage and is covered by dust. The remains of a corroded iron ladder lie beside the grand vessel.

**Creatures:** A trio of grimseems lurk inside the round vessel, hidden by the gloom and the curving sides of the container. They flutter out on shadowy, batlike wings and attack.

**(Grimseem x3:** AC 14, 32 hp; +5 to hit, 1d4 + 3 necrotic damage [bite] and +5 to hit, 1d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage [tentacle])

The spherical vessel was a sensory deprivation tank. Uhl-Kal-Totten drifted inside the tank, floating in warm water and shrouded in darkness, allowing his mind to visit unseen dimensions and contemplate the mysteries of magic. The stain on the floor comes from the heavily salted water that once occupied the tank.

A search of the north wall accompanied by a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check discovers a concealed compartment. This tall, narrow cubby once contained dressing robes and towels, as well as certain substances Uhl-Kal-Totten imbibed before entering the tank to help him attain a trancelike state. On a small shelf is a crystal box (10 gp value) containing a gummy black resin. This substance is extract of the night hyacinth flower, a mystical drug that affects spellcasters. There is a single dose of resin in the box.

Any spellcaster consuming the resin must make a DC 15 Con saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the spellcaster suffers 3d8 poison damage

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and the resin has no further effect. On a successful save, the caster falls unconscious for 1d4 hours, during which time nothing can awaken him or her. The caster has fearsome dreams while unconscious, his mind glimpsing strange vistas at the far ends of the multiverse. When he awakens, he does so with the understanding of how to bolster his magic with his own body.

The spellcaster can effectively increase the level of an expended spell slot by permanently reducing his Constitution by 1 point. For example, a 3rd level wizard could cast a spell using one of his 2nd level spell slots and, by permanently decreasing his Constitution score by one, cause the spell to take effect as if cast with a 3rd level spell slot. Lost Constitution cannot be restored by any magic less than a *wish* spell. Lowered Constitution can still be raised when using the Ability Score Improvement feature during leveling.

This knowledge doesn't allow the caster to use magic beyond his ability. A caster cannot expend more than 1 point of Constitution per round.

## 6. Golem Forge

A massive table fashioned from a single stone slab occupies much of this room's floor space. Scraps of punky, dry-rotted wood and rusty nails indicate tables or other furnishings once lined the western wall, but they have long succumbed to age. A large stone box, its exterior inscribed with strange sigils, rests atop the slab table.

Golems and other constructs were fashioned in this chamber, Uhl-Kal-Totten was preparing to create a new model when his stronghold fell. All that remains is a single component sealed inside a magically-warded box.

A character conversant in Primordial or who makes a successful DC 15 Int (Arcana) check identifies the writing as pertaining to the Plane of Elemental Earth. The box is sealed shut and bears no obvious lock or closure. It weighs 300 pounds. The chest resists attempts to break it open, its rocky surface quickly "healing" damage and shrugging off most magical spells. Its contents can be accessed only three ways: 1) A *disintegrate* spell destroys the box, revealing its contents; 2) a *stone shape* spell allows an opening to be molded in the box's side; and 3) an earth elemental can reach inside using its *earth crawl* power and extract the box's contents.

The box contains an oversized humanoid left hand made from solid stone. Originally intended for a stone golem, the hand is magical and useable by one daring enough to pay the price. If the hand is affixed to the freshly severed (within 12 hours) stump of a left arm and a *regenerate* spell is cast on the hand, it potentially fuses with the flesh, allowing the creature to utilize it as his own, natural appendage. When the *regenerate* spell is cast, the subject must make a DC 10 Con saving throw. If the save succeeds, the limb attaches itself without side-effect. If the saving throw fails, the fist rejects its owner's natural flesh and replaces it with solid rock, petrifying the subject. If restored to normal, the hand separates from the now un-petrified owner and can never be utilized by that creature.

When successfully fused to flesh, the fist grants the owner a +2 Strength bonus when using his or her left arm. Twice per day, the creature can also smash the hand onto the ground and create a *thunderwave* (save DC equals owner's Strength modifier plus proficiency bonus).

## 7. Slippery Stones

A jagged hole tears the stone floor of this chamber in two. Collapsed ceiling stones are piled in tumbled fashion, forming a crude bridge across the gap. Mounds of dark forest earth have partially buried the chamber, having poured into the room through holes in the roof. Debris or broken furnishings are dimly visible on the far side of the room, as is a closed door.

The destruction long ago severely damaged this room, opening an 80-foot-deep, 30-foot-wide rift in the floor while dumping tons of earth and rock into the room from the compromised ceiling. By sheer chance, several of the ceiling slabs fell to form a delicately balanced bridge across the gap. There they have remained, but they are precariously positioned.

**Creatures:** A quartet of shadows flutter through the darkness, greedy for the adventurers' lives. They wait until characters begin crossing the haphazard bridge before attacking.

**(Shadow x4: AC 12, 16 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 necrotic damage and the target loses 1d4 Strength [strength drain])**

Combatants battling on the stone slab bridge risk a very real chance of collapsing the precarious span. Roll 1d6 at the end of each round when combat occurs on the bridge; if the result is less than or equal to the number of rounds fighting has lasted, the slabs fall, pitching all on the makeshift bridge into the chasm. Nonflying creatures on the bridge must make a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw to grab a ledge and save themselves from falling 80 feet to the chasm bottom (8d6 bludgeoning damage). Characters that grab a ledge can be pulled to safety automatically by an ally, or they can pull themselves out with a successful DC 10 Str (Athletics) check. Someone who is struck while dangling over the chasm must make a successful Str (Athletics) check with a DC equal to 5 + damage suffered or fall into the chasm.

The broken debris on the eastern side of the room is all that remains of display and trophy cases that once housed prizes Uhl-Kal-Totten wrested from his enemies. An inspection of the ruined wood, glass, and rusty iron uncovers shattered bits of bone, corroded pieces of armor, and scraps of cloth that crumble to dust at a touch. One object survived the destruction: a human tibia inscribed with magical glyphs and wrapped with decaying reptile hide. This is a *wand of radiance* (see the "New Magical Items" appendix). A thorough search, or a quick search with a successful DC 13 Wis (Perception) check, discovers the intact wand in the debris.

## 8. Map Room

Collapsed shelves and crumbling chests of drawers slouch in this small room, covered with eons of dust and smelling of great age and mildew. A faint, old stink of rotting flesh is barely discernable amongst the other pungent, subterranean smells.

Uhl-Kal-Totten stored his library of maps, charts, and similar documents in this room, but age has destroyed them all. The smell of rot comes from the decayed animal hides that once bore ancient maps of long-vanished lands. The few surviving scraps of material in the room fall to pieces if handled. The exception is a bone scroll case sealed with a mithral cap (200 gp value).

The case contains a thin sheet of metal, rolled like a scroll and bearing a number of seemingly randomly spaced rectangular holes (similar to computer punch card). The sheet measure 12 inches square, and the metal is unidentifiable, even by dwarves. This object serves as a key to open the vault door in Area 10 and to bypass the trap protecting it.

## 9. Funeral Trophies

More than a dozen sarcophagi in various styles and condition are placed about the room. Some stand upright, while others lie flat on the cracked flagstones. The casket lids are all intact and closed, obscuring what, if anything, they contain. One, however, glows with an eerie, pale green light, like foxfire in a dismal mire.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

Uhl-Kal-Totten plundered many tombs and cemeteries to acquire lost lore and the ghastly material components he needed for his spells and experiments. He took to collecting the sarcophagi of his lootings as macabre trophies, speculating that he might be able to utilize their funereal power in his experiments. One of the stone caskets was an obvious source of magical power, and Uhl-Kal-Totten claimed it to further experiment on, but his research was foiled by the collapse of his demesne.

The glowing sarcophagus possess an unusual and possibly beneficial enchantment, but only to the character brave enough to climb inside. If the lid is removed, ancient hieroglyphics are found to line the interior of the casket. A successful DC 20 Int (History) check reveals them to be concerned with rebirth, but their exact meaning is vague. If a living creature climbs inside the sarcophagus and closes the lid, the green glow increases in brilliance, becoming nearly blinding to those outside the coffin. The person inside the sarcophagus undergoes a vivid hallucination of a hundred faces of strangers racing past, many of whom are dressed in outlandish fashions from the distant past (or future?). The enclosed adventurer must then make a DC 15 Con saving throw. If the save succeeds, nothing happens and the light subsides. If the saving throw fails, a strange contingency magic affects the casket's occupant: if he or she dies an untimely death, the body immediately returns to life as if a *reincarnate* spell had been cast on it. The character's appearance is altered to resemble one of the many individuals who have benefited from the magic of the sarcophagus.

While the coffin's contingency magic is in effect (i.e., prior to the hero's untimely demise), the character radiates both necromancy and transmutation magic if subjected to a *detect magic* spell. There is no other indication of what the sarcophagus's effect is. The sarcophagus's magical contingency effect can be nullified on a character by both dispelling magic and removing a curse from the character.

The remaining 14 sarcophagi in the room are old, but are otherwise unremarkable.

## 10. Shadowkin Lair

Shallow niches in the walls of this dark chamber hold rotted picture frames, indicating this was once a gallery where art was displayed. Thin, decorative columns divide the room in two, and the floor is covered by the dusty, decayed remains of a thick carpet that might once have been magnificent.

**Creatures:** Lurking in the darkness is a victim of shadow known as Egrihl. Egrihl and his hounds were scouts for the Duke's soldiers but, like his companions, Egrihl succumbed to the Darkening. Unlike his fellows, Egrihl became a rare form of creature known as a shadowkin, and his faithful hounds were transformed into shadow mastiffs. The shadowkin and his beasts were lured by shadow's summons and now reside close to the source of the Darkening's power. They defend the approach to the Vault of Shadows (Area 12), attacking by ambushing from the shadows. Egrihl also has a +1 battle-axe, hide armor +1, and a *hunter's mask* (see the "New Magic Items" appendix).

**(Egrihl, Shadowkin:** AC 11, 51 hp; +7 to hit x2, 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage plus DC 11 Con saving throw or target gains a -1 penalty on Str-based attacks, saving throws, and ability checks [strength drain])

**(Shadow Mastiff x2:** AC 12, 22 hp; +4 to hit, 2d6 + 2 piercing damage, or living creatures within 300 feet must make a successful DC 12 Wis saving throw or be frightened for 3d6 rounds [bite])

Egrihl uses the *hunter's mask* ability to cast *enhance ability* (*bear's strength*) on himself at the start of combat to gain temporary hit points. He then wades into the thickest concentration of foes. The shadow mastiffs attack foes Egrihl isn't engaged with.

If both shadow mastiffs are slain and Egrihl is still alive, he flees to Area 12. He waits with the shadow elemental there to defend the Darkling Lanthorn and the conduit to shadow.

## II. Vault Door

This chamber is mostly barren. Its only content is a stone post that rises 4 feet from the floor to end in a U-shaped bracket. A small, round protrusion extends from the east side of the post, giving it a lopsided appearance.

Set in the western wall is a massive stone door with dozens of small, iron plates riveted to its face.

This room protects the Vault of Shadows (Area 12) with its well-secured door and a secret trap.

The door measures 8 feet square. Sixty-four steel tiles, each measuring about 2 inches square, are arranged in an eight-by-eight pattern. The tiles are rusted but solid.

The door is solidly locked. No amount of pushing or hammering will force it open. The door can be safely opened only by pressing the correct combination of tiles. A pressed tile slides 1 inch into the door's face, creating a shallow divot. Fifteen tiles will stay depressed at one time; when a sixteenth is pressed, all of the depressed tiles reset to the original position. If the correct fifteen tiles are depressed, the trap is disarmed and the door is unlocked.

The stone post is situated 6 feet from the door. It is part of the solution to determining the proper combination of tiles to be pushed. Each end of the U-shaped bracket has a narrow slot running vertically down its inside, as if it's intended to hold something. If the metal sheet from Area 6 is unrolled and slid into the grooves, it fits perfectly. The round protrusion extending from the eastern side of the post is a stone ring sized large enough to hold a torch or fat candle. Placing a lit torch or candle into the ring allows light to pass through the holes punched in the metal sheet so that it throws small rectangles of light onto the door's face. Each rectangle flickers directly on one of the iron tiles on the door. The fifteen illuminated tiles are the ones that must be pressed to unlock the door and deactivate the trap. The order in which the tiles are pressed doesn't matter. When all fifteen are depressed, the door unlocks with a loud clank and shifts slightly; it can be pushed open by anyone with a Strength modifier of +1 or higher.

A party that hasn't found the key sheet in Area 6 can deduce which tiles unlock the door with a DC 25 Int (Investigation) check. If successful, someone notices that certain tiles show slightly more sign of wear. A *knock* spell unlocks the door so that it can be pushed open as above, but does not disarm the trap.

The trap is triggered by pushing the door more than 5 inches. A cloud of gas floods the chamber from minuscule vents in the ceiling (a successful DC 20 Perception [Wisdom] check notices the vents if a character specifically inspects the ceiling and has sufficient light to do so). Luckily for the heroes, the toxicity of the gas has diminished over the centuries. Each character must make a successful DC 14 Con saving throw or take 3d8 poison damage. The gas persists for three rounds; characters must repeat the saving throw each time they end their turn in the gas.

## 12. The Vault of Shadows

The high, vaulted ceiling of this chamber suggests a large size, as do the rows of thick pillars that extend away from the entrance and disappear in the Stygian blackness beyond your light. From somewhere in the darkness comes a hideous rustling sound, as if the fabric of reality was undulating in an unnatural rhythm.

## THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

Uhl-Kal-Totten kept his most prized treasures in this secure vault, where they remained undisturbed for millennia. But when a single, stray root brushed across the Darkling Lanthorn, that contact with vitality was enough to rouse it from its long slumber. The shadow elemental within escaped its prison and now oversees the conduit between the Plane of Shadow and the material world.

The far end of the room is covered in the magic *darkness* created by the Darkling Lanthorn, so neither the artifact nor the shadow elemental that lurks within it are visible. The *darkness* can be circumvented as normal (a *daylight* spell, for example), which temporarily banishes the gloom and makes the Lanthorn visible (see sidebar).

**Creature:** The shadow elemental is confined to this vault, both by an innate connection to the Lanthorn and by its need to protect the shadow conduit. It waits until one or more heroes approach the magical *darkness* and then rushes from the gloom to attack.

If Egrihl the shadowkin fled here after confronting the party in Area 10, he too waits in the darkness for an opportunity to strike.

**(Shadow Elemental:** AC 14, 85 hp; +7 to hit x2, 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage [fist]; as an action, can fill a 20-ft.-by-20-ft. area for one round with writhing tentacles that cause 2d6 bludgeoning damage, or no damage with a successful DC 12 Dex saving throw [shadow tentacles, recharge 5, 6])

**(Egrihl, Shadowkin:** AC 11, 51 hp; +7 to hit x2, 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage plus DC 11 Con saving throw or target gains a -1 penalty on Str-based attacks, saving throws, and ability checks)

If the *darkness* is dispelled, the party glimpses an incredibly old lantern forged from black iron and lit with blue-black flame. This is the Darkling Lanthorn. It rests atop a stone table. A large tree root coils around the lantern's handle and vanishes into a crack in the stone wall. The air around the Lanthorn ripples with shadows; those are what create the unearthly rustling noise. A dark, gloomy world can occasionally be glimpsed through the cut crystal windows of the Lanthorn. The Lanthorn can be targeted by attacks and spells if it is visible. If it's destroyed, the conduit is sealed and the Darkening is ended (see sidebar for more information).

Destroying the Darkling Lanthorn before the Darkening has fully enveloped the forest (see "Concluding the Adventure") causes the conduit to break apart, creating a brief but powerful suction of ethereal wind as the breech tears apart. All creatures within 40 feet of the Lanthorn when it is destroyed must make two DC 12 Strength saving throws. Anyone who fails both checks is sucked through the collapsing conduit and launched into the Plane of Shadow. The transition alone does no damage, but such characters are stranded in another dimension with no easy way to return to the Material Plane. They must survive the threats of shadow long enough to discover another means to return home.

With the Darkling Lanthorn vanquished, the pervasive gloom filling the cellar vanishes and the party discerns several large stone chests pushed against the wall in the southwest corner of the room. Each locked chest can be opened with a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check; they aren't trapped. They contain:

- Chest #1: 1,506 cp and 997 ep.
- Chest #2: 57 gp and 160 pp.
- Chest #3: a small coffer holding 4 emeralds (100 gp value each), 8 sapphires (150 gp value each), 4 white opals (200 gp value each), and 2 pink diamonds (300 gp value each).
- Chest #4: A gold trinket box (500 gp value), an electrum statuette of an orc chieftain (200 gp value), a breastplate adorned with moonstones (400 gp value), a gem-encrusted astrolabe (700 gp value), and a gold and ruby ring (1,200 gp value).
- Chest #5: A stave of striking and a ring of wizardry.

## The Darkling Lanthorn

This magical artifact resembles a black iron lantern with cut crystal panes. When visible, the Lanthorn burns with a black-blue light. The Lanthorn naturally produces a permanent *darkness* effect in a 15 foot radius, but this blackness can be temporarily negated with a *daylight* spell or similar magic. If countered, the *darkness* fades for as long as the negating spell is in effect, but returns once the spell ends.

The Darkling Lanthorn has three magical properties.

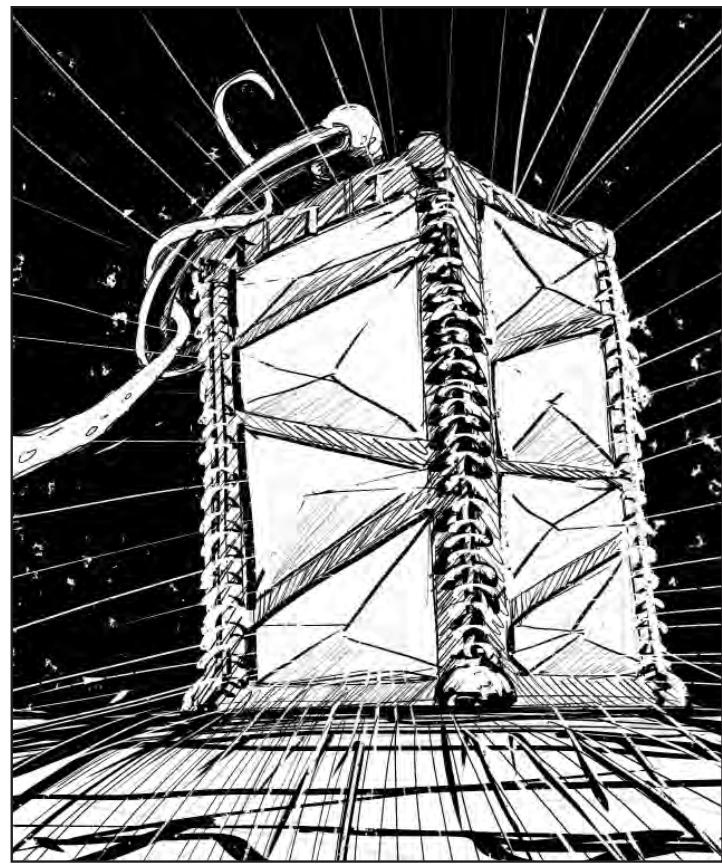
First, a rare shadow elemental resides within its housing. The elemental can emerge from the Lanthorn to protect it and to defend the conduit the artifact produces. The elemental can return to the Darkling Lanthorn when injured, healing all damage after spending 24 hours inside the artifact.

Second, the Darkling Lanthorn acts as a *gate* per the 9th level spell. The gate leads to the Plane of Shadow, and is permanent as long as the Darkling Lanthorn exists. Any creature speaking the phrase, "Lethel marr d'clatik" (which is inscribed on the base of the Lanthorn in Draconic) is transported to the Plane of Shadow the same as if the *gate* spell had been cast. The *gate* works in both directions.

Third, the Darkling Lanthorn has the power to form a conduit between the Material Plane and the Plane of Shadow. This conduit allows the basic essence of shadow to slowly invade the material world with its pervasive darkness. This "darkening" begins slowly, assimilating an area of 2 square miles per day at first, but quickly begins accelerating. The effects of this darkening are detailed at the beginning of this adventure.

The Darkling Lanthorn is subject to physical and magical attacks. Destroying the Lanthorn closes the conduit and the gate, and banishes the shadow elemental back to the Plane of Shadow if it is still alive. The Darkling Lanthorn has an AC of 15 and 100 hit points. It is immune to cold, lightning, necrotic, and poison damage, and has resistance to damage from nonmagical weapons.

If reduced to 25 hit points or less, the Darkling Lanthorn attempts to summon shadow kings to help protect it. Roll 4d6; one shadow king is summoned for each die that rolls 5 or 6.



## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

# Concluding the Adventure

The destruction of the Darkling Lanthorn likely closes the conduit between the material plane and shadow, halting the Darkening and preventing Namjan Forest from become a beachhead of darkness. With the Lanthorn gone, the effects of the Darkening slowly subside over several days, vanishing like shadows at noon. Creatures infected by the touch of the Plane of Shadow do not revert to normal, however; they remain afflicted until their deaths. Whether it's possible for them to pass on these traits to their offspring remains to be seen (and may play a role in further adventures). Heroes who end the Darkening are rewarded as promised by the Duke, earning the 2,500 gp bounty and being named "Wardens of Namjan Forest," a grant of minor nobility that allows them the right to build a stronghold within the woodlands and to act as local overseers of the domain.

It is possible, however, that the spread of shadow grows too large to be

easily broken with the Lanthorn's destruction. If the party tarries too long and the daily growth of the Darkening infiltrates every forest hex on the overland map, shadow succeeds in establishing a claim on the material plane. In this event, destroying the Darkling Lanthorn is insufficient to seal the conduit. Like an avalanche racing downhill, shadow gains too much momentum and the artifact is no longer necessary to keep the conduit open.

In this case, the Darkening continues spreading across the land, moving beyond the boundaries of the forest and infecting whatever it touches. Shadow's encroachment grows daily and the forces of light and hope are pushed back before the advance. Powerful magic, either in spell form or residing in ancient relics, is necessary to seal the conduit and halt the invasion. However, with the conduit stabilized, denizens of the Plane of Shadow also begin pouring through the gate, so anyone venturing into the afflicted area must face them as well as shadow-touched creatures. Eventually, an entire shadow army marches out of Namjan Forest to lay siege to the world. Only an equally powerful force of Light has a hope of stopping it.

# Appendix

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## New Magical Items

### Hunter's Mask

#### Very rare wondrous item

This object is a wooden mask carved from darkest mahogany and bearing inlaid ebony to form winding sigils across its face. When worn by any class other than a ranger, it is simply a decorative ornament. Only a ranger can utilize its full power.

The hunter's mask has three properties when donned by a ranger.

- The wearer gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If the wearer already had darkvision, its range increases by 50 percent.
- The wearer has tactical advantage on Wis (Survival) checks when tracking, regardless of quarry. This benefit does not affect the ranger's usual tactical advantage when tracking favored enemies.
- Once per day, the wearer can cast *enhance ability* on himself, choosing whichever of the spell's six effects he desires. This spell is cast by the *hunter's mask* and does not count as a spell use by the ranger.

### Wand of Radiance

#### Rare magic wand

This wand is crafted from an ancient human tibia wrapped with crumbling reptile hide. Prehistoric glyphs are carved down the length of the bone.

**Property:** The wand has seven charges. As an action, the owner can cast one of the following spells, using the indicated number of charges to do so.

- *Light* (1 charge)
- *Fire bolt* (1 charge)
- *Daylight* (3 charges)

If the wand's last charge is expended, roll 1d20. On a result of 1, the wand crumbles into dust and is destroyed. The wand regains 1d6+1 expended charges each day at sunrise.

## New Monsters

### Gloom Gnome

XP 200 (CR 1)

NE Small elemental (shadow)

Initiative +2

#### DEFENSE

AC 13 (natural armor)

hp: 27 (6d6 + 6)

**Immunity:** Necrotic and poison damage; disease, petrification, poison, unconsciousness

**Vulnerability:** Radiant damage

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 20 ft.

**Multiattack:** A gloom gnome attacks twice.

**Melee Attack—Shadow Blade:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage. The gloom

gnome summons a blade of chilling shadow into its hand that persists as long as the gloom gnome desires. The shadow blade can be dismissed at will.

**Ranged Attack—Necrotic Ray:** +4 to hit, range 30/60; one creature. Hit: 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage. The gloom gnome throws a beam of dark, scintillating energy that drains the victim of vitality.

#### STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), Dex 15 (+2), Con 13 (+1),

Int 12 (+1), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 9 (-1)

**Languages:** Common, Gnomish, Primordial (shadow)

**Skills:** Stealth +4

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft.

#### TRAITS

**Surprise attack:** If the gloom gnome surprises a creature and hits it with an attack on the first round of combat, the attack deals an extra 2d6 damage.

**Light sensitivity:** A gloom gnome has tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks while it is in bright light.

**Shadow stealth:** Dim light obscures the gloom gnome sufficiently for it to attempt to hide and gives it tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks.

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary or band (2-5)

**Description:** A short humanoid with dusky, ash-colored skin and glittering black eyes slinks out of the shadows and plants a blade in your back.

### Grimseem

XP 450 (CR 2)

CE Small elemental (shadow)

Initiative +2

#### DEFENSE

AC 14

hp: 31 (7d6 + 7)

#### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 10 ft. fly 40 ft.

**Multiattack:** A grimseem bites once and attacks twice with tentacles.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d4 + 3 necrotic damage.

**Melee Attack—Tentacle:** +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d8 + 3 bludgeoning damage.

#### STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1),

Int 5 (-3), Wis 8 (-1), Cha 8 (-1)

**Languages:** None

**Skills:** Stealth +5

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft.

#### TRAITS

**Shadow form:** While in dim light, the grimseem can move

## QUESTS OF DOOM: LYCANTHROPIES & ELEMENTALS

through any opening regardless of size without squeezing.  
**Shadow stealth:** Dim light obscures the grimseem sufficiently for it to attempt to hide and gives it tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks.  
**Light sensitivity:** While in bright light, a grimseem has tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Plane of Shadow

**Organization:** Solitary or flock (2-7)

**Description:** An inky black creature resembling a headless bat with a pair of long tentacles trailing behind it swoops down upon you, lashing and biting.

### Miasmic Death

**XP** 100 (CR 1/2)

Unaligned Medium ooze

**Initiative** +2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 12

**hp:** 36 (8d8)

**Resistance:** Bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**Immunity:** Necrotic damage; blindness, charm, prone, restraint, stun, unconsciousness

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** fly 20 ft.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 2 (-4), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 10 (+0),

**Int** 5 (-3), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 10 (+0)

**Languages:** None

**Senses:** Blindsight 60 ft.

### OFFENSE

**Melee Attack—Steal Breath:** automatic hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). **Hit:** target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or take 2d6 necrotic damage.

### TRAITS

**Gaseous Form:** The miasmic death can move through spaces occupied by opponents but can't end its turn there. It can pass through openings of any size without squeezing.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** A cloud of dim oblong bubbles throws a pale rainbow light as it drifts toward you.

### Shadow Elemental

**XP** 700 (CR 3)

CE Large elemental (shadow)

**Initiative** +2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 14 (natural armor)

**hp:** 80 (10d10 + 30)

**Resistance:** Bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**Immunity:** Necrotic and poison damage; disease, paralysis, petrification, poison, prone, unconsciousness

**Vulnerability:** Radiant damage

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**Multiattack:** A shadow elemental attacks twice with fists.

**Melee Attack—Fist:** +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). **Hit:** 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 19 (+4), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 16 (+3),

**Int** 5 (-3), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 10 (+0)

**Languages:** Primordial (Shadow)

**Skills:** Stealth +5

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft.

### TRAITS

**Shadow form:** While in dim light, the shadow elemental can move through any opening regardless of width without squeezing.

**Shadow stealth:** Dim light obscures the shadow elemental sufficiently for it to attempt to hide and gives it tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks.

**Shadow Tentacles (Recharge 5, 6):** As an action, a shadow elemental can fill a 20-foot-square area with squirming, shadowy tentacles that last until the beginning of its next turn. The affected area becomes difficult terrain. Any creature in the area when the tentacles are conjured or that enters it must make a successful DC 12 Dex saving throw or suffer 2d6 bludgeoning damage and be grappled.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Plane of Shadow

**Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** A vaguely humanoid shape of swirling, shadowy mist slithers out of the blackness. A pair of empty holes in its "face" stare at you with malevolent hatred.

### Shadow King

**XP** 700 (CR 3)

CE Large undead

**Initiative** +3

### DEFENSE

**AC** 13

**hp:** 39 (6d10 + 6)

**Resistance:** Acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**Immunities:** Necrotic and poison damage; fright, grapple, paralysis, petrification, poison, polymorph, prone, restraint, unconsciousness

**Vulnerability:** Radiant damage

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Multiattack:** A shadow king attacks twice with claws.

**Melee Attack—Claw:** +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

**Hit:** 1d10 + 3 necrotic damage, and a living creature must make a successful DC 11 Con saving throw or gain a -1 penalty on all Strength-based attack rolls, Str saving throws, and Strength ability checks. The penalty is cumulative with multiple unsuccessful saving throws. The penalty persists until the creature completes a long or short rest. If the penalty plus the creature's normal Strength modifier reach -6, the creature dies. If a non-evil living creature dies from this effect, a new shadow king rises from its corpse 1d6 hours later.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 3 (-4), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 12 (+1),

**Int** 8 (-1), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 10 (+0)

**Languages:** none

**Skills:** Stealth +6

# THE DARKENING OF NAMJAN FOREST

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft.

## TRAITS

**Shadow Form:** While in dim light, the shadow king can move through any opening regardless of width without squeezing.

**Shadow Stealth:** Dim light obscures the shadow elemental sufficiently for it to attempt to hide and gives it tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks.

## ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary or band (2-5)

**Description:** A large humanoid shadow reaches out, a wave of chilling cold accompanying its grasping claws.

## Shadowkin

**XP** 100 (CR 1/2)

NE Medium elemental (shadow)

**Initiative** +1

## DEFENSE

**AC** 11

**hp:** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Immunity:** Necrotic and poison damage; petrification, poison, unconsciousness

**Vulnerability:** Radiant damage

## OFFENSE

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Melee Attack—Strength Drain:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage, and a living creature takes a cumulative -1 penalty to all Strength-based attack rolls, saving throws, and Strength checks. If the total penalty and the creature's normal Strength modifier ever equals -5, the creature dies. The penalty persists until the creature takes a long or short rest.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 15 (+2), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 12 (+1),

**Int** 12 (+1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 10 (+0)

**Languages:** Common, Primordial (shadow)

**Skills:** Stealth +8

**Senses:** Darkvision 120 ft.

## TRAITS

**Shadow Form:** While in dim light, a shadowkin can move through any opening regardless of width without squeezing.

**Shadow Stealth:** Dim light obscures the shadowkin sufficiently for it to attempt to hide and gives it tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks.

## ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Solitary or band (2-5)

**Description:** A humanoid shape carved from living shadow and dressed in martial gear steps forward to bar your passage.

## Shadow Mastiff

**XP** 100 (CR 1/2)

CE Medium fiend

**Initiative** +2

## DEFENSE

**AC** 12

**hp:** 22 (5d8)

**Resistance:** Bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

**Immunity:** Necrotic and poison damage; poison

**Vulnerability:** Radiant damage

## OFFENSE

**Speed:** 45 ft.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 2 piercing damage.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 12 (+1), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 10 (+0),

**Int** 4 (-3), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 14 (+2)

**Languages:** Common

**Skills:** Stealth +6

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

## TRAITS

**Frightful Howl:** As an action, a shadow mastiff can emit a terrifying, otherworldly howl that conjures nightmare visions in those who hear it. All living creatures within 300 feet of the shadow mastiff that hear its howl must make a successful DC 12 Wis saving throw or be frightened for 3d6 rounds. While frightened, the creature must move away from the shadow mastiff as rapidly as possible, until it's far enough away that it can't hear the howling at all (not just beyond the howl's effective 300-foot range).

**Shadow Affinity:** A shadow mastiff has tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks in dim light or darkness, and it can make a Stealth check to become hidden as a bonus action anytime it is in darkness or dim light. A shadow mastiff suffers the effect of being poisoned while in bright light.

## ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land

**Organization:** Hunting pack (4-16)

**Description:** Shadow mastiffs are large dogs resembling normal mastiffs but seemingly composed of solid shadow.

## Shadow-Touched Creatures

Shadow-touched creatures are normal creatures that have been altered by overexposure to the Darkening. Any living creature can become shadow-touched. When a creature is transformed into a shadow-touched monster, the following changes are made to its stat block.

1. The creature becomes evil if it isn't already.
2. The creature gains one new ability chosen or randomly determined from the following list.
  3. **Shadow Stealth:** The Creature gains proficiency in Stealth. Dim light obscures the creature sufficiently for it to attempt to hide and gives it tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks.
  4. **Strength Drain:** As per a shadow's attack (q.v.).
  5. **Damage Resistance:** The creature gains resistance against bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.
  6. **Shadow Coil:** The creature gains the Shadow Coil attack (Melee Attack—Shadow Coil: + standard bonus to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + Str or Dex modifier necrotic damage).
  7. **Shadow Form:** While in dim light, the shadow-touched creature can move through any opening regardless of width without squeezing.
  8. **Necrotic Ray:** The creature gains the Necrotic Ray attack (**Ranged Attack—Necrotic Ray:** + standard bonus to hit, range 30 ft./60 ft.; one creature. *Hit:* 1d6 + Str or Dex modifier necrotic damage). The shadow-touched creature throws a beam of dark, scintillating energy that drains the victim of vitality.
  9. **Shadow Ripping:** The creature gains the Shadow Ripping attack (Melee Attack—Shadow Ripping: + standard bonus to hit; reach 15 ft.; one creature. *Hit:* 2d6 + Str or Dex modifier slashing damage. Ghostly black arms emerge from the creature's shoulders to tear at its enemies' flesh).
  10. **Shadow Immunity:** The creature gains immunity to necrotic and poison damage, and to paralysis, petrification, poison, prone, and unconsciousness.
  11. Increase the creature's Challenge Rating by +1 to reflect its new ability.

Men  
&  
Monstrosities

# Perils of Ghostwind Pass

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By Matt Finch

"Once upon a time, twin sisters went to slay the Winter Prince, who held the freezing winds like tigers leashed in Ghostwind Pass..."

## Introduction

Roll 3d6 and add 10. Write that number down.

*Perils of Ghostwind Pass* is a Fifth Edition adventure designed for four to six characters from level 5 to 7. It is playable at other levels and with different numbers of characters, but the monsters and risks of the adventure may require adjustment by the Game Master to offer an appropriate challenge to the players.

The adventure has two levels of complexity. On one level, there is an interesting background story with a mystery that can be solved, leading to a powerful artifact. The mystery can be left out if desired, leaving a straightforward location-based adventure with a race against time and an evil mastermind.

The adventure is designed to fit anywhere in your campaign world, as long as you have some mountains available. If you're using the Frog God Games *Lost Lands* campaign world, Ghostwind Pass cuts through the northern reach of the Cretian Mountains, connecting Yolbiac Vale to the Town of Elet.

## Background

The Ghostwind is a mountain pass, threading a high trail through the taller peaks rising to either side. It is the main pass in the area, since it can be traversed (with difficulty) by wagons. A few smaller trails remain usable later into the winter, but these mule-trails are too rough for wagons and generally pose other significant dangers such as rockslides along the narrow, cliff-side trails.

An old stone road winds its way through the pass, relic of an empire that has receded from these lands, leaving them unprotected and wild. Although the road is dilapidated and broken, the work done by its builders still allows the pass to be traversed by wagons, even centuries after the stones were originally set. The road is vital to the merchants and other travelers in the Ghostwind for another reason, too: as long as it is not covered in snow, it shows travelers the fastest and safest way through a pass that has several dead-end ravines and blind canyons. Without it, a large number of journeyers through the pass would never arrive on the far side of the mountains.

The ravines and canyons of Ghostwind Pass are rich hunting and trapping grounds during the warm seasons, drawing fortune-seekers to the hunting camp around the Abbey of Saint Kathelynn and to the "South Camp" on the far side of the mountains. There is a third settlement in the highlands of the pass, the Manor of the Mountain Queen, but visitors to the pass avoid this fell place. It is said that the Mountain Queen is not human, although no one really knows what she might be.

Twice each year, the Ghostwind blows down the high peaks, hurling snow and sleet before it to bury most of the pass. The weather becomes violent and murderously cold. Anyone caught in the heights when this maelstrom hits is most likely doomed. Entire caravans have been lost, found at the end of the season where they froze to death after only a day or two of desperate travel back toward a lower altitude. The Ghostwind season lasts two months; during this time, the pass is effectively closed to all passage.

If you intend to run a player character in this adventure, READ NO FURTHER.

## Referee Notes

The vague rumors about the Mountain Queen's Manor are entirely correct: the Mountain Queen is not human. She is a lamia with innate power over storms and snow. She uses these powers to insulate her stone castle from the Ghostwind. Once the Ghostwind falls, she and her monstrous followers rule the high regions of the pass for the two months until the murderously cold storms abate. Chief among her clan are her children: the gray saber-tooths and the white were-tigers that hunt in the higher regions of the pass.

The lamia is long-lived; she knows a great deal about the series of events that took place in the pass seventy-five years ago, when a powerful fey being known as the "Winter Prince" was supposedly defeated by the paladin Kathelynn—because she *is* Kathelynn, or at least what is left of her original self (see, "What Really Happened," below). Although the Winter Prince survived, he traded his life for a promise to restrict the supernatural storms in the pass to twice per year. The characters might or might not stumble upon the odd mysteries and contradictions surrounding the defeat of the Winter Prince; the information is there to be uncovered but is not necessary to the adventure.

For adventurers, the most important key to survival in the high region of Ghostwind Pass (other than avoiding frontal assaults on the Mountain Queen's hall) is to understand how the cold weather moves in. During the warm seasons, humans and their kin are able to survive in the pass. Once the Ghostwind Season begins, the storms and cold turn the pass into a death trap. The only hope for a hunter or a group of adventurers is to fight their way back down to the lower altitudes, out of the deadly weather. No one knows exactly when the Ghostwind will suddenly fill the pass with snow and bitter ice, but the locals are able to make a close estimate. It will be up to the characters how long to remain in the pass as the Ghostwind draws closer. If greed delays them too long, there is a good chance that they will die in the harsh conditions of the Ghostwind, joining the ranks of many other fortune-seekers who thought they could risk "just one more day."

## Missions

The adventure assumes that the characters have arrived at the north side of the mountains, beginning the adventure just as they approach

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

the Abbey of St. Kathelynn. The town of Elet lies close behind them to the north, so allow the characters to do any pre-adventure information gathering there, if they choose. They might simply be traveling through the area, soon to learn that the pass offers some interesting possibilities; but less time will be wasted at the game table if the characters start with some kind of objective (which can, of course, change during the course of the adventure). Seven possible missions are listed below.

- A local baron's son recently disappeared in the pass during a hunting expedition into the ravines. Find out what happened to him and his three companions, and return them (or their bodies) to the baron. The reward will be appreciably larger if the lost nobles are still alive.
- A wizard offers to pay well for the heart of a peryton, and even more for one or more eggs. More than one caravan through the pass has been savaged by perytons, so finding and killing one ought to be easy!
- The characters are hired to guard a small hunting party: a minor noble and his/her courtiers ( $1d3 + 3$ ). They are seeking large game such as boars or deer. Unfortunately, the highborn can be very independent-minded and difficult when it comes to taking advice from members of the lower social orders.
- The characters might decide to go hunting on their own behalf: there are definitely a lot of undeserving monsters out there, wearing some very valuable furs.
- An alchemist could hire adventurers to find a "blood violet." The more sacks of blood violets they can collect, the better.
- The characters are hired to guard a mule train through the pass.
- In the midst of the Ghostwind season, while the storms are blowing, the characters are hired to get an emergency message (or medicine, or a fugitive) through the pass.

## Arrival of the Ghostwind

The first thing to do at the beginning of the adventure is to roll three six-sided dice and add 10 ( $3d6 + 10$ ). This is the number of days that elapse between the characters' arrival at the Abbey of St. Kathelynn and the Ghostwind blowing into the pass. The effects of being caught in the Ghostwind are described below, in the "Wilderness Map" section.

The players ought to have some idea of the bell-curve probability involved in their race against time (that all-important  $3d6 + 10$  days), so it's important that someone in the abbey should tell the characters something like the following.

After the Ghostwind blows in, you'll die if you're in the pass. It's just too cold. But you've got some time until then. My rheumatism says the Ghostwind won't blow in for another 10 days plus another three casts of the die, or so. You never know exactly when, until a couple days before. Two days of heavy clouds and then the cold.

If you and your gaming group have a more "beer and pretzels" approach to the game, feel free to just tell them that you rolled  $3d6 + 10$  days to find out when the Ghostwind will blow in, and that you're not telling them the result. They can judge the odds for themselves.

## Wilderness Map

The map shows three elevations, each shaded differently. Capital letters offer a rough indication of risk levels. The numbered locations on the Wilderness Map are referred to in the Map Key with the letter W for "Wilderness." The elevations and other symbols are described in more detail below.

### Three Elevations

**Low Elevation:** This is the floor of the pass. It is very rough terrain but passable by mules and horses. Wagons can negotiate the road, but they move slowly. Although this is the lowest elevation in the mountain pass itself and is low enough for evergreen trees to survive, it is still high, cold, rocky ground. The trees here are sparse and small; most cannot live through the bitter cold of the Ghostwind season.

**Middle Elevation:** These are high, steep areas, but not rugged enough to require the use of ropes and other equipment. Lots of the movement in these areas is climbing rather than walking, using hands as well as feet. This contour line also represents the tree line: trees cannot grow in the middle or highest elevations of the pass.

**Highest Elevation:** The highest elevation is impassable for purposes of the adventure. A high-elevation area can be reached with climbing gear (the peryton nest is an example), but it is not possible to move from one high-elevation square to another. Up and down are the only choices here.

### Special Movement

**Mules and Other Mounts:** mules do not increase an expedition's speed; they are no faster than people, but they can carry more. Horses also do not increase speed, and since they are not as surefooted as mules, they double movement cost on the Middle Elevation (see "Movement Cost" below). Only mountain creatures such as giant mountain goats and great cats, or giant mounts such as mammoths and elephants, will affect movement. Such mounts do not increase the party's speed, but they do reduce the toll of moving at speed through the uneven terrain, adding one hour to the length of time the characters can move during the day (increase from eight to nine).

**Wagons:** Wagons move at "slow" speed on the road at the lowest elevation (see below, "Movement Speed"). They can move off the road but have a 10 percent chance per hex traveled of breaking a wheel. They cannot move into the Middle Elevation at all.

**Flying:** Flying might appear to be the ideal solution to the perils of Ghostwind Pass, but it actually affords little benefit. During the Ghostwind, flying and levitation are simply not possible. Even before the Ghostwind arrives, the winds in the pass are quite violent if anyone flies higher than 50 feet. Flying provides the following benefits and drawbacks.

- **Flying Speed:** Flying speed requires 0.2 hours (12 minutes) to cross a mile-wide hex on the map. This might seem slow, but the winds are very difficult to handle when airborne.

- **Benefit:** The adventurers cannot be surprised at the beginning of an encounter.

• **Benefit:** If the characters are specifically hunting for animals, roll a second encounter each time you make a normal encounter check. They will not have two encounters, but if the second roll indicates an encounter when the first roll didn't, this means the flying character has spotted the other possibility at a distance from a tenth of a mile up to a full mile ( $1d10 \times 0.1$  miles). Note that the other encounter may have spotted the flying character as well, since airborne objects are easy to spot. If it is intelligent, it will definitely react in some way once it knows it is being observed from afar.

• **Higher than 50 feet—Immediate Risk:** Every time the character tries to fly higher than 50 feet, there is an immediate 10 percent chance that a violent gust yanks the character  $1d4 \times 100$  feet sideways and down in a random direction, to smash against the rocky floor of the pass for 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

• **Higher than 50 feet—Ongoing Risk:** Each mile scouted (and if stationary, once per 20 minutes) while a character remains airborne at an altitude above 50 feet, the character has a 10 percent chance to be blown off course  $1d3$  miles in a random direction. Hitting one of the highest-altitude squares while blowing off course results in a rapid stop and 4d6 bludgeoning damage. As soon as a character reaches this elevation, the feel of the winds alone will alert the character to the risk. (It is a

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

good idea, for purposes of the game, to give the player a fairly good description of the risk and the result of having a character flying in this sort of wind.

- *Lower than 50 feet flying fast—Ongoing Risk:* A character skimming along at an altitude below 50 feet can travel at a movement cost of 0.1 hours per mile, without the risk of blowing off course. However, the low-flying character faces risk from downdrafts. Once per mile traveled, a low-flying character has a 10 percent chance to be caught in one of these and smashed to the ground ( $1d4 \times 100$  feet of random sideways movement, and 2d6 bludgeoning damage upon landing).

- *Lower than 50 feet flying slowly—No Risk:* It is safe to remain with the rest of the party at an altitude of less than 50 feet, gaining the benefits of aerial scouting. The character will be tossed around in the wind but not thrown sideways, downward, or off into the distance.

### Movement Speed

Overland movement in Ghostwind Pass is considerably slower than the official handbook speed, reflecting the fact that characters aren't really "traveling" here. In any combat on the rocky terrain of the mountain pass, assume that all terrain is difficult.

Each hex on the Wilderness Map takes a certain amount of time to cross, depending on its elevation. Crossing the contour lines themselves does not cost extra time; that's accounted for by the different movement rates at the different elevations. A normal speed and a slow speed are given; certain circumstances can reduce the characters' movement rate as described later. Moreover, the characters will normally be limited to eight hours of hiking in a day (see below).

*Lowest Elevation:* It takes 0.5 hours to cross a hex at normal speed and 1 hour at slow speed. Movement cost during the Ghostwind is 1.5 hour at normal speed and 2 hours for slowed speed.

*Middle Elevation:* It takes 1 hour at normal speed to cross a Middle Elevation hex and 2 hours at slow speed. The characters cannot cross Middle Elevation terrain if they are "force marching" in the 9th or 10th hour of the march. During the Ghostwind, it takes 3 hours at normal speed to cross Middle Elevation terrain, and 4 hours at slowed speed.

*Highest Elevation:* The High Elevations can be scaled to reach a particular objective such as the peryton nest at Area W-4. They are

impassable to any other movement; characters cannot move from one high-elevation hex to another.

### Exhaustion and Encumbrance

Characters can hike up to eight hours per day, spending the remaining time making/breaking camp, cooking dinner and breakfast, resting, and sleeping. It is very, very difficult to travel over rough terrain for eight hours with heavy loads of supplies. Nevertheless, it is possible for characters to really push themselves and "force march" to go more than eight hours a day. Forced marching allows the characters to keep going an additional two hours (for a total time of ten hours).

Forced marching is dangerous in treacherous terrain such as Ghostwind Pass. Exhaustion sets in, reducing alertness and making people clumsier than normal. It is much easier to miss your footing or trip over a rock that would have been noticed and avoided earlier in the day. At the end of each hour of forced marching, each character must make a DC 12 Con saving throw or suffer two levels of exhaustion.

If the characters are extremely burdened (not likely, but possible), or are slowed by exhaustion, they will be moving at "slow" speed—which is not necessarily half speed.

### Risk Zones

The Wilderness Map is divided into several risk zones, denoted by capital letters. Along the same elevation, the exact boundaries of the risk zones are unimportant, but the risk zones don't cross contour lines. Whenever characters climb up or down past one of the contour lines, they are automatically crossing into the risk zone in the new elevation. Most of the risk zones are specifically to indicate how dangerous the higher elevations are.

There's another side to risks, of course. As they say, "the greater the risk, the greater the reward." If characters are hunting for valuable pelts, they will find more of them in the more dangerous parts of the pass.

### Hunting

The valuable hunting—for furs—is handled by the system of encounter checks described below. Whenever characters enter a new hex, there is a chance for an encounter. If the characters are also hunting for subsistence, use the normal rules for foraging.

### Encounter Checks

The short answer is: check for an encounter when characters enter a new hex, and once during the night. If the Ghostwind is blowing, use the special encounter table for the Ghostwind Season. Note that the Ghostwind Effect Check is a different check (made every two hours and once at night).

To check for an encounter when characters enter a new hex (or for the one nighttime check), find which Risk Area the characters are closest to (reminder: don't cross contour lines), and roll on the encounter table for that Risk Area. It is fine to be approximate in terms of which risk area the characters are in.

### Ghostwind Effect Check

Once the Ghostwind has blown in, it becomes so cold that no matter how long the characters try to rest, they cannot gain the benefits of a long rest. A full night's sleep is needed just to gain the benefits of a short rest.

Each day the characters are in the pass while the Ghostwind is blowing, they may suffer damage and other effects from the supernatural cold and violent storms. Every two hours of movement, in addition to the encounter checks, roll for *each character* on the Ghostwind Effects Table (d100). A successful Wis (Survival) saving throw gains a +5 on the die roll.

If characters are fighting their way out of the pass during the Ghostwind, consider them "out of the pass" if they reach the abbey or the south camp.

## Quick Travel Rules Summary

1. Determine Movement Rate (normal or slow). If flying, check flying rules.
2. Move into a hex
  - a. Mark off the time required for a hex at that elevation. *Ghostwind Rules:* when 2 hours elapse, each character makes a check on the Ghostwind Effects Table
  - b. Determine Risk Level for that hex (the nearest capital letter at that elevation)
  - c. Roll for Encounter: use the table for that Risk Level. *Ghostwind Rules:* use the Ghostwind Encounter Table, not the Risk Level Tables.
  - d. After 8 hours of movement, characters must either make camp or force march.
  - e. If they force march, add Con saving throws against 2 levels of exhaustion (see **Exhaustion and Encumbrance**). *Ghostwind Rules:* cannot force march during Ghostwind.
  - f. When characters make camp, make one more encounter check for that Risk Level, covering the entire night. Check to see if the Ghostwind is going to hit the next day. *Ghostwind Rules:* use the Ghostwind Encounter Table, not the Risk Level Tables. Make only one more check on the Ghostwind Effects Table for each character.

# QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

## Wilderness Travel Tables

### Ghostwind Effects Table

| d100  | Effect                                                               |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01-10 | Make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or suffer severe frostbite* |
| 11-15 | 6 cold damage**                                                      |
| 16-20 | 4 cold damage**                                                      |
| 21-25 | 2 cold damage**                                                      |
| 26-00 | No adverse effect                                                    |

\*Randomly determine on 1d6 whether the frostbite is in (1) fingers of left hand, (2) fingers of right hand, (3) toes of left foot, (4) toes of right foot, (5) nose, (6) ear. Cure wounds cast at 3rd level or higher can reverse the damage if it is cast before the frostbitten piece falls off (1d6 days). Unless more than one finger is lost on the same hand, missing fingers are not enough of a problem to cause modifiers on die rolls.

\*\*Because the characters cannot get a long rest during the Ghostwind, these hit points will not automatically be restored even after a night's sleep.

### Ghostwind Encounters Table

(use this table in *all* Risk Areas during the Ghostwind)

| d100  | Encounter/Result                                                   |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-76  | No Encounter                                                       |
| 77-78 | White Pudding (1)                                                  |
| 79-80 | Giant Snowy Owl (wild: not from the Roster) (1)                    |
| 81-82 | Giant Mountain Goats (1d4 + 1)                                     |
| 83-84 | Giant Badger (1)                                                   |
| 85-86 | Snow-serpents (1d4 + 1)                                            |
| 87-90 | Giant Weasels (1d3)                                                |
| 91-92 | Cave Bear (1d2)                                                    |
| 93-94 | Giant Ermine (1)                                                   |
| 95-96 | Gray Saber-tooth (from the Roster) (1d2)                           |
| 97    | White Weretiger (from the Roster: Claude, Pierre, or Thibault) (1) |
| 98-99 | Remorhaz                                                           |
| 00    | Khethro Tulroc the Satyr (see Area W-7)                            |

### Encounter Table for Risk Areas A, B, C, D (lower risk)

| d100  | Risk Area A<br>Low Elevation,<br>Low Risk                              | Risk Area B<br>Low Elevation,<br>Higher Risk                           | Risk Area C<br>High Elevation,<br>Low Risk                                                                                                                         | Risk Area D<br>High Elevation,<br>Low Risk                                                                                                                         |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-75  | No encounter                                                           | No encounter                                                           | No encounter                                                                                                                                                       | No encounter                                                                                                                                                       |
| 76-78 | Mountain Goats (normal)<br>(1d4 + 2)                                   | Mountain Goats (normal)<br>(1d4 + 2)                                   | Mountain Goats (normal)<br>(1d4 + 2)                                                                                                                               | Mountain Goats (normal)<br>(1d4 + 2)                                                                                                                               |
| 79-80 | Wolves (1d4)                                                           | Wolves (1d6)                                                           | Wolves (1d6 + 2)                                                                                                                                                   | Wolves (1d6 + 2)                                                                                                                                                   |
| 81    | Giant Lynx (1)                                                         | Giant Lynxes (1d3)                                                     | Giant Lynxes (1d3)                                                                                                                                                 | Giant Lynxes (1d3)                                                                                                                                                 |
| 82    | Wild Boar (1)                                                          | Wild Boars (1d3)                                                       | Giant Mountain Goats<br>(1d4)                                                                                                                                      | Giant Mountain Goats<br>(1d4)                                                                                                                                      |
| 83    | Badger (1)                                                             | Badgers (1d2)                                                          | Badgers (1d3)                                                                                                                                                      | Badgers (1d3)                                                                                                                                                      |
| 84-85 | Bear, Black (1)                                                        | Bear, Black (1)                                                        | Bears, Black (1d2)                                                                                                                                                 | Bears, Black (1d2)                                                                                                                                                 |
| 86    | Giant Weasel (1)                                                       | Giant Weasel (1)                                                       | Giant Weasels (1d2)                                                                                                                                                | Giant Weasels<br>(1d2)                                                                                                                                             |
| 87-88 | Giant Ermine (1)                                                       | Giant Ermine (1)                                                       | Giant Ermines (1d2)                                                                                                                                                | Giant Ermines (1d2)                                                                                                                                                |
| 89-90 | Humans (1d3) (trappers,<br>normal humans)                              | Ogre hunting party (1d4<br>+ 1)                                        | Minotaur Hunting Party<br>(1d3 + 1)                                                                                                                                | Perytons (1d2) (or<br>Minotaur Hunting party if<br>the perytons are dead)                                                                                          |
| 91    | Hawk overhead (normal)                                                 | Vultures circle party for 2<br>hours (normal)                          | Perytons (1d2) (normal<br>hawk overhead if perytons<br>are dead)                                                                                                   | Perytons (1d6) (normal<br>hawk overhead if perytons<br>are dead)                                                                                                   |
| 92    | Badgers, giant (1d2)                                                   | Badgers, giant (1d2 + 1)                                               | Giant Ermine (1)                                                                                                                                                   | Giant Ermine (1)                                                                                                                                                   |
| 93    | Giant Ants (1d4 + 1<br>workers, 1 warrior)                             | Giant Ants (1d4 + 3<br>workers, 1d2 warriors)                          | Giant Ants (1d8 + 4<br>workers, 1d4 + 1 warriors)                                                                                                                  | Giant Ants (1d8 + 4<br>workers, 1d4 + 1 warriors)                                                                                                                  |
| 94    | Slip and fall on rock: 1<br>character takes 1d4<br>bludgeoning damage. | Slip and fall on rock: 1<br>character takes 1d4<br>bludgeoning damage. | Trip and slide on rocks:<br>1 character takes 1d4 +<br>1 bludgeoning damage<br>from fall and must make a<br>DC 15 Dex saving throw or<br>suffer a sprained ankle.* | Trip and slide on rocks:<br>1 character takes 1d4 +<br>1 bludgeoning damage<br>from fall and must make a<br>DC 15 Dex saving throw or<br>suffer a sprained ankle.* |
| 95    | No encounter                                                           | No encounter                                                           | Rockslide. Each character<br>must make a DC 15 Dex<br>saving throw or take 1d20<br>bludgeoning damage.                                                             | Rockslide. Each character<br>must make a DC 15 Dex<br>saving throw or take 1d20<br>bludgeoning damage.                                                             |

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

| d100         | Risk Area A<br>Low Elevation,<br>Low Risk | Risk Area B<br>Low Elevation,<br>Higher Risk | Risk Area C<br>High Elevation,<br>Low Risk    | Risk Area D<br>High Elevation,<br>Low Risk    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>96</b>    | Giant beetles (1d2)                       | Giant beetles (1d3)                          | Giant beetles (1d3 + 1)                       | Giant beetles (1d3 + 1)                       |
| <b>97-98</b> | No encounter (squirrels)                  | Blood violets (1d3 sacks worth)              | Blood violets (1d3 + 2 sacks worth)           | Blood violets (1d3 + 2 sacks worth)           |
| <b>99</b>    | No encounter (crickets)                   | Troll (1)                                    | Trolls (1d3)                                  | Trolls (1d3)                                  |
| <b>100</b>   |                                           |                                              | Tiger, Gray Saber-tooth (from the roster) (1) | Tiger, Gray Saber-tooth (from the roster) (1) |

\* A sprained ankle causes a delay of 0.5 hour while it gets wrapped and the cursing and swearing abates. The sprain reduces character's speed to half (in combat) and the party's wilderness speed to "slow," with the movement penalty lasting 1d100 hours. *Cure wounds* immediately cures the sprain. Roll this result for the night encounter check.

### Encounter Table for Risk Areas E, F, G (higher or specific risk)

| d100          | Risk Area E<br>Highest Elevation,<br>Very High Risk                                                                                                 | Risk Area F<br>Any Elevation,<br>Very High Risk                                                                                                     | Risk Area G<br>Any Elevation,<br>Highest Risk                                                                                                       |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1- 70</b>  | No encounter                                                                                                                                        | No encounter                                                                                                                                        | No encounter                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>71-73</b>  | Mountain Goats (normal) (1d4 + 2)                                                                                                                   | Mountain Goats (normal) (1d4 + 2)                                                                                                                   | Mountain Goats (normal) (1d4 + 2)                                                                                                                   |
| <b>74-75</b>  | Wolves (1d6 + 2) with winter wolf (1)                                                                                                               | Wolves (1d6 + 2) with winter wolves (2)                                                                                                             | Wolves (1d8 + 3) with winter wolves (3)                                                                                                             |
| <b>76-77</b>  | Giant Mountain Goats (1d6)                                                                                                                          | Giant Mountain Goats (1d6 + 1)                                                                                                                      | Giant Mountain Goats (1d6 + 2)                                                                                                                      |
| <b>78</b>     | Giant Badgers (1d3 + 1)                                                                                                                             | Giant Badgers (1d4 + 1)                                                                                                                             | Cave Bears (1d2)                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>79</b>     | Cave Bear (1)                                                                                                                                       | Cave Bears (1d2)                                                                                                                                    | Cave Bears (1d2)                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>80</b>     | Giant Weasels (1d4)                                                                                                                                 | Giant Weasels (1d4)                                                                                                                                 | Giant Weasels (1d4)                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>81-85</b>  | Giant Ermines (1d4)                                                                                                                                 | Giant Ermines (1d4 + 1)                                                                                                                             | Giant Ermines (1d4 + 2)                                                                                                                             |
| <b>86</b>     | Trolls (1d3)                                                                                                                                        | White Weretiger (from the Roster) (1)                                                                                                               | Khethro Tulroc the satyr (see <b>Area W-7</b> )                                                                                                     |
| <b>87-88</b>  | Giant Ants (1d8 + 6 workers, 1d6 + 1 warriors)                                                                                                      | Giant Ants (1d8 + 6 workers, 1d6 + 1 warriors)                                                                                                      | Hill giant and 2 ogres, carrying 1d6 + 3 giant ermine pelts.                                                                                        |
| <b>89-90</b>  | Trip and slide on rocks: 1 character takes 1d4 + 1 bludgeoning damage from fall and must make a DC 15 Dex saving throw or suffer a sprained ankle.* | Trip and slide on rocks: 1 character takes 1d4 + 1 bludgeoning damage from fall and must make a DC 15 Dex saving throw or suffer a sprained ankle.* | Trip and slide on rocks: 1 character takes 1d4 + 1 bludgeoning damage from fall and must make a DC 19 Dex saving throw or suffer a sprained ankle.* |
| <b>91</b>     | Rockslide. Each character must make a DC 15 Dex saving throw or sustain 1d20 bludgeoning damage.                                                    | Rockslide. Each character must make a DC 15 Dex saving throw or sustain 1d20 bludgeoning damage.                                                    | Rockslide. Each character must make a DC 15 Dex saving throw or sustain 1d20 bludgeoning damage.                                                    |
| <b>92-93</b>  | Blood violets (1d6 + 1 sacks worth)                                                                                                                 | Blood violets (1d6 + 2 sacks worth)                                                                                                                 | Blood violets (1d6 + 3 sacks worth)                                                                                                                 |
| <b>94-95</b>  | Bears, Black (1d3)                                                                                                                                  | Bears, Black (1d3)                                                                                                                                  | Bears, Black (1d3)                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>96-97</b>  | Snow-serpents (1d4) (fur still spotted green, has not changed to white)                                                                             | Snow-serpents (1d4) (fur still spotted green, has not changed to white)                                                                             | Snow-serpents (1d6) (fur still spotted green, has not changed to white)                                                                             |
| <b>98</b>     | Badgers, giant (1d2)                                                                                                                                | Badgers, giant (1d2 + 1)                                                                                                                            | Badgers, giant (1d2 + 1)                                                                                                                            |
| <b>99-100</b> | Tiger, Gray Saber-tooth (from the roster) (1)                                                                                                       | Tiger, Gray Saber-tooth (from the roster) (1)                                                                                                       | Tiger, Gray Saber-tooth (from the roster) (1)                                                                                                       |

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

# Rumors and Whispers

Before the adventuring really begins, characters will have a chance to gather some information in the town to the north. (In the Lost Lands campaign, this is the town of Elet). The characters automatically get the Basic Information below. Each character makes a Cha (Persuasion) check. The result determines which category of rumor the character hears through conversation (False, Easy, Pretty Good, and Extraordinarily Good). Once the category is determined, roll in that category to see what sort of tidbits the character learns.

### Automatic: Basic Information

1. The mountain pass is blocked twice per year when blizzards called the Ghostwinds blow in.
2. The Abbey of St. Kathelynn is a safe place to rest.
3. There's a druid who lives just by the abbey. The different religious beliefs cause some friction.

### 0—5: False Rumors (d6)

1. The Mountain Queen is a giantess who collects the heads of anyone who casts magic in her mountain pass.
2. Giant ice toads have built a massive windmill in the heights of the pass, and it pulls in the Ghostwind when their human slaves work the treadmills that turn the windmill's diamond-edged blades faster and faster.
3. A songbird kept for three days in the pass will lay golden eggs for a week afterward.
4. Some people say that the Abbot of Saint Kathelynn actually killed the saint.
5. Ice gnomes have built a giant water wheel at a high elevation near one of the lakes. It is used to catch salmon, but a giant fish with legs has started attacking their settlement.
6. A woman who lives near the abbey is actually a necromancer who curses adventurers by using some sort of rune magic.

### 6—12: Easy Rumors (d6)

1. The higher you go up the walls of the pass, the more dangerous it gets, but the better the hunting.
2. The best hunting in the pass is the giant ermine. Don't use cutting weapons on them, or you drop the value of the pelt.
3. There is some kind of powerful artifact is rumored to be hidden in the pass.
4. You better have magic weapons or silver weapons if you go exploring where you shouldn't go.
5. There is an abbey of a saint at the base of the pass. She was only sainted 75 years ago, and they consecrated an old watch-fort to put her bones in. They haven't repaired it very well, if you ask me.
6. Rope yourselves together to cross the river fords, and if you plan on climbing any of the crags, bring spikes, ropes, and grappling hooks. The giant owl eggs are worth a lot, and that's the only way to get them, because they nest in the high places. If you get one of the owl eggs back safely, you can buy me a drink.

### 13—18: Pretty Good Rumors (d10)

1. There are gray saber-tooth cats in the pass. Avoid them, they're cunning.
2. The abbot of St. Kathelynn's is so old that he remembers the last days of the saint's life.
3. There is a nest of perytons on one of the high peaks.
4. An artifact associated with Saint Kathelynn is supposed to be buried with her bones.
5. Saint Kathelynn had a sister you almost never hear about in the stories.
6. Watch out for the Manor of the Mountain Queen. You don't want to go there.
7. If you're going to hunt giant ermines, you should wear the druid's Mark.
8. They say the Mountain Queen hunts people in the wilderness. If she

finds you, you become her slave and you're never seen again.

9. The abbey at the base of the pass is kept warm by the Saint. It's the only place the Ghostwinds can't freeze when they blow in.
10. The Mountain Queen has a magic pool, and she can see things in it even if they are far away.

### 19+: Extraordinarily Good Rumors (d4)

1. The servant of a fey winter power, by the name of Tulroc, lives near the eastern wall of the pass.
2. The Ghostwinds are fey powers called into the pass by a creature named Tulroc.
3. Saint Kathelynn and her twin sister were both famous, but Kathelynn was definitely the one who shined the brightest.
4. The Ghostwinds are fey powers controlled by a creature called the Winter Prince.

## What Really Happened

The characters might realize early on that there is something strange about Kathelynn's canonization. The fact of the matter is that the proper authorities of the church, rushing to honor the heroine of Ghostwind Pass, canonized the wrong person. Not only that, Kathelynn is the one who killed Elys, and she is still alive, no longer a champion of the faith. Cursed and transformed by the gods, her mind twisted to murderous hate, she still lives in Ghostwind Pass, under the name of the Mountain Queen.

Kathelynn and Elys were both clerics, identical twin sisters. Kathelynn was the famous warrior-priestess, and the quiet sister Elys was her standard bearer, carrying Kathelynn's red rose banner into battle. The twins could be told apart by their shields: Kathelynn wore her red rose, and Elys's rose was white as snow. The only other difference was a vertical battle scar on Kathleen's face.

At this time, seventy-five years ago, Ghostwind Pass had been choked off for many years by a fey lord known as the Winter Prince. His Ghostwinds, like chained hounds, kept the area in a perpetual blizzard, completely impassable. The sister paladins swore an oath to banish the immortal Winter Prince and free the mountain pass from his influence. They and their five retainers stopped at the fort just north of the pass (now the abbey), and the sisters went out alone into the snow to pray. They returned bearing the Staff of the Remorhaz, a holy artifact dating back to the beginning of history and the wars against forgotten, evil gods.

With Kathelynn at the forefront, and Elys bearing the Staff and Red-Rose banner, the twins became separated from their followers in the blizzard, and then lost each other too, coming separately upon the Winter Prince in the midst of his howling Ghostwinds.

First to meet him was Kathelynn, and the Prince's sweet words and subtle magic undid Kathelynn's defenses and corrupted her to the service of evil. Then Elys came upon them, and fought the Fey Lord in single combat. In the great battle, the power of the Winter Prince snapped the Staff of the Remorhaz, but he was still forced to yield by Elys's prowess in battle. The Prince agreed to free the mountain pass from the Ghostwinds except for twice a year. As Elys put her weapon away, the treacherous Winter Prince gestured to Kathelynn. The Prince's newest servant, standing behind Elys, crushed half of her twin sister's skull with her mace. Dying, Elys swung with the last strength in her, and killed the body of the Winter Prince. Laughing, the spirit of the Winter Prince rode his Ghostwinds away to find a new body: victorious, although still bound by the oath he had sworn to Elys. The Ghostwinds would only return to the pass twice a year instead of year-round.

Kathelynn reached out to take the *Staff of the Remorhaz*, for without her twin holding the cold-warding staff, she was freezing in the bitter chill of the high mountain. The moment she touched the ancient artifact, it took a terrible vengeance upon her for the murder of her twin. She was transformed into a horrible beast with the lower body of a white tiger and her own body from the waist up, a dreadful lamia of the cold mountains. Blinded by the pain of the transformation, she grabbed what she thought was her own shield and ran, still clutching the part of the ancient relic she had taken. When the lamia awoke in the wilderness, fully transformed, she could see what she had left the battle with: the eye from the top of the

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

staff, and her sister's white-rose shield.

With the Ghostwinds gone, the five knights were able to find Elys's body where it lay next to the body of the slain Winter Prince, together with Kathelynn's shield and the *staff of the remorhaz* fallen nearby. The knights, of course, assumed the faceless body was the famous sister, Kathelynn, apparently the victor over the Winter Prince. They brought the body and the broken staff back to the chapel at the base of the pass, where they buried it in secret, concealing it in a grave labeled with another person's name ("Gryffin Winemaker"). Their thinking was simply to hide it from anyone who might try to desecrate it before Kathelynn could be sainted. The result was disaster. Kathelynn, now a lamia, insanely believes that if she can repair the artifact, she will reverse her transformation. Not knowing where the other half lies and correctly assuming that it was buried with Elys, Kathelynn kidnapped each of the retainers in turn and tortured them to learn the periapt's location. Each of them died without divulging the secret.

With the retainers all dead, the broken staff's location has been lost. No living person knows where St. Elys's body can be found, and only Kathelynn the lamia knows that the wrong saint was consecrated.

### Trimming the Background Story

If you want to remove the artifact-and-buried-saint mystery from the adventure to make it simpler, all you need to do is make one change: change the rose symbols in the Manor of the Mountain Queen from red to white (or from roses to but tigers or some other symbol). As long as that's done, all you need to do is ignore references to Saint Elys and her burial.

## Start

You and your companions have traveled up an increasingly poor trail toward the foot of the mountains. You now stand gazing at what definitely appears to be the last ragged gasp of civilization this side of the mountain peaks. A dilapidated-looking drum tower is set on a hill, attached to a sagging wooden stockade that probably encloses a couple of other buildings. A watchtower stands to each side of a wooden gate. There is a cottage of some kind beside the hill, with one or two trees around it.

## Wilderness Map

### W-1. Abbey of Saint Kathelynn, Druid's Cottage

See the separate map of the Abbey grounds.

### W-2. River Crossing

The river is deep and very fast-flowing, although it is obviously not as full as it will get during the spring thaw. There is a ford here, where the river widens and becomes shallower as it runs over a broad rock shelf. Any person going across the ford on foot must make two successive DC 15 Dex saving throws along the way to avoid tripping, falling, and being carried away by the water into the rapids below.

Anyone failing a saving throw has one chance to grab hold and stop before being pulled into the rapids, by making a successful DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics) check. If this check fails, the character is washed downstream in the icy water and takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage before being washed to one side of the river or the other (roll randomly to see which bank).

The same risks apply to crossing the river anywhere in the pass.

## W-3. Tembril Tarn

The water of this lake is, of course, icy cold, and it is very deep. At night, an eerie luminescence rises over the lake, and anyone near the banks hears a soft, muttering, whining voice that does not form words but continues for several minutes, then suddenly rises to a low scream before being suddenly cut off. This phenomenon repeats itself over and over again until dawn. Spellcasters cannot regain spell slots if characters are camped within a quarter-mile of the banks of the tarn.

## W-4. Peryton Nest

This is the nest of **6 perytons**. (Some of them might already have been killed by the time characters scale the cliff to the nest, if they appeared in random encounters.)

The cliff is very steep and 110 feet tall. The wind whipping around the rock formation makes it impossible to fly to the top. There might be ways around this (players are ingenious). Their solution, if it is to succeed without catastrophe, would need to address all six directions in which a flying or levitating character could be violently pitched (forward/back, side/side, up/down). Impacts could range from a bad bump of 1d4 bludgeoning damage, up to a massive gust causing 4d6 bludgeoning damage if the character hits the stone.

The most reliable way to reach the top of the cliff is climbing, which is not especially dangerous if the climbers have spikes, ropes, and plenty of time. Unless characters have already killed all the perytons, however—in which case they probably don't know how to find the nest in the first place—they must climb the cliff under attack from at least one peryton and possibly as many as six. The perytons do not hunt in groups of more than two unless there is a human kill available (possibly a decoy miles away, if the party splits up to leave a human effigy somewhere). If the adventurers manage to decoy some of the perytons away from the nest, roll 1d4 + 1 to see how many leave (subtract previously killed ones, too). Waiting for a couple of perytons to leave, whether decoyed or just hunting, is a good strategy.

The climb has three stages:

*Stage 1* starts at the ground, hits a difficult spot at 20 feet, and ends at a secure 6-inch-wide ledge at the 50-foot mark.

*Stage 2* starts at the 6-inch ledge (50 feet), hits a difficult spot at 80 feet and 90 feet, and ends at 100 feet.

*Stage 3* starts at the 100-foot mark and is a fairly easy scramble to the cliff top at 110 feet.

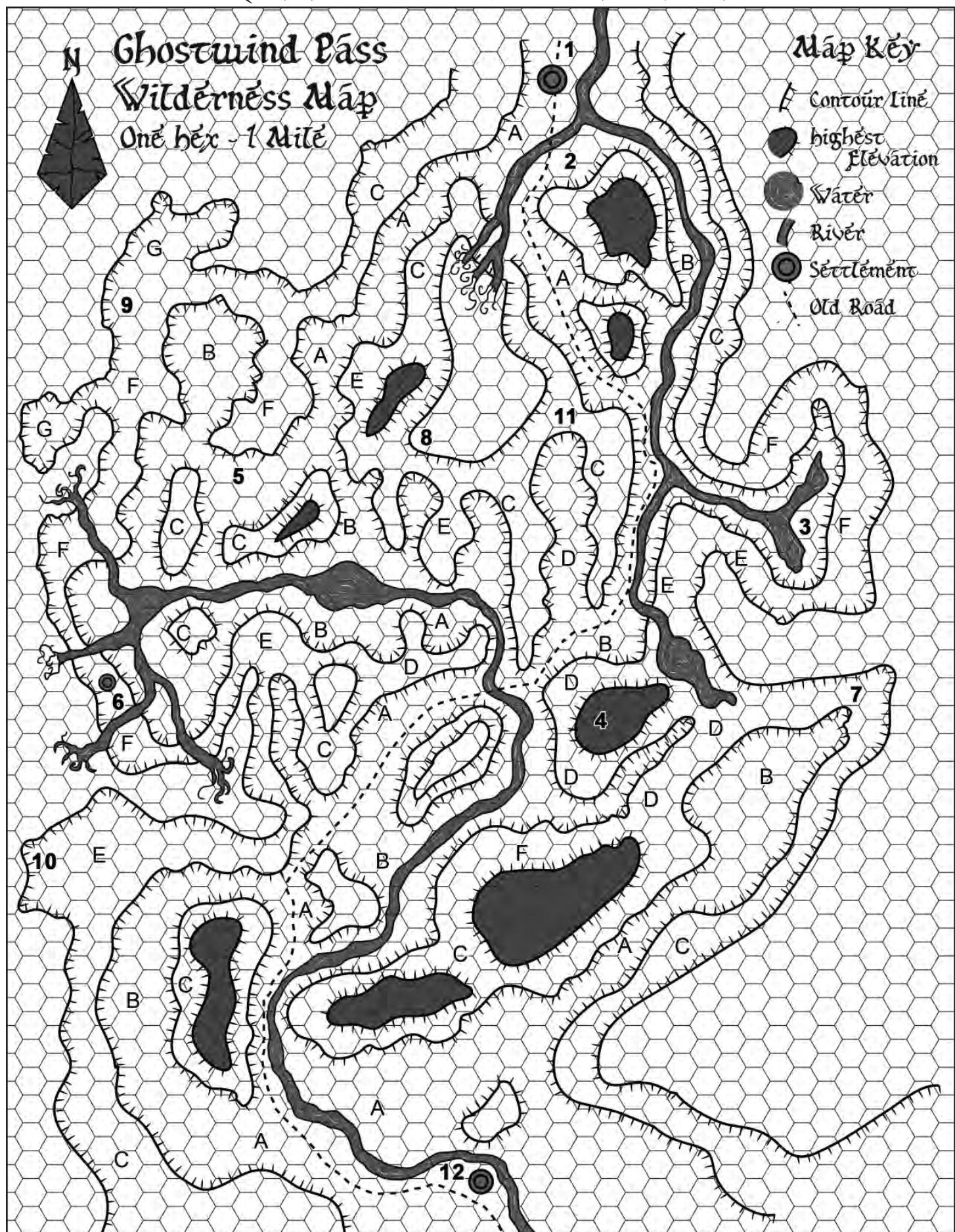
All vertical movement is at a speed of 5 feet per minute, and movement is not possible in the same round that a character attacks or takes any other action. The areas between the "difficult spots" can be climbed by any unskilled person using a rope or driving spikes into the rock along the way; it just takes time and care. Climbing such an area without equipment requires a successful DC 20 Str (Athletics) check. One failed check does not indicate that the character falls; it means the character is stuck on the rock face and can't proceed farther without equipment. If a second check fails (while the character is retreating down from being stuck, for example) the character does fall.

Climbing past the difficult spots with equipment requires a separate DC 20 Str (Athletics) check; without equipment, the DC is 25.

If anyone uses a hammer to drive spikes at an altitude higher than Stage 1 of the climb, the noise alerts the perytons. They defend their lair savagely against climbers on the cliff.

**(Peryton:** AC 13, 33 hp; +5 to hit, 1d8 + 3 piercing damage [gore] and +5 to hit, 2d4 + 3 piercing damage [talons]; does 2d8 extra damage with an attack that follows a dive of at least 30 ft.; doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when flying out of an opponent's reach)

**Treasure:** The perytons actually collect treasure in the nest, although they also threw out one object of considerable information value (the



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notebook of Jauric Tallbones: see below). In the nest, characters can find a scattering of 52 gp, 129 sp, and 533 cp. Two halves of a magic wand are now useless, but a steel scrollcase was shiny enough stay in the nest and tough enough to protect its contents of two scrolls. One scroll is clerical, with the spells *cure wounds* x3 and *mass cure wounds*. The other scroll contains the magic-user spells *web*, *mirror image*, and *gust of wind*. A golden bracelet is worth 100 gp, and a piece of jade carved into the shape of an ugly baby is worth 300 gp (the value of the jade). A necklace of ivory rabbits is worth 500 gp, and a well-chewed quiver contains one +2 arrow (along with three whole, mundane arrows and six broken arrows).

On the cliff ledges below the peryton nest are many bones, and below the aerie falls a curtain of death's garbage: clothes, empty boots, and bits of hair. One of the more noticeable items is a leather-bound notebook.

The notebook is the journal of an adventurer named Jauric Tallbones, son of John Tallbones, one of the names in the Abbey graveyard. Jauric came to the Abbey to learn more about his father, taking notes and collecting information about the ill-fated expedition to the Hall of the Winter Prince.

My father, John Tallbones, told me before his martyrdom how they found Saint Kathelynn and the dying Winter Prince. He spoke of a battle standard that was also found at the same location. This staff was a holy item with great power, but the faceted gem atop the staff was broken away. He said that if I should become a knight I should seek it. My father used to say, "Find Elys, the sister, and you'll find the eye of the remorhaz. It's probably treasure in the Manor of the Mountain Queen now, or sitting in some badger's lair. The other half we buried with Saint Kathelynn of the Red Rose, blessed may be she, but I am sworn never to reveal where the saint's bones are buried, even under torture. All I can say is to look in the griffin's lair, son."

## W-5. Shrine of St. Kathelynn.

This is where the battle took place, and there is a memorial here. The ground around the shrine has been dug up in several places (by Kathelynn's bugbears, checking to make sure that Elys's bones were not buried at this fairly obvious location. Red roses have been left here in memory of Saint Kathelynn. Kathelynn the lamia occasionally collects these to decorate her rooms, appreciating the irony. Just as the druidess Lurilune makes an occasional trip to Cenaur Yltair (Area W-11), Abbot Godefroy makes a pilgrimage to this site, leaving roses and offering prayers. Any ranger or druid making a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check will notice what look like big lion or panther tracks around the shrine. For any other character class, the DC is 20.

## W-6. Manor of the Mountain Queen

The Mountain Queen is Kathelynn, whose acts transformed her into a lamia with the body of a white saber-toothed tiger and a woman's torso. See the separate map of the Manor of the Mountain Queen (and the map entries with an "H" prefix).

## W-7. Piper of the Winds

Roll an encounter as normal for this hex, but in addition to whatever else might be here, the area contains a cave, the den of a satyr named **Khethro Tulroc**.

Tulroc has a very unusual appearance for a satyr, being the servant of a different power than most satyrs follow. His skin, horns, and hair are

bone-white; his only color is in his ice-blue eyes. The satyr carries a set of bone pan-pipes and wears nothing but a belted sporran and cudgel, even in the most biting cold. His behavior is not much different from normal satyrs, although he is quite old and very canny.

Tulroc is a servant of the Winter Prince, and his bone pan-pipes are actually the instrument that lures the Ghostwinds down into the pass. If Tulroc does not play the pipes, the Ghostwinds will eventually come looking for him—but there will be a delay of 1d4 + 2 days beyond the time they would normally have arrived. However, if the satyr is killed, the Ghostwinds will bring some other servants of the Winter Prince to avenge him: a pack of five white trolls with maximum hit points. The five trolls will pursue their quest for vengeance beyond the heights of the pass. If they are defeated, no further servants of the Winter Prince will follow.

Tulroc has 90 percent concealment among his rocks, and this makes it unlikely that the characters will find him if he doesn't want to be found, even if they have a character scouting from the air. He could be enticed into the open if the characters camp here, if there are any females in the group, if they play music, or if the characters are calling his name.

The pipes will not call the Ghostwinds unless it is Tulroc playing them: they are not magical.

**(Khethro Tulroc [Satyr]: AC 14, 31 hp; +3 to hit, 2d4 + 1 bludgeoning damage [ram] or +5 to hit, 1d6 + 3 piercing damage [shortsword] or +5 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., 1d6 + 3 piercing damage [shortbow]; has tactical advantage on saving throws against magic)**

## W-8. Snowy Owl Nest

There is a nest of **2 giant snowy owls** here, in a cave high up the cliff face. Unless the Game Master chooses to use a different procedure, the cliff must be scaled in the same way as the one where the perytons make their nest (Area W-4). In this case, the owl nest is only 70 feet up the cliff, and there are only two stages to the climb.

*Stage 1* starts at the ground, hits a difficult spot at 30 feet, and ends at a secure foot-wide ledge at the 40-foot mark.

*Stage 2* starts at the ledge (40 feet), hits a difficult spot at 50 feet, and ends at the cave mouth (70 feet).

At night, one of the owls is always out hunting while the other guards the nest. During the day, both owls are here.

(Giant Owl: AC 12, 19 hp; +3 to hit, 2d6 + 1 slashing damage [talons]; doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when flying out of an enemy's reach)

**Treasure:** There are 3 giant owl eggs in the nest.

## W-9. Druidic Holy Place (Olier Orphais)

The holy place known as Olier Orphais is a natural rock arch, flickering all over with a faint greenish fire. The flames cannot be extinguished other than by the power of a demi-god, at the least. This arch is one of the sacred places Lurilune (Area A-8) is sworn to protect and maintain.

## W-10. Druidic Holy Place (Ambioc Tor)

Amboic Tor is a naturally formed tower of rock 60 feet tall and 20 feet or so in diameter. It is a place where the material world lies very close to the elemental plane of earth. Anyone within a quarter mile of the Tor begins hearing a low-toned, slightly rhythmic music, like several bass drums whose every beat occupies a half minute rather than a half second. This is the living sound of elemental earth, so close that it reverberates into the material plane.

## W-II. Druidic Holy Place (Cenaur Yltair)

Cenaur Yltair is found on a mile-wide saddle of high, rocky land. It is a rock formation shaped like a curving ramp, with its apex 50 feet over the height of the surrounding rocks. If there is a druid in the party, the character might know that according to local druidic tradition, a person is sacrificed here once every seven years by throwing them off the top after a procession up the ramplike rock formation. Usually these are criminals who have been sentenced to death in the town of Elet to the north. The town tends to keep this connection and tradition quiet.

In between the major sacrifices, one of Lurilune's duties is to come to Cenaur Yltair once a year to light a bonfire at the top. It is possible that she might recruit the characters, especially if there is a druid among them, to come with her as guards and assistants on the bonfire trip to Cenaur Yltair.

There is a danger in coming too close to the area around Cenaur Yltair without a druid: a **will-o'-wisp** guards it (for no apparent reason). The will-o'-wisp can charm people up the formation, causing them to fall over the edge. It darts from behind one rock over to the next, showing its eerie lights to one character after another, trying to enrapture at least one of them into walking up the Yltair. The will-o'-wisp then leads the way toward (and over) the edge, which ends up giving the other characters a short window of time to attack it. With luck, they can kill it before their companions walk off the edge to their doom. The will-o'-wisp leaves the characters alone if they are accompanied by a druid.

**(Will-o'-Wisp):** AC 19, 22 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 lightning damage [shock] and one creature at 0 hp within 5 ft. of the will-o'-wisp must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or die, giving the will-o'-wisp 3d6 hp)

## W-I2. South Camp

The South Camp is a base camp for hunters and trappers who live south of the mountain pass. It is far enough down, and sheltered enough from wind, that it is considered "out of the pass" for purposes of escaping the Ghostwind's terrible cold. If the characters are starting the adventure by approaching the pass from the south, they can gather information from the hunters and trappers who are camping here between their expeditions into the wilderness.

## Abbey of Saint Kathelynn

"Saint" Kathelynn was only canonized 75 years ago, but the tower and outbuildings of the fortified monastery are obviously older than that. It was originally an old border fort, which was consecrated to Saint Kathelynn after her "death." Despite the fact that Kathelynn is neither saintly nor dead, the yet-to-be-recognized Saint Elys protects the Abbey as her own.

The nature of this protection is warmth, and protection from the Ghostwind. If you are running the adventure to include the mystery of Elys and the location of the Staff of the Remorhaz, the relative warmth of the abbey is an important clue, so make sure you stress that *the entire abbey is far warmer than the biting mountain air outside the walls.*

## A-1. Gates

Two watchtowers stand with a wooden gate between them, a Bowman in each tower. The gate is painted with a red rose, and the towers are crude, providing cover for only one person at a time.

The two **archers** are the lay brethren Brother Maru and Brother Tenir. If the two brethren decide the characters aren't going to be a threat to the abbey, Brother Maru will climb down his ladder and unbar the gates. Their passive perception is 12.

The moment the characters step through the gates and into the abbey's curtilage, they feel the biting cold of the mountain air lessen. Although the temperature does not rise to the point of complete warmth, it is definitely above the freezing point. Everyone ascribes the divine warmth to Saint Kathelynn's intervention, since it only started after the abbey was consecrated to her.

**(Brothers Tenir and Maru [Guards]:** AC 16, 11 hp; +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20 ft./60 ft., 1d6 + 1 piercing damage [spear])

## A-2. Abbey Hall

This is a stone building with shuttered arrowslits for windows and a steeply pitched slate roof. A painting of a red rose has been added over the top of the door, but the red paint has faded to a delicate shade of pink.

This is the abbey's main hall, containing a storage room, a kitchen, and a dining hall. Stairs lead up to a second floor, which has small bedrooms for up to eight lay brethren. Six of these are occupied by brothers Maru, Tenir, Odoc, Bernart, Ocrip, and Selmus, and the other two are empty. The two empty rooms are used as guest rooms if the abbey has visitors. Brother Odoc, the abbey's cook (and generally responsible for this entire building), is usually found here.

**(Brother Odoc [Acolyte]:** AC 10, 9 hp; +2 to hit, 1d4 piercing bludgeoning damage [club]; *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*)

## A-3. Stable and Barn

This stone building smells like a stable, and has doors to match. A rudimentary blacksmith's forge stands outside under a canvas shade, capable of making horseshoes and not much else.

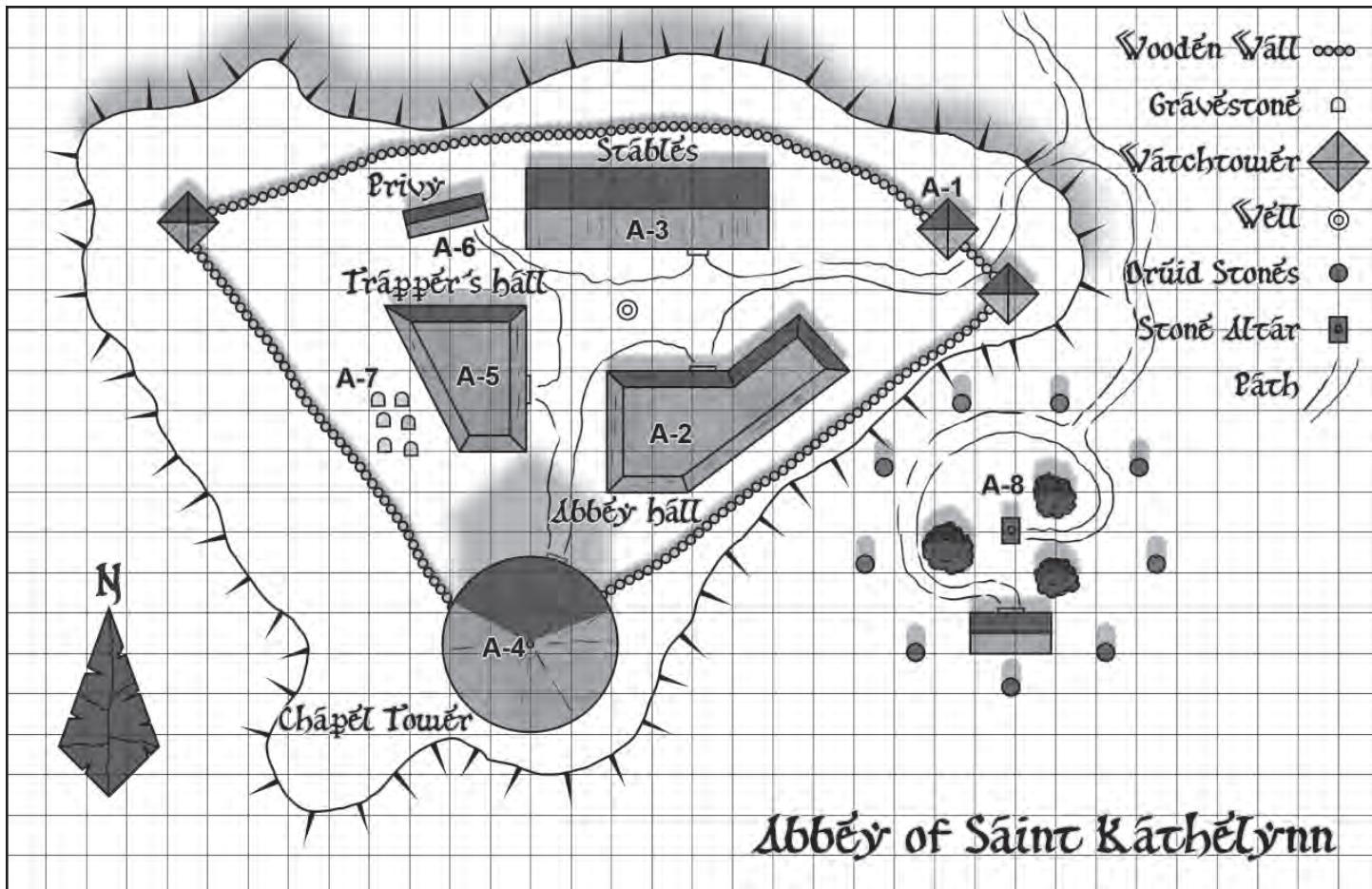
The stable is used as a barn as well, currently housing six mules and ten goats. Brother Bernart is currently here tending the animals, but he doubles as the abbey's blacksmith and goatherd. He is often away from the abbey, guarding the goats as they graze the meagre fodder of the foothills north of the pass.

**(Brother Bernart [Acolyte]:** AC 10, 9 hp; +2 to hit, 1d4 piercing bludgeoning damage [club]; *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*)

## A-4. Chapel Tower

The tower is stone, with a conical roof. The roof is shingled with slates, some of which are missing. A red rose has been painted on the door, but the paint seems to be developing small white spots where the red pigment is dropping away.

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS



### Fading Roses

The whitening of all the red roses in the abbey, and the brothers' unconscious preference for leaving their wooden holy symbols unpainted, is a symptom of the abbey's mis-consecration to the "red rose" twin rather than the "white rose" twin. If characters use any sort of divination spell that requires a vague answer from higher powers, the answer to the spell might be pointing out the whitening of the abbey's red roses.

In the tower:

The ground floor of the tower obviously serves as the chapel. Along with lots of candles and a small wooden altar, the chapel's central feature is an empty sarcophagus. The wooden lid is propped up vertically beside the stone coffin and bears the painting of an armored woman, with the symbol of a red rose on her shield. She has a vertical scar on the left side of her face. A flight of stone stairs leads to the upper stories.

A very old man stands by the sarcophagus, looking at the painting.

This is **Abbot Godefroy**, the 85-year-old man who is in charge of the abbey. He receives little from his superiors and less in tithes, so the abbey has gone from being in merely poor repair to being in very poor repair over its 75 years as a religious institution.

If characters look closely at the painting, they will notice that the paint of the red rose is flaking very slightly (automatic success if a player announces that the character is checking the painting for detail). The rest

of the picture's paint appears to be fine, although a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check reveals that the paint of the facial scar also seems to be suffering the same problem. If asked about the painting, the abbot admits sheepishly that he painted it himself from memory, decades ago. No doubt he mixed the red paint poorly, he admits; such things happen with pigments. Abbot Godefroy can provide a great deal of information if the characters get curious about the *Staff of the Remorhaz* (see "Talking to Abbot Godefroy," below), but if they are just here to hunt monsters or guard caravans, don't push the area's background story on them. They will either start looking into the mysteries of the pass or they won't. If they do, they'll be back at the abbey asking questions soon enough. If not, Ghostwind Pass offers plenty of adventure and treasure for those who aren't interested in playing detective.

The second floor contains Abbot Godefroy's bedroom and study, together with bedroom-cells for two monks. These are currently empty, since the only ordained brother here is the abbot. The third floor contains six more monkish cells and some arrowslits. The tower's conical slate roof can be reached by a trapdoor, but the slates of the roof are in poor condition. Climbing around on them would be unsafe, to say the least; climbers must make a successful DC 17 Dex (Acrobatics) check or fall.

### Talking to Abbot Godefroy

If characters appear to be worthy individuals, or rich ones, Godefroy offers to grant them a benediction that help them in their endeavors. A generous contribution to the abbey would certainly be appreciated, of course (see "Abbot's Benediction").

If the characters are specifically asking about Saint Kathelynn, or the Abbey's history, Abbot Godefroy is happy to talk.

#### The Story of Saint Kathelynn

The sarcophagus is empty because the bones of St. Kathelynn were buried in secret by her five retainers; characters are invited to pay respect to their memorials in the graveyard. The sarcophagus awaits the day when the saint's bones are finally returned to their proper place. Anyone who does so,

And so began the Expedition to kill the Winter Prince, led by Kathelynn, who would be the saint, and her twin sister Elys, her standard-bearer. The twins forged ahead, magically protected from the cold by their gem-topped staff, and the five warriors of their retinue became separated from them in the blizzard.

Ahead of them the warriors heard an inhuman scream upon the cold, white winds, and when they made their way forward the harm was done. The body of Sainted Kathelynn lay upon the snow, her skull half crushed. Of Elys, there was no sign at all.

But there also lay dying the body of the Winter Prince, its evil soul already gathering away from the body in a freezing mist. And the Winter Prince laughed from the lips of that dead man, saying, "I am defeated, yet I keep my bargains. I shall release the Ghostwinds from the mountain pass except twice a year." And then the body of the Winter Prince fell dead, and its misty soul blew away on the wind to wait for the evils it would do in the next winter.

The warriors brought back the body of the Saint, and buried her in secret. Shortly thereafter, they disappeared one by one, leaving no trace. For killing the Winter Prince and thus banishing the Ghostwinds for most of the year, Kathelynn was canonized as a saint. The mystical way in which she called her loyal followers to her, to serve her as knights where they were needed, serves as obvious confirmation of her sainthood.

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

the abbot notes, would be greatly blessed. Not only that, more visitors and pilgrims would also make their way to the abbey to see a real relic.

Godefroy was a ten-year-old boy when the twin paladins Erys and Kathelynn undertook their fateful mission to the heights of the pass along with five loyal retainers. He remembers seeing the saint and her twin sister, but of course he was not actually on the expedition. He wrote down the story as it was told to him by the five retainers who were there (almost), and will provide the characters with a copy if they wish.

### The Abbott's Note

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#### Abbot's Benediction

This is also where the characters can receive the abbot's blessing if they donate money or other valuables to the upkeep of the abbey. In particular, the abbot wants to repair the tower's roof to avoid having slates fall off and possibly hit someone. Also, it is beginning to leak a bit. He wants to replace the wooden wall with a stone curtain wall, but this would require many thousands of gold pieces.

If characters donate 200 gp or more each, they can receive the abbot's ordinary benediction. The benediction is a powerful blessing from the greater powers of Law, delivered in the name of "Saint" Kathelynn. The blessing allows the character to call on the saint before attempting a task and thereby gain divine favor for the attempt. This is reflected by gaining tactical advantage on whatever die roll is being attempted. If the task is one that would be adjudicated with a judgment call rather than a die roll, the task automatically succeeds unless it is simply impossible. The benediction can be used for an attack roll, an attribute check, spell or weapon damage, etc. It can be used for a saving throw only if the character would have time to yell out the saint's name. The ordinary benediction can be received twice in a character's lifetime.

If the character donates 500 gp or more, the abbot grants a greater benediction. The greater benediction may be used twice rather than once, and allows the character to roll 3d20 instead of 2d20. The greater benediction can be received by a character just once in the character's lifetime.

#### The Abbot and Druidism

The abbot stresses that a character cannot carry a benediction and a druid's mark at the same time. He is obviously disdainful of the druidic faith and cautions characters that they should not trust druids in general or Lurilune in particular. Druidism, he believes, is like an extortion scheme, holding Lawful civilization hostage to the amoral forces of nature, demanding sacrifices in exchange for good weather and fertile lands. If there is a druid in the party who takes offense at this attitude,

the abbot quickly shifts into the role of an old man who perhaps rambles too much, that he does not mean to offend, and that he perhaps overstated his opinions. He did not overstate his opinion, of course, but he is not a confrontational person. He will specifically offer the druid character the abbot's ordinary benediction with no donation required, if that level of apology is needed.

**(Abbot Godefroy [Priest]:** AC 13, 27 hp; +2 to hit, 1d6 bludgeoning damage [mace]; spell attack +5, save DC 13; *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy, cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary, lesser restoration, spiritual weapon, dispel magic, spirit guardian*)

**(Ocrip and Selmus [Veterans]:** AC 17, 58 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d10 + 3 slashing damage [longsword])

### A-s. Trappers' Hall

This building is stone with a high, peaked roof. A sign above the door shows a white animal fur, and underneath the words, "Trappers' Hall."

The Trappers' Hall is a mixture of inn, tavern, warehouse, and store. There are ten rooms on the upper floor, three of which are occupied by traders and two of which are occupied by trappers recently returned from expeditions into the pass. The traders have offices with one-room vaults containing their furs and other goods; they buy pelts from trappers throughout the hunting season, then retreat back to the town of Elet when the Ghostwind blows into the pass. They are mostly interested in purchasing furs from hunters and trappers, but they also do a brisk business selling the various goods needed for long expeditions into the wilderness.

#### Prices offered by the traders are as follows:

**Blood Violets:** 200 gp/sack

**Mountain Goat meat:** 5 gp/goat (150lb)

**Giant snowy owl egg:** 1000 gp

**Giant lynx pelt:** no trader will purchase these due to the druidic ban on killing or hurting the giant lynxes of the pass.

**Snow-serpent pelt (white):** 100 gp

**Snow-serpent pelt (spotted green):** 200 gp

**Giant Weasel pelt:** 200 gp

**Cave bear pelt:** 800 gp

**Giant ermine pelt:** 1000 gp

**Saber-tooth pelt:** 800 gp

**Weretiger pelt:** 1000 gp

**Wolf pelt:** 5 gp

**Winter wolf pelt:** 500 gp

### The Traders

If necessary, use the commoner or veteran stat block for specific traders.

#### Auloyne of Elet

To lower Auloyne's selling price by 5 percent requires a successful DC 20 Cha (Persuasion) check.

To raise Auloyne's buying price by 5 percent requires a successful DC 20 Cha (Persuasion) check.

#### Tadric Furman

To lower Tadric's selling price by 5 percent requires a successful DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check.

To raise Tadric's buying price by 5 percent requires a successful DC 20 Cha (Persuasion) check..

#### Paganne of Troye

To lower Paganne's selling price by 5 percent requires a successful DC 20 Cha (Persuasion) check.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

To raise Paganne's buying price by 5 percent requires a successful DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check.

The facilities boast wooden seats and an unpleasant smell.

### The Trappers

If necessary, use the bandit, commoner, or veteran stat block for specific trappers.

#### Lodo the Trapper

Leather armor, dagger, short bow, 20 arrows, smelly fur-lined sleeping bag, pouch containing 10 garnets (5 gp), various bits of outdoor survival gear.

#### Ghentry Badger

Leather armor, dagger, short bow, 20 arrows, fur-lined sleeping back, pouch containing 34 gp, 3 dice, and a rabbit's foot, flask of whiskey, various bits of outdoor survival gear.

## A-6. Privies

This is a rickety wooden building with a half-moon-shaped hole cut in the door.

## A-7. Graves

This is a very small graveyard with only six headstones. Each headstone bears a name but no inscription, other than a rose carved into the stone below the name.

The names on the gravestones are: Tallow Smith, John of Elet, John Tallbones, Griffin Winemaker, Claude Yellowhair, and Benedict the Bald. None of the graves except Griffin Winemaker's actually contain bodies; these are memorials for the five loyal retainers who disappeared shortly after burying St. Kathelynn's body in a hidden sanctum. Give no hints or helpful die rolls in this area! If the characters are to get hold of a powerful artifact like the staff or earn the fame that comes from finding a saint's lost bones, they should earn it fairly, without help.

The grave carved with the name of Griffin Winemaker contains the lead-shielded bronze casket of St. Elys (a body everyone believes to have belonged to Kathelynn). In the casket along with the true saint's bones is the wooden stave of the *Staff of the Remorhaz*; it is bereft of its tip, the multi-faceted eye of the remorhaz. The half-artifact conveys no benefits

## The Staff of the Remorhaz

From the Northlands Saga Book 2: *Beyond the Wailing Mountains*

In eons past, many dread gods rose and fell, thrown down by deities of good and their heroic champions. Most of these elder gods were born when the world was young. They were savage and feral, drawing their power from the primordial forces of nature perverted to evil and destruction. Most of these elder gods have long since been destroyed, but a few remain, sleeping away the ages and waiting for the opportunity to rise again.

One such elder god is Althunak, the Lord of Ice and Cold. His is not the natural changing of the season, not the cycle of autumn, winter, and spring, but instead the continual death of a perpetual winter. His cult once flourished when the races of the world were young, but he was challenged and destroyed by some of the earliest heroes to walk the world, or so it was thought.

One of the abominations in Althunak's dread horde was a great remorhaz, Othroäta the Paleworm. When the vanguard of Althunak's army was broken at the Battle of Heshkar, Othroäta was slain by Uhlred the Horned Paladin, who ripped out the beast's great, faceted eye. Spiking the eye on his battle-spear, Uhlred raised it aloft as a standard to call his warriors forward. Seeing this, the great ice trolls and giants of the horde's vanguard ceased their advance, and the troops behind them halted and milled about in great consternation. Whereupon the warriors in their ranked battalions behind the Horned Paladin gave a great cry of triumph and charged, following Uhlred and his grisly standard to the legendary victory on Heshkar's blood-glutted fields, where Althunak's horde was broken and the evil god himself was thought slain.

This battle standard, the eye of the remorhaz on the spear of the Horned Paladin, was then lost to history for a very long time. It does not reappear in recorded histories until Tourmaj's account of the Second Battle of Aixe, at the darkest and most desperate moment of the battle, in the small wood where the true King lay wounded, defended by his embattled knights. As the snow began to fall, Leothrand the High Priest raised the Staff to rally the remaining forces of the King. The last charge of Leothrand Cold-wielder shattered the half-demon army of the Alabastrian heresy and brought peace once again to the lands. When Leothrand's body was recovered from the piles of dead, the Staff was gone. Thereafter, the Chansons of Ghen describe three more instances after the Second Battle of Aixe when the Staff of the

Remorhaz was granted to heroes; always clerics, always of Lawful alignment, always by an angelic being, always in blizzard-like snow. The only change in detail is that the eye of the remorhaz seems to have hardened into a multi-faceted gem atop the staff.

The Staff was most recently held by the paladins Elys and Kathelynn, three quarters of a century ago, when it was broken in half in battle against the Winter Prince. The two parts are assumed to be lost in Ghostwind Pass, where the battle took place.

The standard is a six-foot battle staff which, before it was broken, was topped by a multi-faceted gem, the Eye of Othroäta.

Any Good-aligned cleric who holds the staff is immune to cold damage, including magical cold. On the other hand, the holder of the staff is vulnerable to fire damage. The cleric's hair becomes snow white for as long as the character holds the artifact, and if the staff is used thrice, the change is permanent.

The Good-aligned cleric holding the staff can use any of its powers listed below. When the staff is used, it pulls coldness from the air. In a 10-foot radius around the user there is a blast of violent heat: every creature in the radius must make a successful Con saving throw against the cleric's save DC or take  $1d3 + 1$  fire damage. Anyone in contact with the artifact is unaffected.

The staff's powers are:

- Read languages (at will)
- Find traps (3/day)
- Wall of Ice (2/day)
- Polymorph Self (1/day)
- Visions (This power of the staff is not under the wielder's control. When there is a great evil that must be addressed, the wielder may begin having cryptic visions about it. This aspect of the staff is under the GM's control.)

If anyone who is not Good-aligned takes hold of the staff, the artifact defends itself ferociously by polymorphing the offender into a white lynx with the intelligence of an animal and only vague memories of its former existence. A successful DC 15 Wis saving throw prevents the transformation, but the saving throw must be repeated each time the staff is gripped. The staff's powers can only be used by a cleric.

The only way to destroy the staff is to bathe it in the still-hot blood of a remorhaz.

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

to a wielder unless it is joined with its other half. It does, however, exert enough magical force that it warms the entire area of the abbey. Despite the vast magical power of the artifact, it is shielded from all detection magic other than the direct intercession of a deity. This is no magical trinket with a distinct aura: it is ancient power that blends into the power of the earth itself, unable to be distinguished unless a detection spell is cast directly upon it.

### A-8. Circle of the Druidess

A cottage made of stone and roofed with slates is surrounded by a circle of widely spaced stones, each of them about five feet tall and carved with runes. Green grass grows within the stone circle, and at the center of the field stands a stone altar. A **giant lynx** the size of a dire wolf sits in the path at the entrance to the strange garden.

This is the cottage of **Lurilune**, the druidic custodian of Ghostwind Pass. Her task here, as she sees it, is fairly simple. She maintains the various small druidic shrines in the pass; makes sure the visiting hunters do not abuse the bounteous hunting in the area; and looks for ways to destroy the Mountain Queen, whom Lurilune considers to be completely outside the natural order. She knows and constantly reminds herself not to seek a direct confrontation with the monstrosity that Kathelynn has become, but if she makes contact with a strong-enough looking group of adventurers, she would definitely seek ways to point them toward the lamia. She will not risk herself, the guardian of the pass, by accompanying them, but she will give each of them a druidic mark if they swear that they will use it in an attack on the Manor of the Mountain Queen. She does not know the lamia's true identity but simply refers to her as the Mountain Queen. Lurilune does know that the Mountain Queen has the lower body of a white tigress. Having the secretive nature common to many druids, she will share this information only if the characters are definitely on a quest to attack the Manor.

The druidic mark is a pattern that Lurilune traces upon a person's face before they venture into the pass. Most of the hunters would not dream of entering the pass without the mark. To get the druidic mark, one must make some sort of sacrifice on the altar in the center of Lurilune's green freehold. Only a few types of things are acceptable sacrifices:

| Accepted                                        | Not Accepted                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Gems or precious stones (100 gp minimum)        | Gold, silver, copper           |
| Gems or precious stones (500 gp minimum)**      |                                |
| Blood (1 hit point's worth)*                    | Someone else's blood           |
| Blood (5 hit points' worth)**                   |                                |
| Pelt of a wolf, badger, or giant weasel         | Herbivore pelts or a lynx pelt |
| Heart of a peryton** or pelt of a saber-tooth** | Iron or steel                  |

\* A blood sacrifice reduces the character's max hit points by 1 (or 5) points for as long as the character is in the pass. Even a restoration spell will not return the lost hit points until the character enters the Abbey, the south camp, or otherwise leaves the pass into the lowlands.

\*\*These are the "greater sacrifices" described in more detail below.

A normal sacrifice "allows" the recipient to hunt the giant ermines that live in the pass. Anyone without the mark who kills more than one of the giant ermines immediately begins suffering from a curse: they are afflicted

with a weakness of the joints that imposes a -1 modifier on all attack rolls and damage rolls. Leaving the pass abates the weakness, but it returns if the victim enters the pass again without having the curse removed by Lurilune or by a spell. Each additional giant ermine killed without the druid's Mark worsens the curse by increasing the penalty to -2, -3, etc.

Making one of the greater sacrifices (5 hit points or a peryton heart) confers a temporary druidic power against death itself. If the bearer of the greater druidic mark takes a mortal wound (would be brought to 0 hit points), the mark draws upon the natural pattern of sacred sites in the pass to bring the character back to 1 hit point. When this happens, the greater druidic mark also disappears from the character's face. The mark disappears if the character leaves the pass, but reappears upon return (until its power is used).

There are some restrictions on the mark. It disappears permanently if the character bearing the mark sets foot in the chapel tower of the abbey. Similarly, it is not possible to have both the Abbot's blessing and bear the druidic mark. Moreover, the druidic mark disappears immediately if the character with the mark kills one of the giant lynxes in the pass. These act as Lurilune's eyes and ears, and they are sacred to the druidic powers of the area.

**(Lurilune [Druid]: AC 11, 27 hp; +2 to hit, 1d8 bludgeoning damage (shillelagh); spell attack +4, save DC 12; druidcraft, produce flame, shillelagh, entangle, longstrider, speak with animals, thunderwave, animal messenger, barkskin)**

**(Giant Lynx [Lion]: AC 12, 26 hp; +5 to hit, 1d6 + 3 slashing damage [claw] or +5 to hit, 1d8 + 3 piercing damage [bite]; keen smell, pack tactics, pounce, running leap)**

**Treasure:** The inside of Lurilune's cottage is carpeted with woven green rugs, and several books are stacked on a writing desk. There is a bedroom in the back containing an unnaturally soft mattress stuffed with fragrant grasses, and a wardrobe containing white druidic robes. The books all contain complex astrological charts, weather predictions, records of prophetic bird migrations, and instructions for all kinds of auguries and divinations. All told they are worth 4,000 gp, but if they are sold, eventually the druids will find out that one of their own has been robbed, and they will search tirelessly for the thieves (or, perhaps, murderers).

A small chest (unlocked) contains 40 small emeralds (500 gp) in a pouch. If anyone departs the cottage with these emeralds and does not leave one of the stones behind, an **earth elemental** is released from imprisonment beneath the stone circle—the precious stones are part of the binding. It attacks ferociously to retrieve the emeralds and thus ensure its escape.

**(Earth Elemental: AC 17, 126 hp; +8 to hit x2, 2d8 + 5 bludgeoning damage [slam]; can burrow through stone and earth without leaving a trace.)**

## Manor of the Mountain Queen

The Mountain Queen's minions are tracked on a monster roster, since the battle for the Manor will most likely involve monsters moving around, rather than staying in one place.

### Approaching the Manor

A huge manor house is built into the sloping side of a hill, with three levels. The roof is steeply pitched and made of slate shingles.

There is a bugbear sentry in Area H-28 keeping watch over the front of the building, waiting for the sort of visitors who walk up to front doors.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES



It is certain to notice creatures that don't take special precautions against being spotted. Against those who do, this bugbear's passive Perception is 13.

Other than the front door, the Manor offers two other avenues for covert entry: through the roof or through an arrowslit.

### The Roof

Getting onto the roof of the Manor is easy, but getting through the heavy slate shingles without making a tremendous racket is virtually impossible. Rogues recognize the extreme difficulty of this route automatically. A lone person on the roof can make a hole large enough for one person by first making a successful DC 20 Str (Athletics) check to physically move an area of tiles without noisily dropping any, followed by a successful DC 25 Dex (Acrobatics) check to get through the gap without dislodging more tiles. An individual character can attempt each check only once. Failing a check by 5 or fewer points means the character realizes the job can't be done without making a lot of noise; failing by 6 or more points means a tile (or a tool) was dropped, making enough noise to attract attention. If characters haven't yet made a hole in the roof, guards from the manor roster come to investigate. If they have made a hole in the roof, someone inside the building spots them.

A character who succeeds at both checks gets inside without attracting attention, possibly into a loft, possibly onto nothing more substantial than one of the roof beams 40 feet above the floor (in the low or middle tiers) or 20 feet above the floor in the top tier. Other characters can follow through the same hole by making just the second ability check.

Players who come up with an especially ingenious plan (probably involving magic) might be able to get through the roof more easily.

### Arrowslits

There are four arrowslits in the front wall of the manor: two are high up on the first tier, and two are high up on the second tier. The arrowslits on the second tier have line of sight to anyone on the roof of the bottom tier.

The slits are too narrow for Medium or larger creatures to pass through. A Tiny creature can get through easily, and a small humanoid can squeeze through by stripping off all gear and armor and making a successful DC 20 Dex (Acrobatics) check. Only one attempt is allowed per character. Characters who can polymorph, turn gaseous, or teleport might find an easy access through the arrowslits.

## Wandering Monsters (if needed)

Wandering monsters will only be an issue in the Manor if characters stop in one place for a long time. If the characters stay in one place for more than an hour or set up an ambush in a corridor, roll on the following table once every 30 minutes.

### Wandering Monsters

| Roll<br>1d20 | Result           |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1-10         | No Encounter     |
| 11-12        | 1d2 + 1 bugbears |

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

| Roll<br>1d20 | Result                                       |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>13</b>    | Gaston the Cook (Area H-7)                   |
| <b>14</b>    | 1 weretiger and 1 saber-toothed tiger        |
| <b>15</b>    | 1d2 saber-toothed tigers                     |
| <b>16</b>    | Glaivorn (Area H-13) and 1d3 of his bugbears |
| <b>17</b>    | Henri Tharnac and 1 weretiger (Area H-17)    |
| <b>18</b>    | Serz and Cloyaun, human servants (Area H-18) |
| <b>19</b>    | Martin of Becqueril (Area H-19)              |
| <b>20</b>    | Kathelynn and 1 weretiger                    |

## All is Not as it Seems—Weretigers!

Even if they are being attacked, the weretigers will remain human for one or two rounds, trying to make intruders believe that the Manor is a normal settlement that just happens to have saber-toothed tigers and bugbears wandering around. The charmed slaves and Henri back this up convincingly. Gaston the Cook tries to lie, but he isn't very convincing. The weretigers, of course, try to keep characters away from Gaston, introduce them to an illusion of Kathelynn, and get them to sleep in one of the guest rooms. Once the characters are separated, Kathelynn can try to charm and enslave them one at a time.

Kathelynn may use her ability to create a major image of herself as a human, with a face different from her own. She usually only attempts this in the Great Hall, where she can regally dismiss the characters before the ten-minute duration of her illusion expires. One of the weretigers always stands near the illusion to open doors for it and to prevent it from being touched.

The weretigers are usually in human form, even when they are alone.

## H-1. Main Gate

This solid-looking wooden door has a red rose painted on it. A slot through the door at eye level can be opened from within to inspect visitors.

During the day, the door stands open, allowing the **saber-toothed tigers** to come and go as they please. At night, the door is barred and a **bugbear** stands watch behind it in the murder hall.

**(Bugbear:** AC 16, 27 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage [morningstar] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage; the bugbear does an extra 2d6 damage in the first round of combat against an opponent who was surprised)

## H-2. Murder Hall

This stone room has arrowslits pointing into it from the room beyond (the Covered Court, Area H-3) and a stout door that obviously leads into the main part of the manor.

If it is nighttime, include the bugbear in the description of the hall. As with the main gate, during the day this door is open to the rest of the hall so the cats can go in and out. At night, a **bugbear** stands guard here with a horn to summon reinforcements if the Manor is attacked. The bugbear is any of those listed on the general roster.

## H-3. The Great Covered Court

This room comprises almost all of the castle's lowest tier. The ceiling is steeply pitched overhead, supported with wooden beams and stone buttresses. There appears to be a walled-in loft under the center of the roof, surrounded by a cobweblike array of heavy beams and struts. The room has a number of strange features: balconies, arched openings placed high up the wall, a ramp and drawbridge leading to the next tier of the fortified manor, stairs that lead up to the loft area, a wall with arrowslits pointing into the hall rather than outward, and some large double doors. It is a lot to take in at a first glance.

### A. Balcony (10 feet up)

A sturdy balcony made of stone is mounted 10 feet above the floor, with no railing.

The tigers can leap 10 feet up, so their leaping-hole has a balcony 10 feet below it, allowing the tigers to clear the upward distance from the main floor to the leaping-hole in two jumps. They can pounce downward from the leaping-hole to the floor 20 feet below in a single leap without risk. One of the saber-tooths always watches the balcony from the leaping-hole (see Area H-11, the Tiger Run).

### B. Leaping-Hole

An arch-shaped opening in the wall sits oddly 20 feet above the floor. This presumably leads up to the second tier of the building.

There are several leaping-holes in the manor. They are designed to let the great cats of the manor pounce in and out of a room through a door humanoids can't reach. All of the leaping-holes have an adjacent balcony, as described above, to make the required upward leap manageable. One of the saber-tooths can come blasting down from a leaping-hole at full speed for an automatic pounce. A quarter ton of fast-moving saber-toothed tiger will knock down any creature.

One saber-tooth is watching the balcony and can pounce directly to it, if it sees prey.

### C. Drawbridge and Ramp

An enormous right triangle of stone rises from the ground at about the center of the yard. It forms a ramp that is 10 feet wide, 10 feet high, and about 20 feet long. The ramp ends 10 feet short of north wall, but a drawbridge has been lowered from an opening in that wall to the top of the ramp. The ramp appears well traveled, and the drawbridge clearly allows access to an upper tier of the manor—or it can be raised, sealing off the upper tier in case of attack.

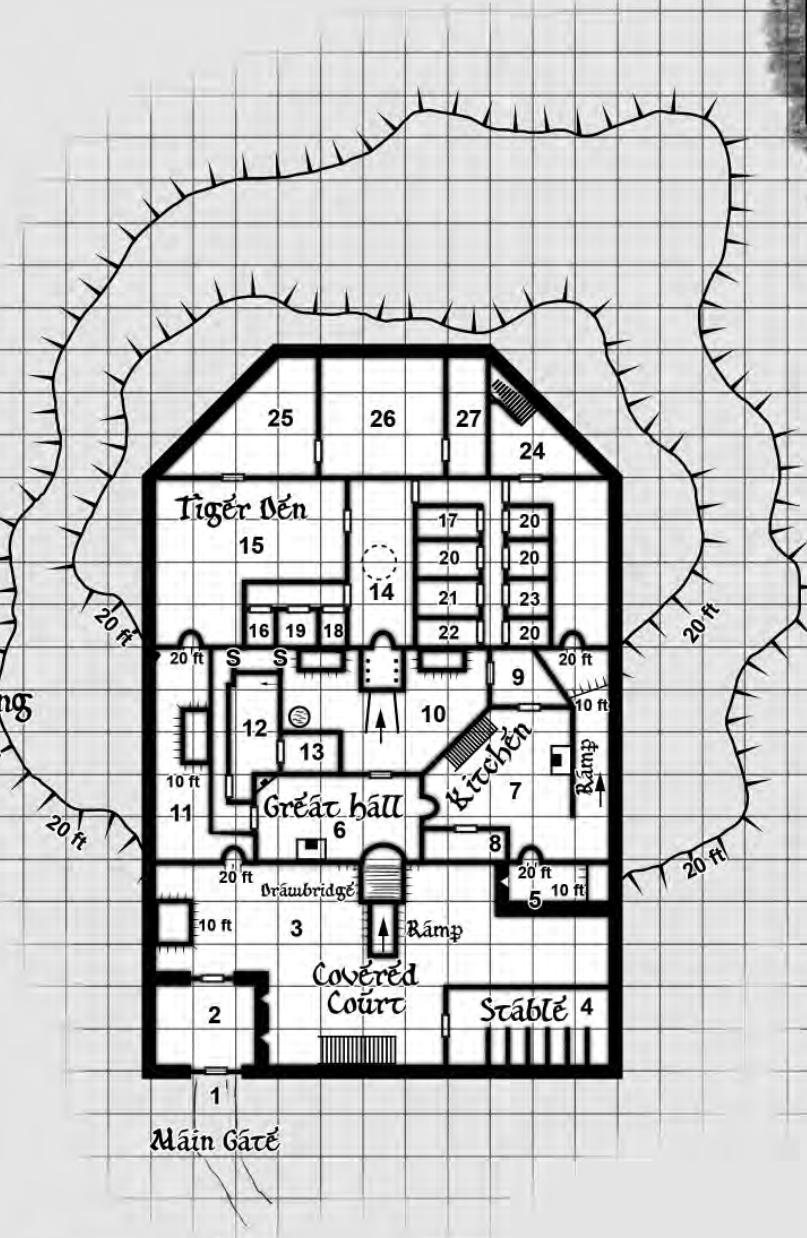
The drawbridge is usually down so that Kathelynn's bugbears and any guests can move freely about the manor. If Kathelynn decides that she faces a significant threat, she has this drawbridge pulled up to block the route into the higher tier of the manor. In that case, adjust the readaloud text accordingly.

# Máñor of the Mountáin Quéén

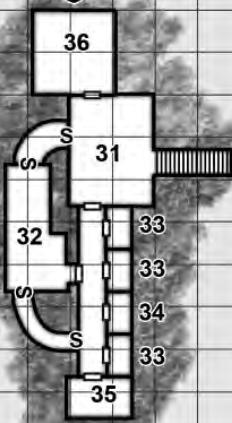
1 square - 10 feet

## Map Key

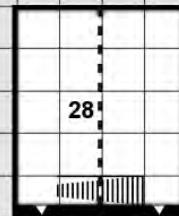
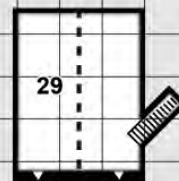
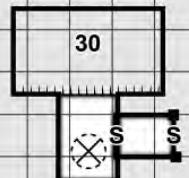
- Outer Wall
- Inner Wall
- Arrow Slit
- Door
- Secret Door
- Archway
- Balcony
- Drawbridge
- Ramp
- Stairs up
- Stairs down
- Trapdoor Ceiling
- Trapdoor Floor
- Fireplace
- Pool



## Dúngéon



## Lofts



N

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

### D. Stairs to Loft

A flight of narrow stone steps is built against the south wall.

These stairs are too narrow for anything other than walking single file; they are just barely wide enough for the saber-tooths to climb. They lead to Area H-28, a storage loft.

### H-4. Tiger-Proof Stable

These large double doors seem extremely powerful for internal doors, even in a castle. They lead into an enclosed stable. Two mules watch you placidly from their stalls, which is unsurprising. The third animal is most definitely unusual, though: it is a chestnut-brown warhorse, the sort that would ordinarily be found in the possession of a knight or noble. The warhorse is obviously much more nervous than the mules.

The design requirements of a stable in a castle where weretigers and saber-toothed tigers roam free are different from the requirements for a normal stable. The mounts only come out when the cats are safely occupied in other rooms, and then make a beeline for the outside.

The warhorse belongs to Martin of Becqueril, the son of Baron Jauntir of Becqueril, who is willing to pay an enormous ransom (1,000 gp) for the return of his missing son. Martin has been enthralled by the lamia (see Area H-19).

### H-5. Inside Bastion

This fortified space has no entrance from the yard, but it appears to have no roof, meaning it can be entered by jumping down from the arched hole in the wall above it. Arrowslits in the walls make it clear that it serves as a defensive bastion for the courtyard.

If characters announced their arrival by knocking on the door or gave the entire manor time to prepare against an assault in any other way, then **Kathelynn** will be in this area to see what happens when strangers enter the Covered Courtyard (Area H-3). If she believes she's in any danger, she leaps out of the room and into the kitchen above (Area H-7). She doesn't necessarily order her minions to attack strangers; visitors might be bringing messages or interesting news of the outside world. She wants to assess newcomers before allowing them farther into her home. Kathelynn might possibly even speak to characters from this chamber, since the arrowslit easily conceals the fact that her lower body is that of a white tiger. If she decides that her best course of action is to impersonate a human, she will play the trick here.

### H-6. Great Hall

The walls of this room are hung with tapestries depicting saber-toothed tigers stalking and killing humans in the snowy crags and rifts of a mountainous region. Two fireplaces blaze with the crackle of pine wood, and three great wooden tables are set out with embroidered cloths and tableware.

Two confused-looking humans seem to have been working in the room, because they are holding mops and buckets.

If appropriate, add a description of the bugbears (below) to your description of the Great Hall.

The great hall is where the denizens of the Manor eat their meals and socialize, and also is where visitors are brought to meet Kathelynn. There will always be **one or two bugbears** in the hall (assuming they haven't all been killed) and **two human slaves**. The slaves are Caurien and Jirral, both of them charmed by the lamia's magic. They will not help either the bugbears or the characters if a fight breaks out here, but if Kathelynn or one of the weretigers is here and gives an order, they must follow it. They won't follow the characters, act as lookouts, or help in any other substantial way; they've been told to mop the floor, and they aren't going to let themselves be sidetracked from that task.

If characters inspect the ceiling, they see a wooden loft above the eastern half of the room. It has wooden walls, and no entrance is visible from this area (the stairs to the loft are in the Kitchen, Area H-7).

**(Caurien and Jirral [Commoners]):** AC 10, 4 hp; +2 to hit, 1d4 bludgeoning damage

**Treasure:** the tapestries in this room are worth a total of 100 gp and weigh 500 pounds altogether. The embroidered cloths on the tables are worth a total of 200 gp. The tableware is of no particular value.

### H-7. Kitchen

This room is obviously the kitchen. A massive fireplace stands almost in the center of the room; its chimney is a stone column that rises to the roof above. A fat man wearing a chef's hat is chopping vegetables at a large table, apparently preparing the stuffing for a roast goat, which also lies on the table.

In addition to these basics, the room has several entrances and exits:

- A flight of stairs leads to a loft overhead.
- There is a door in each of the north and south walls.
- An archway in the west wall leads to an adjoining room.
- An archway in the south wall appears to open into the room to the south, well above the level of the floor in that chamber.
- There's an arched opening in the north wall 20 feet above the floor of this room. A ramp leads up along the east wall, behind the chimney, and ends 10 feet away from, and 10 feet below, the north archway.

The cook at the table is **Gaston Payis**, a normal human. He is a tremendously good cook; the weretigers kidnapped him from the town of Elet and brought him here specifically to become the Manor's cook. Unlike the lamia's other slaves, Gaston is not charmed. The monsters decided that it might inhibit his cooking skills. He is utterly terrified of the other denizens of the Manor, but he knows he couldn't possibly survive in the wilderness of Ghostwind Pass long enough to get away. He won't be willing to help the adventurers unless it is clear that they are going to succeed in killing the lamia and the weretigers; if they fail, what then for Gaston Payis, who betrayed the tigers?

Various kitchen supplies are kept in boxes under the table, including knives, pots, pans, buckets, and the like.

**(Gaston Payis [Commoner]):** AC 10, 4 hp; +2 to hit, 1d4 piercing damage; 5 gp

### H-8. Storage Room

This room contains crates and sacks on the floor. Shelves on the walls contain earthenware pots and wine bottles.

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

This is the kitchen's storage room. It holds flour, sugar, herbs, cheese, and various other ingredients found in kitchens. Most of the wine is poor quality with the exception of five bottles of Chateau d'Amber, which can be sold for as much as 200 gp each in a large town. One of the crates has a piece of parchment nailed to it, which reads: "For delivery, Henri Tharnac of Elet." (Henri is a merchant who deals with the Manor: see Area H-17).

## H-9. Cook's Quarters

This modest room contains a bed, table, chair, and an unlocked wooden cabinet.

This is Gaston the cook's room (see Area H-7). There is nothing here to interest the adventurers.

## H-10. Foyer

This room's most prominent feature is another ramp-and-drawbridge arrangement like the one on the lower tier. It is on the north wall and obviously leads to the Manor's third tier. There is a balcony on either side of the drawbridge, 10 feet above the floor, and the archway the ramp leads to is 20 feet above the floor. A wooden-walled loft runs north-and-south over the middle of the room, but it has no visible entrances or exits.

Most of the area is bare stone, but there is a little island of luxury in the eastern part of the room. There, three armchairs are grouped around a delicate wooden table on a flower-patterned carpet.

There is also a decorative pool in a western corner of the room.

A gentleman is sitting in one of the armchairs, unless the alarm has already been sounded. This is **Claude**, one of Kathelynn's were-tiger sons. He wears a black robe and sandals, which makes him look a bit like a monk, but he wears no holy symbol. The robe is what Claude always wears; the robe fits loosely enough that it doesn't tear when he transforms into a tiger.

If the characters are trying to trick their way in, Claude is not easily fooled, because he is usually the one of the three brothers whom Kathelynn sends to Elet on errands such as kidnapping people or dealing with merchants.

The flowers embroidered on the carpet are red roses, if anyone bothers to look. Kathelynn is as obsessed with her heraldic symbols as any knight.

The pool in the western part of the room is not more than three inches deep. It has a shallow, concave bottom that appears to be coated in silver, making the pool so reflective that it is almost a perfect mirror. This pool is actually a scrying bowl that Kathelynn can use to find the location of intruders in her manor before directing her defenses against them.

If the Manor has been widely alerted to the presence of armed strangers, the monsters' fighting contingent assembles here (see the roster for details).

**Claude [Weretiger]:** AC 12, 120 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d8 + 3 slashing damage [claw] or +5 to hit x2, 1d6 + 3 slashing damage [scimitar] or +4 to hit, range 150 ft./600 ft., 1d8 + 2 piercing damage [longbow]; if the weretiger moved 15 ft. straight toward a creature before hitting with a claw, the creature must make a DC 14 Str save or be knocked prone and attacked at +5 to hit, 1d10 + 3 piercing damage [pounce and bite]; shapeshifter

## H-11. Tiger Run

At the south end of this hallway is an archway that opens 20 feet above the floor of the manor's lowest tier. At the northern end is an archway 20 feet up the wall, with a balcony 10 feet below it.

Unless the saber-tooths have all been killed by the time the characters get here, **one saber-toothed tiger** is watching the leaping-hole to Area H-15 like a cat outside a mouse hole. The saber-tooth is one of those from the general roster.

## H-12. Bugbear Quarters

Ten very big beds are covered with shaggy sleeping-furs in this rancid-smelling room. A substantial wooden table stands in the middle of the room, looking like it has taken a beating and been repaired several times. There is a door in the far wall with a knife stuck in it.

This is the room where the manor's bugbears sleep. If the characters have gotten this far, assume that all surviving **bugbears** on the roster (with the exception of those that have set locations on the map) will be here.

There is a burlap sack under each bed where the bugbears store their nonvaluable possessions. They contain nothing but dirty clothes, bones, and the occasional mouse.

If there is any combat in this room, Glaivorn the Overseer (in Area H-13) joins the fight in 1d3 rounds.

**Treasure:** Other than what they carry in their pouches, all of the bugbears keep their treasure in individual bags stashed in Glaivorn's chest.



## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

**(Bugbear:** AC 16, 27 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage [morningstar] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage; does an extra 2d6 damage in the first round of combat against an opponent who was surprised)

## H-13. Bugbear Overseer

This room is a bedroom with a table, bed, sturdy chair, and a wicker basket filled with clothes. There is a large, padlocked wooden chest in the northeast corner of the room, with a smaller iron box beside it.

This room belongs to **Glaivorn**, the bugbear who oversees all menial work done in the manor. He wears a black tunic embroidered with Kathelynn's red rose symbol. The large wooden chest contains 10 leather bags, each containing the treasure of one of the bugbears.

**Bag #1:** 15 gp, gold earring with pearl (100 gp), 2 dwarf-bone dice

**Bag #2:** 22 gp, 28 sp, 119 cp, cat skull with "bad kitty" written on it in goblin, iron ring with quartz stone (1 sp)

**Bag #3:** 169 gp and a hand mirror (10 gp)

**Bag #4:** 56 gp, 260 sp, 2 cp, and a set of ivory false teeth (25 gp)

**Bag #5:** 9 gp, 28 sp, bracelet of wooden thorns (worthless), someone's finger bone, crushed-velvet hat (1 gp) with broken feather, polished obsidian fish (50 gp)

**Bag #6:** large sewing needle, thread, pincers, thumbscrews, and a large piece of amber containing a preserved lizard (200 gp)

**Bag #7:** 16 gp, 189 sp, 295 cp, 1 wad of chewing tobacco (1 cp)

**Bag #8:** 6 gp, 505 sp, 2 rolled-up ermine furs (normal size and low quality, worth 100 gp each)

**Bag #9:** 35 gp, 69 sp, 12 cp

**Bag #10:** 8 gp, wax candle (1 sp)

Glaivorn's personal treasure is in the smaller iron box, which is locked and has a poison needle trap on the catch. The trap can be detected with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check, and the lock can be picked with a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 10 Dex check. If the chest is opened without detecting the trap, the opener must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw against poison or immediately drop to 0 hit points. The character can be stabilized normally but can't regain hit points until the poison is neutralized. The box contains 10 gp, 16 sp, 31 cp, and a silver brooch inlaid with jade and garnet (300 gp).

**(Glaivorn [Bugbear Chief]:** AC 17, 65 hp; +5 to hit x2, 2d8 + 3 piercing damage [morningstar] or +5 to hit x2, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 3 piercing damage; does an extra 2d6 damage in the first round of combat against an opponent who was surprised; carries the key to the iron box in Area H-13)

## H-14. Central Hall

This broad stone hallway is accessed from the chamber below by another ramp-and-drawbridge arrangement. It also has two doors on the west wall and one on the east wall.

What is not apparent in this room is the concealed trapdoor in the ceiling (treat as a secret door that can be noticed from the floor only with a successful DC 25 Wis [Perception] check). If Kathelynn is cornered in her rooms and tries to circle around the characters through her escape loft (Area H-30 is above the trapdoor), this is where she will jump down.

## H-15. Tiger Den

This large room contains boulders, which must have been brought into the manor from the outside with considerable effort. They range from four to six feet in diameter. The remains of a goat—not much more than bones—are scattered about, and fresh blood is splashed on one of the rocks. There is a door in the north wall.

This is the playroom for Kathelynn's gray saber-toothed tigers that, along with the weretigers, she refers to as her "children." If the characters reach this room, assume that **all surviving saber-toothed tigers** are here.

The door in the north wall is locked. It can be opened with a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 10 Dex check.

## H-16. Weretiger Room (Thibault)

This room is luxuriously furnished, with a velvet-draped feather bed, a locked iron chest, several thick rugs covering the floor, and woolen tapestries on the walls.

**Thibault** (TIH-bawlt) is Kathelynn's youngest son and a white weretiger. Unless the characters launched a frontal assault on the manor, they should encounter Thibault first in his human form. He is a tall and handsome man with a long ponytail, long mustaches, and bushy eyebrows, all very pale blond. His yellow eyes are a bit disconcerting, but they have normal, human pupils rather than a cat's.

**(Thibault [Weretiger]:** AC 12, 120 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d8 + 3 slashing damage [claw] or +5 to hit x2, 1d6 + 3 slashing damage [scimitar] or +4 to hit, range 150 ft./600 ft., 1d8 + 2 piercing damage [longbow]; if the weretiger moved 15 ft. straight toward a creature before hitting with a claw, the creature must make a DC 14 Str save or be knocked prone and attacked at +5 to hit, 1d10 + 3 piercing damage [pounce and bite]; shapeshifter)

**Treasure:** The velvet bedclothes are worth 200 gp, and the rugs (weighing 300 pounds in total) are worth another 200 gp. The locked iron box contains a leather pouch with a drawstring that holds 56 gp, 229 sp, and 3 pearls (300 gp).

## H-17. Guest Room (Henri Tharnac)

This room contains a feather bed with a quilt. There is a nightstand with a candlestick on it, and a backpack on the floor. A man sits at a small writing desk.

This man is **Henri Tharnac**, a merchant from Elet. He visits the Manor to deliver supplies and take orders for the next delivery. Henri is quite aware of his customers' monstrous nature, but he allows himself to believe that they do not actually kill people. After all, he delivers large quantities of salted meat and even drives small herds of goats here.

**(Henri Tharnac [Veteran]:** AC 17, 58 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d10 + 3 slashing damage [longsword])

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

### H-18. Slaves' Quarters

Two humans are asleep on straw pallets in this room, which contains two empty pallets as well. The people are dressed in clothing that was once of extremely fine quality but is now stained and torn.

Four of the lamia's human slaves share this room as their sleeping quarters. Two of them, Caurien and Jirral, are in the Great Hall (Area H-6). The other two, **Serz and Cloyaun**, are the ones currently in the room. Serz and Cloyaun were originally courtiers in the service of Martin of Becqueril but, like Martin, they are now under the lamia's spell and are her willing servants. They have been put to cleaning and other menial tasks, but because of the *charm*, they bear no resentment at all. Serz is quite pudgy, but Cloyaun looks as if he's half starved. They actually receive different quantities of food; Serz is being fattened up for slaughter.

**(Serz and Cloyaun [Guards]:** AC 16, 11 hp; +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20 ft./60 ft., 1d6 + 1 bludgeoning damage [club])

### H-19. Martin's Guest Room

This room is furnished with a cot, a wooden chest, and a small writing table. A peg on the wall holds an expensive green cloak of boiled wool, trimmed with what looks like fox fur.

A dreamy-eyed man sits at the table, clad in the fine clothes of a nobleman.

This is the room belonging to the Mountain Queen's "guest," **Martin of Becqueril**. Martin is the heir to a barony. He was hunting with three of his courtiers in the pass when Kathelynn came upon them. Returning with the weretigers, she made short work of kidnapping all of them and returning to the Manor with the unfortunate captives. One of them is now dead and eaten; the other three, including Martin, are alive but have been drained of all their wisdom and are Kathelynn's slaves.

It is not readily apparent that Martin has been mentally emptied out. He tends to be excitable and to babble on about nothing, unless Kathelynn is nearby, in which case he immediately becomes completely alert, hanging on her every word. There is a substantial reward offered for his return, which will be paid by the Baron of Becqueril; If characters rescue Martin and bring him home, the next mission offered to them might be to help restore Martin's mental faculties (which were never remarkable, but at least he had free will).

**(Martin of Becqueril [Noble]:** AC 15, 9 hp; +3 to hit, 1d8 + 1 piercing damage [rapier]; can add 2 to AC as a reaction against an attack he sees coming)

### H-20. Empty Guest Room

This room contains a comfortable feather bed and a wooden chest. A thick wool carpet covers the floor, and the walls are hung with heavy tapestries for warmth.

These rooms are given to Kathelynn's guests. The locks work properly, and the guest is given the key. Even if the door is locked from the outside (using another key), the guest can unlock it again from the inside, with the key.

### H-21. Treacherous Guest Room

This room contains a comfortable feather bed and a wooden chest. A thick wool carpet covers the floor, and the walls are hung with heavy tapestries for warmth.

This room is given to guests that might cause problems in some way or guests that need to be gotten rid of. As with the other guest rooms, the guest is given a key. The lock in this door, however, is unusual; it can be locked from the outside with a different key, and if this is done, the guest key won't unlock it from the inside. Thus, a guest can be confined in the room while his or her companions are dealt with.

### H-22. The Unpleasant Minstrel

This room contains a bed, chest, small table, and chair. A lute and a small set of bagpipes hang from wall pegs.

A man dressed in a multicolored tunic is reading through several parchment sheets that appear to be musical notations.

The Manor's minstrel, **Cap Jongleur**, lives in this room for the time being. He is not charmed by the lamia, and he has no particular problem living with a clan of psychotic monsters. He is confident that if he ever needs to escape, he can, and it will make a great story to turn into a ballad. It hasn't occurred to him that he might not survive to the end of the tale.

**(Cap Jongleur:** AC 12, 27 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d6 + 2 piercing damage [shortsword] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage [hand crossbow]; spell attack +5, save DC 13; friends, minor illusion, prestidigitation, charm person, heroism, sleep, thunderwave, cloud of daggers, detect thoughts, hold person; has a lute, bagpipes, shortsword, warm-weather clothing, backpack, 5 days' rations, and a small chest containing three sets of clothes, two lady's handkerchiefs [one embroidered with a red rose, a token from Kathelynn], a golden bracelet [50 gp], and a belt pouch containing 25 gp)

### H-23. Empty Guest Room

This room contains a comfortable feather bed and a wooden chest. A thick wool carpet covers the floor, and the walls are hung with heavy tapestries for warmth.

This was the guest room assigned to a huntsman named Ormant Ulute, who was just recently killed, cooked, and served to the monsters and Kathelynn's charmed slaves. Ormant happened upon Cap Jongleur (Area H-22) playing bagpipes by a mountain stream nearby, and Cap invited him back to the Manor for dinner. Kathelynn was so amused by the prank that she gave the minstrel a token of affection and decided to keep him alive for at least another month. Ormant, on the other hand, was served for dinner after a few days as a guest.

Ormant suspected that something was not quite right in the Manor, and he wrote a note outlining his suspicions, which he hid under the mattress along with a dagger, hoping that the next person to sleep in the bed would feel the dagger and find the hidden note.

The note reads: "I fear I have fallen in among monsters. Do not trust the singer. Escape if you can. Have the abbot sing prayers for me, if you find this and live. Signed, Ormant Ulute."

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

### H-24. Stairs to the Dungeon

A stone staircase leads down into cold and darkness.

This staircase leads to the cellars (Areas H-31-36), first arriving in Area H-31, the Dungeon Cellar.

### H-25. Lamia's Antechamber

The walls of this room are bare stone with only two decorations. The first is a suit of armor carrying a shield in one corner. The second is a large basin in the center of the room, mounted on a 4-foot stone pedestal.

The suit of armor is plate mail, and the shield, which bears the sigil of a red rose, is magical (+1 AC). The red paint on the rose is still wet, and it will remain so until it is removed, revealing a white rose beneath. This is the shield of St. Elys, which Kathelynn grabbed by accident when she fled the scene of her sister's murder.

The basin contains water, and its inside bottom surface is coated with silver, making it highly reflective. This is Kathelynn's small scrying basin (as opposed to the large basin in Area H-10). It is not inherently magical, but it provides a place for the lamia to "see" what her magic reveals.

### H-26. Lamia's Bedchamber

The walls of this room are lurid with blood-red tapestries, and the floor is painted red as well. There is a four-poster bed against the southern wall, with closed curtains that look uncomfortably like crimson-dyed human skins stitched together. A high loft is built above the south portion of the room, but no ladder or stair leads up to it. The strangest feature of the room, though, is the east wall, which is entirely covered by a blooming rosebush: tangled thorns, red flowers, and green leaves grow more than a foot deep from the floor to the ceiling. There is a door through this hedge, but it looks as if it is thoroughly covered in thorns.

A window in the north wall looks out over the mountainous scenery behind the Manor.

This is the lamia's bedchamber. If the manor is taken entirely by surprise, she will be found here. It is also the room where she will flee if a battle is going badly, because the loft has a secret exit through the roof (see Area H-30, the Escape Loft).

Kathelynn has the torso of a human female but the lower body of a white tiger. Her face looks quite human, although her canine teeth are long and the irises of her eyes are a golden color. She has a vertical scar on the left side of her face. If the characters have seen the painting of Saint Kathelynn in the Abbey's chapel, they immediately notice the remarkable resemblance between Kathelynn's face and the lamia's.

Kethelynn wears the Eye of Othroäta on a gold chain around her neck. Even a cursory examination of the Eye reveals that, unlike most jewelry, the Eye is held in its setting with a clever, puzzle-like latch. A few simple twists free it from the setting. A rogue or bard solves the puzzle instantly; others figure it out automatically with a minute or two of effort.

There is no window in the north wall, as the characters might know if they scouted the outside of the Manor. It is an illusion permanently placed

to conceal a niche in the wall, which contains a key. Anyone touching the window detects the illusion automatically, but it does not disappear when detected. If the character feels around behind the "window," the niche can be found easily and the key recovered.

The lamia does not keep her treasure in this room, but there is a longbow and an "escape kit" in a leather bag next to the bed. The bag contains a quiver with 20 arrows, a heavy winter coat, a waterskin, rations for five days, and a pouch holding 30 gp and three emeralds worth 1,000 gp each.

**(Kathelynn [Lamia]):** AC 13, 97 hp; +5 to hit, 2d10 + 3 slashing damage [claws] and either +5 to hit, 1d4 + 3 piercing damage [dagger] or +5 to hit, target has tactical disadvantage on Wis saving throws and all ability checks for 1 hr. [intoxicating touch]; can replace standard attacks with +3 to hit x2, range 150 ft./600 ft., 1d8 + 1 piercing damage [longbow]; spell DC 13; at will—disguise self, major image; 3/day—charm person, mirror image, scrying, suggestion; 1/day—geas; longbow, 20 arrows, dagger, 30 gp, key to Area H-25, the Eye of Othroäta

#### The Rose Door

The rosebush over the east wall is real, although it is created by magic. The inch-long thorns drip with poison. Anyone pushing through them must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw against poison or immediately drop to 0 hit points; the character can be stabilized normally but can't regain hit points until the poison is neutralized.

The door through the rose-covered wall has no latch or knob: its only feature is a rose carved in bas-relief at the center. The rose vines covering the wall grow outward from the carving. The vines can be cut with weapons that do slashing damage, but new growth rejoins the cut ends within seconds. The vines penetrate the adjoining walls, floor, and ceiling into Area H-27 and form a thorny cage enclosing that entire room.

The rose in the center of the door has a round hole or channel at the center that's an inch in diameter. Someone who peers into this channel or probes it with a small tool notices that it is about 2 inches deep and at its end is a small depression with a hole in the bottom; anything smaller than one inch in diameter that's pushed into the channel would drop through the second hole. The channel is a keyhole, and the key is the Eye of Othroäta. The Eye must be dropped through the hole. Dropping it in on a string so it can be fished back out won't work: it must be dropped so that it can roll freely into the Treasure Room on the other side.

Once the Eye is dropped through the door, five keyholes appear in the door around the rose. The key to all five locks is hidden behind the illusory window in the north wall. Initially, the key fits one of the locks (if you like, you can roll 1d5 to determine how many keyholes characters must try before finding the right one). When that lock is unlocked and the key removed from the keyhole, the key magically reshapes itself to fit another lock; when the second lock is unlocked, the key reshapes to fit a third, and so on until all five locks are released. When all five locks are turned, the door slowly swings into Area H-27 as the thorns recede from the opening.

The doorway remains clear for 10 minutes. At the end of 10 minutes, the door swings shut and the roses grow over it again (on both sides). If the door was blocked open with something heavy, it takes 1d10 rounds before building up enough force to overcome the block, or 2d10 rounds if it was spiked open. Even if the door is held open, the thorns grow across the doorway in just two rounds. On the first round, a character who can reach the doorway with a single move can dive through the roses without getting scratched with a successful DC 12 Dex (Acrobatics) check. On the second round, the DC increases to 18. Failure on either check by 5 or fewer points means the character escaped from the room but was scratched by the roses and must make a saving throw against their poison. Failure by 6 or more points indicates that the character isn't just scratched but is also grappled by the rapidly growing vines. A grappled character who is still conscious can escape with a successful DC 18 Dex (Acrobatics) or Str (Athletics) check. An unconscious character can be pulled free by an adjacent ally who makes a successful DC 18 Str (Athletics) check.

## H-27. Treasure Room

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this room are entirely covered by blooming rose vines to a thickness of 6 or more inches. Entering it is like walking into a cave of roses. The room also contains two sturdy chests and five large sacks.

The Eye of Othroäta sits in a depression on the threshold just inside the room (assuming characters didn't devise some means of getting into this chamber without unlocking the door). Immediately upon entering the room, characters smell the overpowering, cloying scent of roses. Anyone breathing the scent for more than 30 seconds must make a successful DC 15 Con saving throw against poison or fall asleep. This magical sleep is profound; it can only be removed by a kiss or by magic capable of lifting a curse.

Characters can walk on the roses safely, assuming they're not barefoot (unlikely in this climate). Someone who falls down or bumps against a wall must make the DC 15 Con saving throw against the roses' poison.

**All five sacks** are full of human skulls: grisly trophies of Kathelynn's meals. There are 183 skulls in all, taken from people she has eaten over the last 75 years.

**Chest #1** is locked, and is covered in thorns (all of which are coated with the same lethal poison as the roses). Because the roses regenerate so quickly, the lock must be picked through the vines. That task requires a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 20 Dex check. If the check fails by more than 5 points, the character is scratched by a thorn and must make the DC 15 Con saving throw against the roses' poison. Smashing the chest sends thorns flying and vines thrashing in all directions, hitting everyone in the room. The chest contains 3,205 gp, 6,730 sp, 4,053 cp, 3 ep, 2 polished disks of rare wood worth 10 gp each, and 25 worthless lead tokens the size of coins.

**Chest #2** is trapped and locked the same as chest #1. It contains a scroll (*protection from energy, hallucinatory terrain, remove curse, and wall of stone*), a giant ermine pelt worth 1,000 gp, and four potions: *plant control, growth, invisibility, and gaseous form*.

If characters are inside the room when the door closes after 10 minutes, they may be in serious trouble. For details on how the door closes, see "The Rose Door" in the description of Area H-26. The inside of the door has an ordinary doorknob, so opening it is simple if the roses can be cleared away, but they regenerate so fast that it is impossible to just cut them back. If characters look at the door closely, they notice that the roses do not grow near metal. There is a clear space around each of the hinges and around the doorknob. With some experimentation, characters discover that the branches actually move a bit away from iron, as if they dislike it. It is possible to start in the middle of the door with some metal (first sword points, then plates of armor will work) and slowly create a perimeter of metal to push back the thorns. Alternatively, characters could cut away branches and quickly block them with metal from regenerating back over the door. By working like this, a group of trapped adventurers can clear the doorway, turn the knob, open the door, repeat the process with the rose wall in Area H-26, and walk out.

## H-28. Storage Loft

This is an airy wooden loft underneath the sharply pitched roof of slate tiles overhead. The front of the loft is the manor's front wall, which is pierced by two arrowslits.

Several barrels are lined up along the side walls, and thirty chicken coops are stacked against the north wall.

During daytime, a sentry is posted in this room (a **bugbear** from the roster). He might have spotted the characters' approach if they headed directly for the manor's front gate.

Most of the barrels contain salted meat. Three of them contain ale (these are worth 100 gp each, but they weigh 440 pounds apiece). Many of the barrels bear a merchant's mark with the initials "H.T." This is the mark of Henri Tharnac, a merchant who knowingly deals with the monsters of the Manor (see Area H-17).

The chickens are ordinary chickens.

## H-29. Storage Loft

Boxes and crates are stacked in here, along with cords of firewood, rope, and three statues.

The statues are all of a woman wearing armor with a rose on her shield and a vertical scar on the left side of her face: they were taken from shrines to Saint Kathelynn on orders from the lamia.

The contents of the storage loft are diverse; virtually anything required to run a wilderness freehold can be found in this loft, at least in small quantities.

## H-30. Escape Loft

This loft overlooks the bedroom below. It contains a wooden log supported on sturdy trestles and a round cushion 5 feet in diameter, lying on the floor. The center of it is indented slightly.

Unless they have flown down to reinforce Kathelynn in a combat, there are **2 giant white owls** here, on the log perch. They are very intelligent and can speak the Common tongue. They are also very loyal to the lamia, so they attack anyone they consider a threat to her.

There are two hidden exits from this room. If Kathelynn needs to either escape or double back around the characters, this loft provides the opportunity. There is a secret exit (leading to a secret door in the roof) in the loft's eastern wall, and there is a trapdoor in the floor (under the cushion) that leads to Area H-14.

The cushion is a cat bed for the lamia, when she chooses not to use the human-style bed in the room below. It also does a good job of concealing the trap door beneath.

**(Giant Owl:** AC 12, 19 hp; +3 to hit, 2d6 + 1 slashing damage [talons]; doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when flying out of an enemy's reach)

**Treasure:** There is nothing valuable in the room.

## H-31. Dungeon Cellar

This is a low-ceilinged cellar with doors in the north and south walls. It smells bad down here.

Although it looks innocuous, this room is the entrance to the dungeons beneath the Manor. Both of the doors in the room are locked. They can be opened with a set of thieves' tools and successful DC 12 Dex checks.

## H-32. Jailer's Room

This chamber is decorated with shields of all shapes and sizes hung on the walls, at least 50 of them. A comfortable-looking bed stands against the western wall, and a set of keys hangs on a peg next to the bed.

This bedroom belongs to the weretiger **Pierre**, one of Kathelynn's sons. If the manor has not been completely alerted, Pierre will be here; he is the last to hear of any assault, and deep enough underground not to hear the clamor of battle.

The shield collection is not worth more than any other collection of battered-up shields.

The keys open the cells (Areas H-33-35) and the door to Area H-36.

**(Pierre [Weretiger]):** AC 12, 120 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d8 + 3 slashing damage [claw] or +5 to hit x2, 1d6 + 3 slashing damage [scimitar] or +4 to hit, range 150 ft./600 ft., 1d8 + 2 piercing damage [longbow]; if the weretiger moved 15 ft. straight toward a creature before hitting with a claw, the creature must make a DC 14 Str save or be knocked prone and attacked at +5 to hit, 1d10 + 3 piercing damage [pounce and bite]; shapechanger)

## H-33. Unoccupied Cell

The door of the cell is wood, with iron bindings and a padlocked bolt. There is a small, barred window in the door, 6 inches by 3 inches.

This stone cell is apparently empty.

Yes, it is definitely empty.

## H-34. Cell

The door of the cell is wood, with iron bindings and a padlocked bolt. There is a small, barred window in the door, 6 inches by 3 inches.

A person in rags sits in the back of the cell directly across from the door, head bowed so that long hair covers the face.

This prisoner has been tortured, and is now blind. He introduces himself as **Mad Andre**, and asks if the characters have any food or water.

Andre is a mystic who has visions of a "Saint Elys." He began preaching about her in the town of Elet, north of Ghostwind Pass, calling her the Snow Maiden. Word of this preacher came to Kathelynn's ears, and she immediately sent the weretigers Claude and Thibault to kidnap him and bring him to the Manor.

From his visions, Mad Andre knows Elys's name and that she is associated with winds and snow, but he doesn't know much more about her. Her symbol is a rose, white as snow. She has difficulty sending the visions to him because she is far away, but she will gradually draw nearer as more people hear Andre talk of her. Elys tells Andre that her bones are hidden "beyond the reach of the Ghostwind, in the Ghostwind's reach," but Andre doesn't know what this means. If characters ask, he can tell them that the "tigers" tortured him because they wanted to know the location of Elys's bones.

## H-35. Communal Dungeon Cell

The door here is a barred gate like a cage wall, secured with a padlock. The inside is a noisome cell containing four people.

The people in the cell are **4 trappers and hunters** captured by the lamia or the weretigers. Their names are Yaric, Otho, Kevrix, and Winfril. Winfril is female, the others are male. Otho has been scratched by one of the weretigers and infected with lycanthropy. However, he will not transform for the first time until he stands under the night sky when the moon is full. Thereafter he will be able to change form at will. There is no reward for any of these prisoners, but—with the exception of Otho—they will eventually present a giant ermine pelt to the characters (they are, after all, hunters).

## H-36. Five Skeletons

Five skeletons hang from rusty manacles on the walls of this room.

These are the bones of the five loyal retainers who buried Elys's body, thinking it belonged to Kathelynn. This room is where they met their demise one after the other, refusing to the bitter end to disclose the body's whereabouts. If a Lawful cleric enters the room, the ghostly shade of a woman in chain mail, resembling all the images of Kathelynn but without a scar, appears in the middle of the room. She seems to be trying to speak, but the words are faint and inaudible. She gestures to the skeletons, and you can hear the words, "Must bury [something something] at the Abbey [something something] warm [something] protect." She gestures again at the skeletons, then fades away.

The characters have just had a direct encounter with Saint Elys. If the five skeletons are brought to the abbey and buried in their appropriate graves (as best as can be determined), every Lawful cleric in the party will gain one level of experience or 1,500 XP, whichever is greater. Each other member of the clerics' party gains 1,000 XP.

# Monster Roster

## State of Alert

If the Manor is alerted, most of the fighting monsters head for **Area H-10**, to assemble under Kathelynn's leadership and counterattack. Kathelynn uses the scrying pool in that room to find the characters and direct the counterattack accordingly. Noncombatants (the "Free Individuals" and the "Charmed Slaves" other than Martin) remain where they are. The giant owls and the saber-tooth at **Area H-11** remain in place. From that point on, the monsters respond as their leaders indicate. The Manor is designed to allow lots of tactical mobility.

If the Manor is not on alert, all of its inhabitants can wander freely through its halls and lower chambers. They are found in the indicated areas if they haven't been met elsewhere first, haven't been drawn away by an alert, or if you think it would be more appropriate or more dramatic for them to be somewhere else.

## The Lamia, Kathelynn the Mountain Queen

If she isn't met first somewhere else in the Manor, Kathelynn will be found in her chamber (**Area H-26**)

**Kathelynn:** AC 13, 97 hp; +5 to hit, 2d10 + 3 slashing damage [claws] and either +5 to hit, 1d4 + 3 piercing damage [dagger] or +5 to hit, target has tactical disadvantage on Wis saving throws and all ability checks for 1 hr. [intoxicating touch]; can replace standard attacks with +3 to hit x2, range 150 ft./600 ft., 1d8 + 1 piercing damage [longbow]; spell DC 13; at will—*disguise self, major image*; 3/day—*charm person, mirror image, scrying, suggestion*; 1/day—geas; longbow, 20 arrows, dagger, 30 gp, key to Area H-25, the Eye of Othroäta

## 10 Bugbears

When they aren't on duty, the bugbears spend most of their time in their quarters (**Area H-12**).

**Bugbear:** AC 16, 27 hp; +4 to hit, 2d8 + 2 piercing damage [morningstar] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage; does an extra 2d6 damage in the first round of combat against an opponent who was surprised

When he isn't on duty, the bugbear leader Glaivorn spends most of his time in his quarters (**Area H-13**).

**Glaivorn (Bugbear Chief):** AC 17, 65 hp; +5 to hit x2, 2d8 + 3 piercing damage [morningstar] or +5 to hit x2, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 3 piercing damage; does an extra 2d6 damage in the first round of combat against an opponent who was surprised; carries the key to the iron box in Area H-13

## 2 Giant Owls

The giant owls spend most of their time at their perch (**Area H-30**).

**Giant Owl:** AC 12, 19 hp; +3 to hit, 2d6 + 1 slashing damage [talons]; doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when flying out of an enemy's reach

## 5 Saber-toothed Tigers

The saber-toothed tigers roam freely through the Manor and can be encountered anywhere. One is always present in the tiger run (**Area H-11**).

**Saber-toothed Tiger:** AC 12, 52 hp; +6 to hit, 2d6 + 5 slashing damage [claws]; if it moved 20 ft. straight at an enemy before hitting with claws, the target must make a DC 14 Str saving throw or be knocked prone and attacked at +6 to hit, 1d10 + 5 piercing damage [bite]

## 3 Weretigers

The weretigers are the Lamia's three sons: Claude (**Area H-10**), Thibault (**Area H-16**), and Pierre (**Area H-32**).

**Weretiger:** AC 12, 120 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d8 + 3 slashing damage [claw] or +5 to hit x2, 1d6 + 3 slashing damage [scimitar] or +4 to hit, range 150 ft./600 ft., 1d8 + 2 piercing damage [longbow]; if the weretiger moved 15 ft. straight toward a creature before hitting with a claw, the creature must make a DC 14 Str save or be knocked prone and attacked at +5 to hit, 1d10 + 3 piercing damage [pounce and bite]; shapeshifter

## 5 Charmed Slaves

The slaves have many duties around the Manor, but they spend most of their time in the same locations.

**Caurien and Jirral** (Commoners, **Area H-6**): AC 10, 4 hp; +2 to hit, 1d4 bludgeoning damage

**Serz and Cloyaun** (Guards, **Area H-18**): AC 16, 11 hp; +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20 ft./60 ft., 1d6 + 1 bludgeoning damage [club]

**Martin of Becqueril** (Noble, **Area H-19**): AC 15, 9 hp; +3 to hit, 1d8 + 1 piercing damage [rapier]; can add 2 to AC as a reaction against an attack he sees coming

## 3 Guests

The guests of the Lamia are free to wander through the lower areas of the Manor, but they spend most of their time in their rooms.

**Gaston Payis** (Commoner, **Area H-7**): AC 10, 4 hp; +2 to hit, 1d4 piercing damage; 5 gp

**Henri Tharnac** (Veteran, **Area H-17**): AC 17, 58 hp; +5 to hit x2, 1d10 + 3 slashing damage

**Cap Jongleur** (Bard, **Area H-22**): AC 12, 27 hp; +4 to hit x2, 1d6 + 2 piercing damage [shortsword] or +4 to hit, range 30 ft./120 ft., 1d6 + 2 piercing damage [hand crossbow]; spell attack +5, save DC 13; *friends, minor illusion, prestidigitation, charm person, heroism, sleep, thunderwave, cloud of daggers, detect thoughts, hold person*; has a lute, bagpipes, shortsword, warm-weather clothing, backpack, 5 days' rations, and a small chest containing three sets of clothes, two lady's handkerchiefs [one embroidered with a red rose, a token from Kathelynn], a golden bracelet [50 gp], and a belt pouch containing 25 gp)

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

# Concluding the Adventure

If the only focus of the adventure has been hunting and monster-fighting, it will conclude with the characters either leaving the pass before the Ghostwind catches them ("better part of valor") or getting caught by it ("just one more"). Assuming they get away alive, the immediate focus probably will shift to selling their furs before moving on to other adventures.

If characters solved the mysteries of the pass and restored Saint Elys's bones to the Abbey's chapel, they will be rewarded with possession of the *Staff of the Remorhaz*. It will seem obvious to all that anyone who can find and safely carry the artifact is its chosen holder. With the Ghostwind a thing of the past, the Abbey doesn't need the staff to maintain its warmth.

Since Ghostwind Pass is a large area, it can easily be used for further adventuring. If the characters joined the two pieces of the *Staff of the Remorhaz* and the artifact is in their possession, it provides its wielder with fragmented information about other quests, if the characters are inclined to become roving defenders of justice.

# New Monsters

## Cave Bear

XP 450 (CR 2)

Unaligned Large beast

Initiative +0

### DEFENSE

AC 12 (natural armor)

hp: 47 (5d10 + 20)

Resistance: Cold damage

### OFFENSE

Speed: 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Multiattack:** A cave bear either bites once and attacks once with claws, or uses its bear hug.

**Melee Attack—Bite:** +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d10 + 5 piercing damage.

**Melee Attack—Claws:** +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 2d6 + 5 piercing damage and the target must make a successful DC 15 Dex check or be grappled and take 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Melee Attack—Bear Hug:** automatic hit (one creature already grappled by the cave bear at the start of the cave bear's turn). Hit: 3d6 bludgeoning damage and the cave bear can make a bite attack against the same creature.

### STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), Dex 10 (+0), Con 18 (+4),

Int 3 (-4), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 8 (-1)

Languages: None

Skills: Perception +5

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Cold mountains

**Organization:** Solitary or family (2 cave bears and 1d4 noncombatant cubs)

Prehistoric bears and polar bears are even larger and more ferocious than grizzly (brown) bears.

## PERILS OF GHOSTWIND PASS

# Giant Ermine

Giant ermines are identical to giant weasels for most purposes, but their snow-white pelts are worth 500 gp. Its value is halved, however, every time the ermine takes slashing, acid, or fire damage. Giant weasel pelts sell for 1d6 x 10 gp each, with the same penalty for damage.

## Giant Mountain Goat

XP 50 (CR 1/4)

Unaligned Medium beast

Initiative +1

### DEFENSE

AC 12 (natural armor)

hp: 16 (3d8 + 3)

Resistance: Cold damage

### OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

**Melee Attack—Ram:** +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning damage.

### STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), Dex 12 (+1), Con 12 (+1),

Int 2 (-4), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 5 (-3)

Languages: None

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

### TRAITS

**Charge:** If the giant mountain goat moved 15 ft. straight toward its target before hitting with a ram, the creature takes an extra 1d6 bludgeoning damage and must make a DC 12 Str saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Sure-footed:** A giant mountain goat has tactical advantage when making saving throws against being pushed or knocked prone.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Cold and temperate mountains

**Organization:** Cluster (2-5) or herd (4-24, half of which are noncombatant young)

These beasts are quite impressive, standing 5 feet tall at the shoulder. They are shaggy-coated, and the males sport enormous, curving horns. Giant mountain goats are found only in the highest mountains, often in the keeping of stone giants or frost giants. They are not territorial but they are very aggressive about protecting the herd, and until they learn otherwise, they assume any strange creature approaching within 300 feet is a predator.

## White Pudding

XP 700 (CR 3)

Unaligned Large ooze

Initiative -2

### DEFENSE

AC 7

hp: 76 (9d10 + 27)

**Immunity:** Piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons; acid, cold, and lightning damage; blindness, charm, deafness, exhaustion, fright, prone, stun, unconsciousness

### OFFENSE

Speed: 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee Attack—Slam:** +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). Hit: 1d8 + 3 bludgeoning damage plus 3d6 + 3 acid damage, and the target's clothing and gear might be damaged by

## QUESTS OF DOOM: MEN & MONSTROSITIES

acid (see Acidic, below).

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16 (+3), **Dex** 4 (-3), **Con** 16 (+3),  
**Int** 1 (-5), **Wis** 7 (-2), **Cha** 1 (-5)

**Languages:** None

**Skills:** Stealth +2

**Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft.

### TRAITS

**Acidic:** A white pudding's acid eats into organic matter such as cloth and wood but doesn't affect metal or stone. When a white pudding does acid damage, the target of the attack must make a successful DC 10 Dex saving throw or one item of nonmetallic gear is damaged by the acid: clothing or footwear can have holes burned through it, a wooden canteen could spring a leak, a backpack could have its straps burned away, etc. If the target is wearing padded, leather, or hide armor and fails the saving throw, the armor's AC is permanently reduced by 1. Even metal armor can be temporarily damaged by having leather straps or padding dissolved. A wooden weapon, or one with a wooden handle, gains a permanent, cumulative -1 penalty on damage rolls each time it strikes a white pudding. A magical weapon made entirely of wood (e.g., a quarterstaff) is immune to this effect, but one that is only partly wood (e.g., a magical axe with a nonmagical wooden handle) is not; such damage can be repaired by replacing the damaged, nonmagical parts. Arrows are destroyed automatically.

**Amorphous:** A white pudding can move through gaps as small as 1 square inch without penalty.

**Camouflage:** A white pudding has tactical advantage on Stealth checks in areas of snow and ice.

**Split:** If a Medium or Large white pudding is hit by an attack that normally does lightning or slashing damage, the pudding splits in half, creating two puddings that are one size smaller and with one-half the parent pudding's remaining hit points apiece.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Cold land, underground

**Organization:** Solitary

The white pudding is a variety of the black pudding that is found only in frigid areas. It uses its pure white coloration to advantage when ambushing prey.

The creature secretes a digestive acid that dissolves organic material but doesn't affect metal, stone, or other minerals. This is a particular danger in the frigid environments where white puddings hunt, because having holes burned through your parka or your insulated, waterproof boots can lead to death by freezing just as surely as being killed directly by the white pudding. The body of an old white pudding is a good place to search for magical arrowheads and axeheads lost by other adventurers, if someone is willing to risk more acid exposure; the creature's remains stay dangerously corrosive for weeks after its death.

## Snow-serpent

Snow-serpents are snakes covered in thick fur that's mottled gray and white. They are at home in snow and ice, and they are seldom found in climates warmer than arctic tundra. They slither easily through deep snow drifts, suddenly bursting from the powder to strike with fangs that drip deadly venom.

Occasionally, in areas with wide variation in temperature, the fur of a snow-serpent is mottled green until the first snow falls. The hide of a snow-serpent can fetch as much as 100 gp for a white pelt or 200 gp for the rarer mottled green pelt.

Snow-serpents have stats identical to giant poisonous snakes, with two exceptions.

- Their swim speed is replaced with a burrow speed of 20 feet, effective only through snow.
- The bite of a snow-serpent inflicts cold damage instead of poison damage, but it is still considered a poison effect. A bitten character who takes full damage from the poison must repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns until it either succeeds once or fails two more times. No damage is inflicted for succeeding or failing at these saving throws, but if the saving throw is failed a total of three times, the creature's blood freezes in its veins and the creature immediately drops to 0 hit points. A successful save doesn't give immunity to the venom: a second bite has the same consequences as the first.

# Vampires & Fées

# The Isle of Eliphaz

By Easey W. Christofferson and Bill Webb

*The Isle of Eliphaz* is an adventure for characters of at least 14th level. In the course of the adventure, the PCs face the powerful lich Athransma in the hidden Maze of Ancients. Careful searching and sharp wits help the PCs avoid being led astray by the devices of Athransma in his goal to awaken the primal Eliphaz. The group should include a rogue who's skillful at both spotting and disabling traps. The party should also include a druid, a wizard, and at least two powerful melee combatants. Under no circumstances should any adventuring group set out without a cleric.

Throughout the adventure, items and features that can be spotted with Perception checks take only a round or two to find. If an Investigation check is called for, then it automatically involves spending five to ten minutes making a careful, deliberate search of the area.

## Island of Eliphaz Keyed Locations

### A: A Mysterious Island at Sea

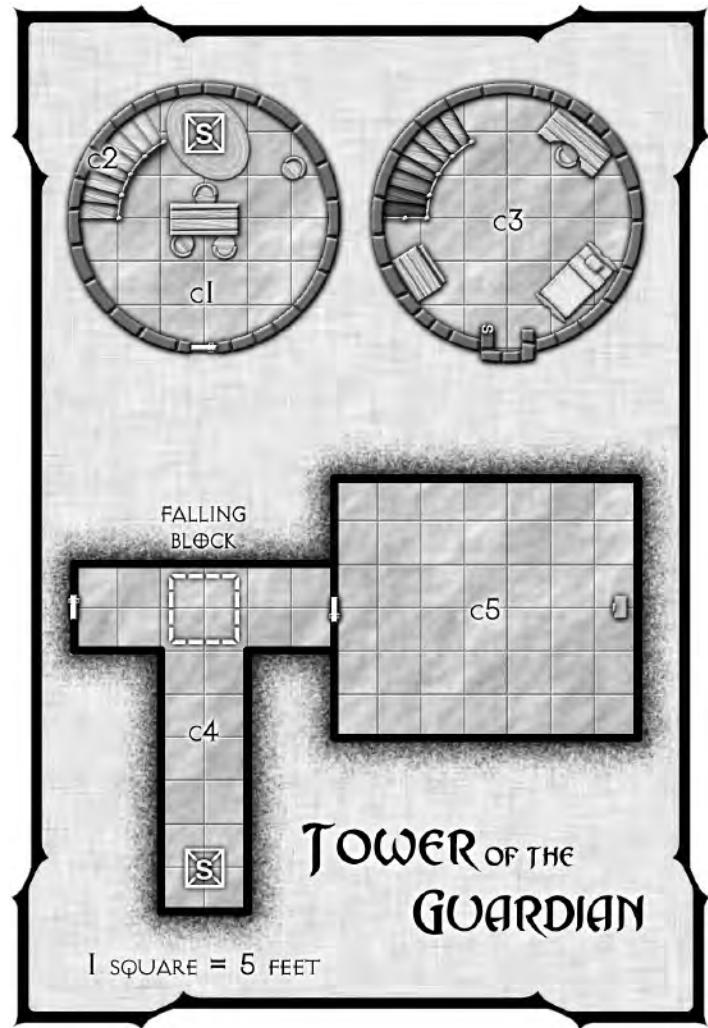
It is said among sages and treasure-hunters that on the Isle of Eliphaz, located in the Crescent Sea nearly 200 miles off the coast of the Grand Duchy of Reme, the false tomb of an ancient wizard lies buried. Local legend flies as far as Bard's Gate that a great evil god lies in a slumber on the isle, waiting to be awakened by some poor unfortunate souls. Indeed, it is said by all that this is an island to be feared, and no local sailors ever agree to an attempt to reach its shores.

The island is small and rocky, with only two places available for egress by ship. The beaches of this island are nondescript, though the rocks in the channels leading to them are treacherous. These passages are so vicious that any ship with a draft of greater than six feet has an 80% chance of running aground, with half that chance of inflicting so much damage to the ship that it begins to sink. At best, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) skill check or a comparable Intelligence check by a professional sailor cuts these probabilities in half.

The island itself is a typical one for this region, with coniferous trees, sea birds, and thick brush. This land is curious in the fact that no magic of any sort functions on or around it. In fact, anyone approaching the island within 50 feet has all active magic nullified — a potentially lethal hazard for anyone attempting to reach the island by air. This effect is the result of a permanent *antimagic field* cast over the entire island by the evil wizard prior to the time of his demise. The antimagic field allows many of his magic traps and hazards to function, but it shuts down everything else.

### B: Crater of Eliphaz

Once on the island a quick search by the PCs discovers a low volcanic cone within the center. Characters can scale the rugged outer slopes and reach the lip of the cone with successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) checks. There, they spy a small tower with a single door and no windows sitting atop the cooled lava dome in the very center of the crater. A second DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows the characters to progress down the inner slope to the crater itself. Failure on either of these Strength



checks results in the character falling and taking 4d6 slashing damage from tumbling across sharp rocks.

### C: The Tower of the Guardian

The tower is made of dark stone, the door of fine wood. Strangely enough, the door is unlocked.

#### C1: Bottom Floor

Inside the tower, the intruders discover some old furniture: a table, four chairs, and a wooden staircase leading up. Hidden in the table, revealed only by a successful DC 20 Int (Investigation) check, is a note from the wizard and a *deck of many things*. The *deck* is special; anyone drawing a card has double the normal chance of drawing a negative one. When a character draws a card, if the card is a good result, ignore it and have them draw again. Apply the second card regardless of whether it's beneficial or

## THE ISLE OF ELIPHAZ

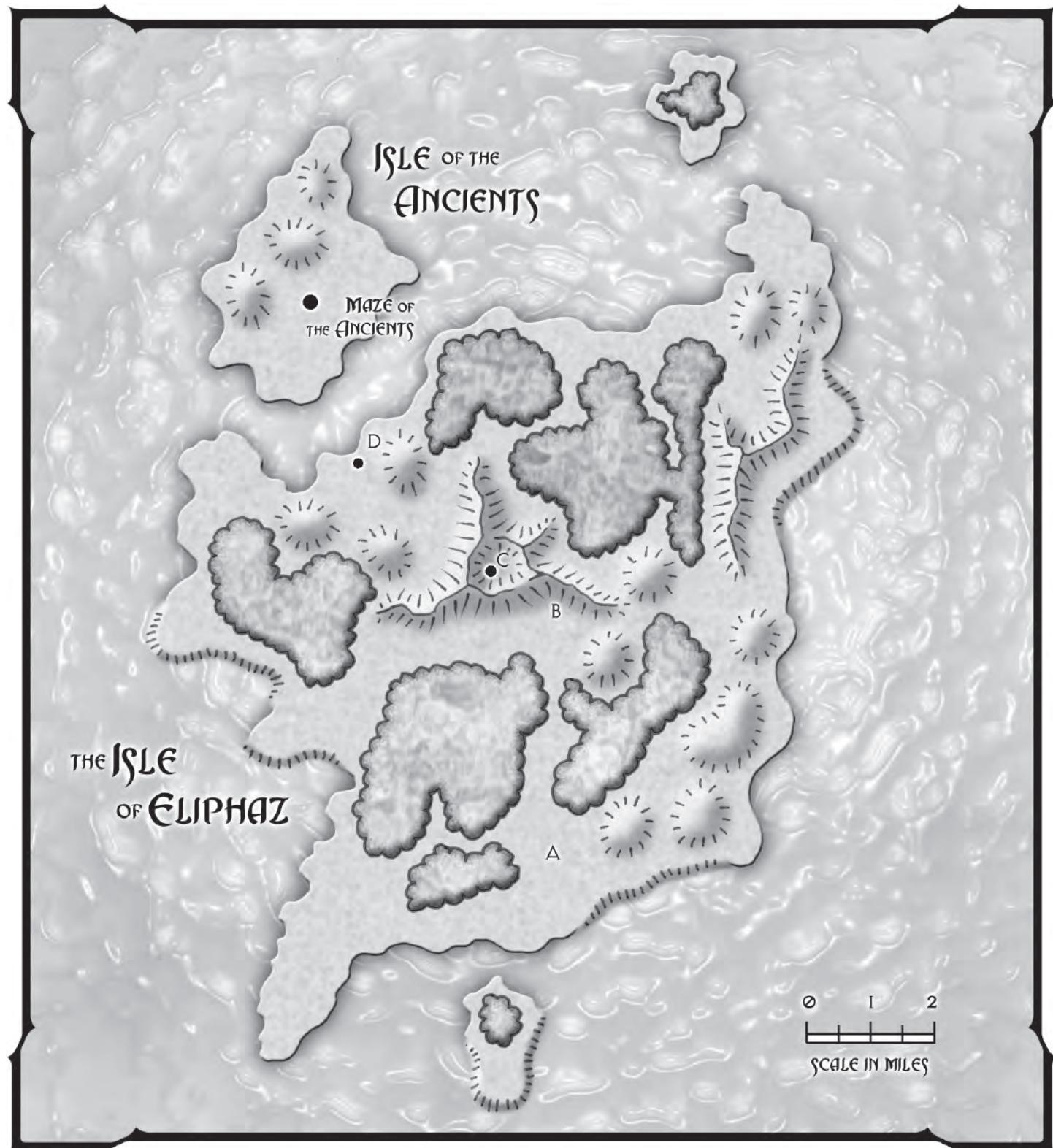
harmful. Of course, the *deck* doesn't do anything until the *antimagic field* is turned off. The note is a challenge from the wizard to:

"Trust Lady Luck in your quest for my tomb."

In the floor of this level is a **secret trapdoor**, which can be found with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. The trapdoor leads to **C4: Passage to the False Crypts**, the dungeon below the tower.

There is nothing of value in this level of the tower, but on the fifth round after it is entered, a **gray ooze** attacks from above. It is impossible to detect before it moves because of its False Appearance, so it automatically surprises the characters when it attacks.

**(Gray Ooze:** AC 8, 22 hp; +3 to hit, 1d6 + 1 bludgeoning damage plus 2d6 acid damage and metal armor loses 1 pt. of AC; nonmagical metal weapons that strike the ooze gain a cumulative -1 penalty on damage and are destroyed if the penalty reaches -5).



## QUESTS OF DOOM: VAMPIRES & LICHES

### C2: Rickety Stairs

The stairs are old and rickety but can easily support the PCs. They lead up to the second level.

### C3: Second Floor

The second level of the tower is not a very nice place. All that it contains is the old bedroom furniture of the wizard, a couple of useless papers, scrolls, books, a fireplace, and a wood and metal construct in the form of a blocky humanoid. This is a shield guardian created long ago by Athransma and left here with ages-old instructions to guard the chamber and its contents.

A single shield guardian would be a relatively easy fight PCs at this level but for two things; the PCs' magic doesn't work, and Athransma stored a unique version of the *black tentacles* spell in the shield guardian. At the start of the shield guardian's second turn in combat, the spell is released. It nearly fills the entire chamber. The spell isn't shut down by Athransma's *antimagic field*, and the tentacles don't attack the shield guardian. It lasts for one minute or until the shield guardian is destroyed, whichever happens first.

**(Shield Guardian:** AC 17, 142 hp; +7 to hit x2, 2d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage [fist]; the shield guardian regenerates 10 hp at the start of its turn, as long as it has at least 1 hp remaining; *black tentacles* spell is stored in the shield guardian)

**Secret Panel and Locked Box:** In the fireplace is a secret panel, which the characters can discover with a successful DC 20 Int (Investigation) check. Inside is a locked box requiring a successful DC 20 Dex check to open. Within the box is a key, and there are two keyholes in the bottom inside panel. The key appears to fit both keyholes. Turning the key in the left hole lowers the *antimagic field* surrounding the island. Turning the key in the right keyhole has no effect while the antimagic field is still active. If the field has been deactivated, then the right keyhole activates a *glyph of warding* that triggers a powerful *dispel magic* effect. All magical effects on characters that are equivalent to 5th-level or lower spell effects are dispelled automatically; this applies primarily to the effects of ongoing spells and active potions. Then characters must start rolling 1d6s for their magic items, one at a time. A potion is destroyed on a roll of 1, 2, or 3; a scroll is destroyed on a roll of 1 or 2; and any other magic item is disenchanted on a roll of 1, becoming a normal, mundane article of its type. Artifacts, relics, and sentient items are unaffected. If this effect is triggered before the shield guardian is destroyed, the construct also has a 1-in-6 chance of being deactivated, and the *black tentacles* spell ends on a roll of 1 or 2 (like a scroll).

Athransma found it necessary in his studies of the Ancients to craft this box. He intended for it to dampen all magic on the island in the event that one of his experiments went awry within the Maze of Ancients. In addition, it was his hope that treasure hunters and looters would be put off by the loss of their powers upon stepping onto the shore. Much to the chagrin of Athransma, the spells on the box, although powerful, are not strong enough to overcome the bindings that the Ancients placed upon the elemental god. Athransma had hoped his little box of tricks would work. He added the second keyhole purely out of spite.

### C4: Passage to the False Crypts

The trapdoor in Area C1: Bottom Floor leads down to a T-intersection of 10-foot by 10-foot tunnels. At the end of each tunnel is a door. To the left are a **false door** with a **pressure plate trap** in front of it that releases a stone block that falls in the third 10-foot section of the hall (see below). The center passage leads to a concealed door with a **poison needle trap** on the opening mechanism (see below) and an *arcane lock*. Behind this door is a small pentagram inscribed on the floor. This symbol has minor

magic woven into it so that it will set off *detect magic* spells, but it is nothing more than a decoy.

**Pressure Plate Trap:** The pressure plate can be detected with a successful DC 15 WP check. Once it's spotted, the trapped section of floor is easy to avoid. If it's not spotted, anyone examining the false door triggers the trip, which drops a stone block from the ceiling into the third 10-foot section of the hall. Everyone in that space takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Dex saving throw.

**Concealed Door:** The door can be found with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. Opening the door requires a successful DC 25 Str (Athletics) check, or DC 15 if the *arcane lock* is removed or suppressed. The door's opening mechanism is protected by a poison needle trap.

**Poison Needle Trap:** The trap can be spotted with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If spotted, it's trivial to disable. If it's not spotted, the person opening the door takes 1d4 piercing damage plus 2d6 poison damage. The character makes a DC 14 Con saving throw at the end of each of its turns; if the saving throw fails, it takes another 2d6 poison damage, and if the save succeeds, the poison is neutralized.

### C5: The False Tomb

The right passage leads to the first false tomb. When the door is opened, a *magic mouth* spell triggers evil laughter and the voice of the wizard screams:

"Now prepare to die the most painful of all deaths!"



## THE ISLE OF ELIPHAZ

When the voice stops, a *glyph of warding* triggers a *fireball* spell. The *glyph* is concealed on the far side of the room; it's impossible to detect from the doorway.

**Fireball Trap:** The fireball does 8d6 fire damage to everyone in area C4 and C5, or half damage with a successful DC 18 Dex saving throw.

The room contains a large golden calf, a coffin, and a bronze chest. A rotting tapestry hangs above the chest. Three rounds after the room is entered, the golden calf reveals its true nature by transforming into a **gorgon**. It attacks immediately.

**(Gorgon:** AC 19, 114 hp; +8 to hit, 2d12 + 5 piercing damage [gore]; +8 to hit, 2d10 + 5 bludgeoning damage [hooves]; 30-ft. cone, creatures must make successful DC 13 Con saving throws or be restrained [petrifying breath; recharge 5, 6]; restrained creatures repeat the saving throw at the end of their next turn; a successful save ends the effect, but a failure petrifies the creature; if the gorgon hits a target with its gore attack after moving at least 20 feet straight toward the target, the target must make a successful DC 16 Str saving throw or be knocked prone and attacked by the gorgon's hooves)

The chest is unlocked and contains a pile of gold — that in reality is a patch of **russet mold** disguised by an *illusion*. The *illusion* is dispelled as soon as anyone touches it, and the mold attacks with surprise at the same instant. Beneath the mold is a potion bottle wrapped in a scrap of leather with a note written on it. The note is from the wizard.

"Fools! You have failed in your grave-robbing ways to find my tomb, for it is far away, and this is just a hoax. Now, you idiots must decide which of your stony comrades you will save, for in ten minutes, all of the statues will turn to dust. Go home and become shopkeepers, for you are failures as grave robbers. Lick your wounds and rejoice that I have allowed you to live, for I could have chosen not to do so."

The note is signed, *Athransas the Merciful*.

**(Russet Mold:** AC 8, 9 hp; each creature within 5 ft. of the russet mold must make a successful DC 12 Con saving throw or take 2d6 poison damage and become poisoned [spores]; a poisoned creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the poisoned condition with a successful save but taking 2d6 poison damage on a failure)

Hanging above the chest is a moldering tapestry depicting an island. The island on the tapestry reveals the true location of the wizard's tomb — it was left here by mistake. If the ancient writing on the tapestry is deciphered (with a *comprehend languages* spell or a successful DC 22 Int (History) skill check), characters will realize that the tomb is on a nearby island, not this one! The island shown on the tapestry is known as the Island of the Ancients. If characters compare the tapestry map to the zodiacal symbols found on the dolmen of the pierced stone along the northern banks of the Isle of Eliphaz, they find that the hole in the center of the disk there points directly to the island's location. It lies just off the shore of the Isle of Eliphaz, but beneath the waves. See **Area D: Dolmen of the Pierced Stone** for further details on raising the Isle of the Ancients.

**Treasure:** The bottle is marked "*potion of stone-flesh, 1 dose,*" but is in reality a dose of extremely powerful acid. Anyone or anything onto which this is poured takes 10d6 acid damage.

The coffin is made of granite, and contains a skeleton holding a wooden staff and adorned in fake jewelry. If an *identify* spell is cast upon the skeleton's robe, it reveals itself as being a *robe of the archmagi*, but it is actually a *poisonous cloak* that does 4d6 poison damage to whoever puts it on, or half damage with a successful DC 12 Con saving throw. The only real piece of treasure is a *gem of seeing*, tucked into a pocket of the cloak.

## D: Dolmen of the Pierced Stone

This dolmen on the north shore of the island comprises several standing stones carved with various arcane or zodiacal symbols, as well as symbols easily recognized runes of both earth and water. A stone disk stands balanced upon an altar of large stones. The center of the disk has a hole in it approximately the size of a fist. A character that makes a successful DC 16 Int (History) skill check can read the following passage.

"Into the eye of the disk do place that which makes secret things revealed; thus does the light then find Isle of The Ancients divined."

Placing a *gem of seeing* (one can be found in Area C5) into the hole in the center of the disk causes a great beam of light to flare forth from the disk. The disk itself swivels on its altar pointing a short distance into the ocean. The water begins to boil as the beam strikes it, and the island of Eliphaz rumbles and shakes beneath the player's feet. After a few moments a second island rises from the waves not far from the shore of the first island. The second island is shrouded in a silvery mist as steam billows from the seawater. The *gem of seeing* is completely consumed in the process of raising the **Isle of the Ancients**.

## Isle of the Ancients

This small island just off the coast of the Isle of Eliphaz is shrouded in steaming mist generated from the Dolmen of the Pierced Stone. Walking upon the island is treacherous as the entire island is concealed as by an Enlarged *fog cloud* spell. Furthermore the footing is very slippery from a rank-smelling muck of ankle deep silt, which has coated the island during its years of submersion beneath the waves. The island counts as difficult terrain, and movement across the island is reduced to one-fourth normal speed. Any character moving at a higher speed or jumping must make a successful DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics) check or fall prone into the mud and seaweed. This does no real harm, but it's embarrassing and the character smells bad for the rest of the adventure.

## Entrance to the Maze of Ancients

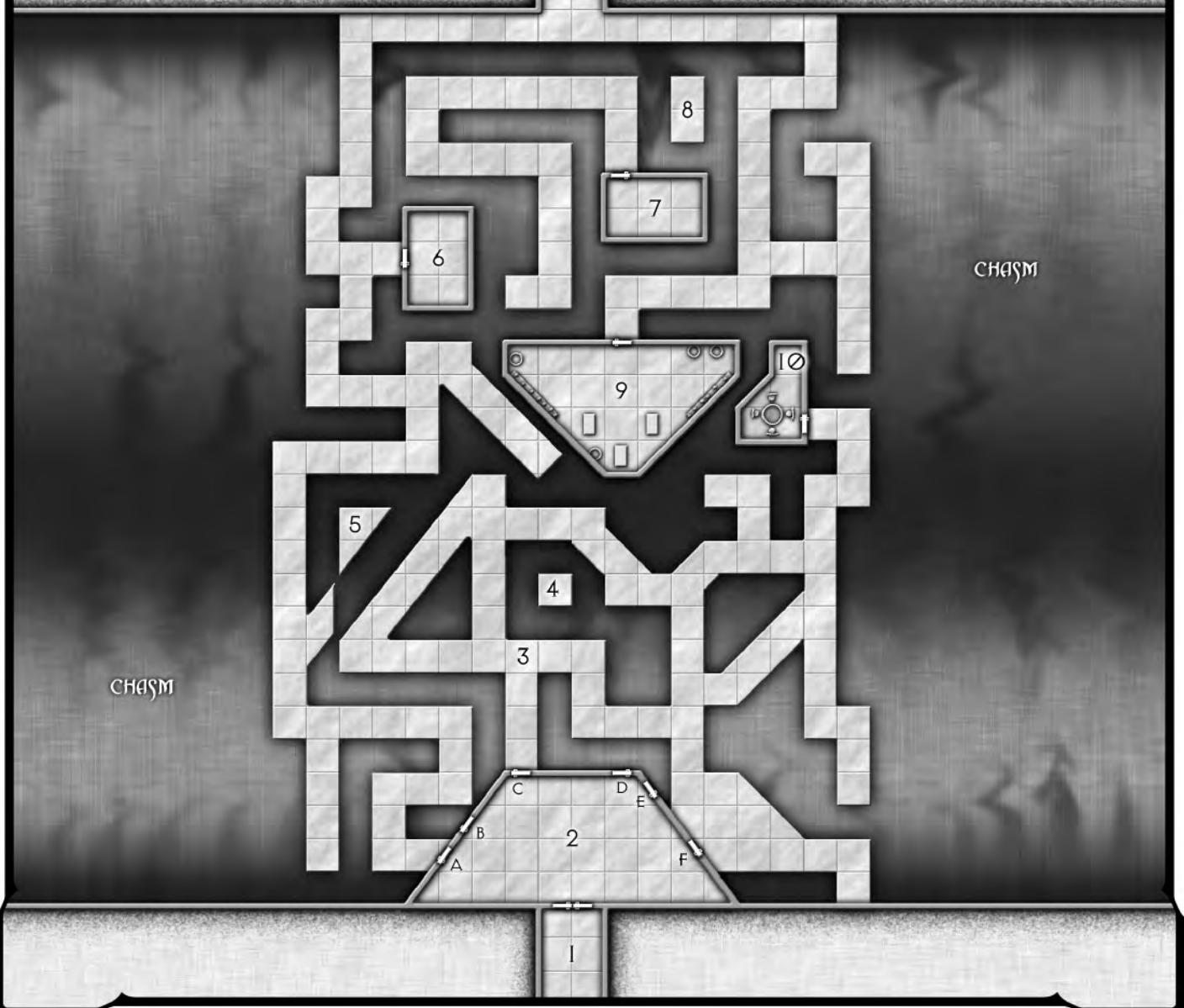
Two huge pillars carved with images weathered and covered in thick barnacles dominate the entrance; whatever symbolism the carvers of these pillars left behind has been lost to the ravages of the sea. Between the two pillars sits a low shrinelike structure carved of the same materials as the weathered pillars. A tight-fitting door sits in the center of the southern wall of the shrine.

When the characters clear away the muck and seaweed, they reveal a finely crafted bronze door. Bright green with the patina of age and salt water, the door is inscribed with a cipher that can be interpreted only if *comprehend languages* is cast on them.

"So have you found the entrance to my tomb! Know that through the Maze of Ancients you must pass. Be warned: their evil is greater than my own. Tread here and breathe your last, for Athransma the Merciful am I. Turn back thieves or surely die!"

The door to the Maze of Ancients is **trapped** with a *black tentacles* spell that triggers the moment the door is touched. An *arcane lock* spell also seals the door. Casting *knock* on the door may open it, however it still triggers the trap, which may only be disarmed by a high level rogue or some form of *dispel magic*.

MAZE OF THE  
ANCESTORS



## THE ISLE OF ELIPHAZ

Once the PCs open the door, they see a stone staircase descending hundreds of feet deep into the heart of the island ending at **Area M1**.

### M1: Portal of the Ancients

At the end of the hallway is the **Portal of the Ancients**. The Portal of the Ancients is 30 feet tall by 20 feet wide and engraved with ancient celestial holy symbols that some unknown hand scarred and desecrated long ago. The engravings once featured law and celestial power being brought to bear against the elemental chaos of a primeval world, forging it and shaping it into a semblance of order. *Detect magic* reveals a strong *antimagic field* within the portal, possibly shielding against certain transmutation spells.

Writing on the portal is in an ancient tongue, decipherable with *comprehend languages* or a successful DC 20 Int (History) check.

"So did they who came instruct in all manner of goodness and power over chaos, thus here did we build for them a remembrance of what was left behind, eternally restful by device. Thus through this door may those with wisdom glean their sage advice. Bringers of chaos and hatred enter not into their sacred womb for thus trapped forever find their doom. Those who bring with them nature's gift, welcome be and not bereft for close you are to a power true, within Letek're stones lies the answer sought by you. Only one with true balance may complete the task, setting the bound god upon the path of natural order at last."

### 2. The Trapezoidal Conflagration

This room is filled with 10 doors, three of which lead into the maze, one that leads to the bottomless bowels of the mountain, and the other six doors being false doors that are actually part of the wall. Searching for which doors lead out into the maze and which doors lead nowhere or do nothing at all should be an interesting challenge for the players.

#### A: Door of the Narrow Path

There's nothing behind this door but a **spear trap** that can be detected with a successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) check and disabled with a successful DC 18 Dex check. If triggered, it attacks the person who opened the door with +12 to hit and does 2d8 piercing damage.

#### B: False Door

The door's obvious **lock** can be unlocked with thief's tools and a successful DC 20 Dex check. There's nothing behind the door but blank stone wall.

#### C: Door of the Far Path

This door is protected by a **poisoned needle trap** that can be detected and simultaneously disabled with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. If triggered, the person who opens the door takes 1d4 piercing damage plus 4d8 poison damage, or half poison damage with a successful DC 13 Con saving throw against poison. This door allows passage into the maze.

#### D: False Door

The door's obvious **lock** can be unlocked with thief's tools and a successful DC 18 Dex check. There's nothing behind the door but blank stone wall.

### Maze of the Ancients

This area below the Isle of Ancients is the lair of several intellect devourers and the tomb of Athransma the Lich. The Maze of Ancients is so named for the bodies of ancient outsiders, encased in pillars of pure energy.

#### Maze Features

The maze itself comprises an area of 10-foot-wide pathways that twist over a deep chasm that apparently falls away into nothingness. A character who falls off the side of the maze can catch the edge of the surface by making a successful DC 12 Dex saving throw. Failing that, they fall into nothingness, and if they fall beyond 100 feet without being rescued somehow, they are effectively beyond rescuing unless their companions come up with a very, very clever plan to get them back.

An additional magic field, functioning regardless of the state of the *antimagic field* — one in place due to the presence of the Ancients — renders all magical levitation, flying, *dimension door*, or *teleport* magic ineffective. Such magic works normally on the pathway, but it fails if it's used in an attempt to from one section of the maze to the next. This field is only in effect on the actual path itself, and does not impede magic in any of the various chambers located within the maze unless otherwise noted. Should all the Ancients be either destroyed or released, should Eliphas be released from his confinement, or should all three *Letek're stones* be brought together, this effect is eliminated.

**Locked Stone Doors:** Unless otherwise noted, all of the doors in the maze of the Ancients are made of stone (AC 17, 20 hp) and are locked (DC 20 Dex check to unlock, DC 25 Str (Athletics) check to force open).

### E: Door of the Dark Path

This door's **lock** can be unlocked with thief's tools and a successful DC 16 Dex check. Opening the door triggers a **tilting floor trap** that can be detected and simultaneously avoided with a successful DC 14 Int (Investigation) check. If triggered, the person who opens the door is dropped through the floor into the trackless void below; see "Maze Features" for further information on falling off the maze.

### F: Door of the Den

An **arcane lock** protects this door; forcing it open requires a successful DC 24 Str (Athletics) check, or DC 14 if the **arcane lock** is dispelled or suppressed. Opening this door releases the displacer beasts from **Area 6: Den of the Displacer Beasts**.

### 3. The Maze of the Ancients

The stone pathway is 10 feet wide. It is all that exists between the characters and oblivion. In the near darkness they can see other parts of the path about 10 feet away in several different directions.

The magical effect of the Ancients prevents magical flying and *levitating* effects to merely cross directly through the maze, anyone attempting such an action find that their spell has failed. The chasm below the pathway is effectively bottomless. Of course fast thinking, ropes, bungee jumping off the side and catching a falling comrade are interesting game possibilities.

### 4: Pillar of the Ancients

Here, seemingly suspended in the air within a pillar of pure light energy, is a wizened and hairless figure sitting in the crouched lotus position. His

## QUESTS OF DOOM: VAMPIRES & LICHES

four fingertips are pressed together in a contemplative state, and beautiful wings like mother of pearl are folded behind him. There is a strong aura of good and justice emanating from the glowing image though it does not move or even breathe. The ancient winged figure is dressed in a simple robe and his oversized eyes are closed. At the base of the pillar of energy the PCs note writing in an exotic script glowing along the side of a metallic disk upon which the Ancient sits.

The language upon the base of the pillar is Druidic, therefore it is quite possible that it is unknown to many of the PCs and would require a *comprehend languages* spell to decipher. Druids can read it. The words on the pillar read:

“Guardians here for eternity our sacrifice keeps primal beast beneath, trapped here with us by our leave. So disks of stone in Nature’s hand thus with a sense of balance stand. Force of will upon a knotted brow rebukes the mountain god for once and all.”

The two remaining pillars of the Ancients cannot be moved by any force or entered without a complex ritual that involves dampening the energy field that is generated around them using the pedestals in **Area 9**.

A druid channeling elemental energy through the Pillar of Ancients using that pillar’s corresponding *Letek’re stone* generates the following effect: The pillar fills the Ancient with energy as the pillar itself dissipates, releasing the astral deva from his self-imposed slumber. Dissolving the pillar of light has the secondary effect of breaking one of the two remaining seals that bind Eliphaz beneath the main island’s volcanic cone.

### Ancient (Astral Deva)

The deva greets the PCs, addressing the druid of the group if one is present.

“Ten thousand of your years have we bound ourselves to this place. In doing, we bound the one called Eliphaz to the island of his name. Great was his power for destruction, and hatred did he have for all manner of green life, and the life which bleeds precious red blood, for his is a heart of burning fire, and a mind of wrath. Sad am I that one of the three has been lost to this place. For now, with only two who remain, sworn to defend your world against the elemental. I fear we are not strong enough to save precious mortal lives from his burning vengeance. Unless...”

The deva suggests that within the bound crater of Eliphaz the *elemental belt* lies hidden. If the other Ancient is freed from the Pillar of the Ancient, the deva acts as a diversion allowing the PCs time to slip within the mouth of the volcano and grab the *elemental belt*, allowing them one chance to send Eliphaz to rest forever. Should the PCs agree to this course of action, the deva summons his mace to his hand and vanishes to stand watch over the rim of the crater waiting for Eliphaz to rise.

## 5. Pillar of the Ancient

As with **Area 4**, this Ancient is also in a state of meditation within the pillar of light that is so deep no mortal power, not even a *wish* spell can remove them from it. An aura of Good and Law exudes from the pillar in a 40-ft. radius that causes individuals of Chaotic and/or Evil alignments to become uncomfortable. Athransma appears immune to this effect. The light from the pillar is as bright as daylight in a 20-ft. radius from the pillar itself.

### Ancient (Astral Deva)

The Druidic writing around the base of this disk reads:

“When angels again absorb their light, the slumbering one shall rise. Turned from nature in his wrath did the fiery god despise every living thing upon which he set his burning eyes: A word of pause to nature’s servants who would bring down the pillars of light, our strength was not enough before to win that brutal fight. Is your faith in earth now great enough to set the balance right?”

Note that a druid, and only a druid, using the correct *Letek’re stone*, can dissolve the power of the pillar of light. If this deva is the first one freed, use the description in **Area 4**. If this deva is the second one freed by the players, the pillar of light dissipates as before, filling the Ancient with light and recharging his powers. It looks to the PCs and says:

“We must hurry to my ally’s aid. The beast rouses from slumber, and the *elemental belt* must be gained. We shall hold it away from you as long as we can.”

It then summons its mace to its hand and teleports to the rim of the volcano as a rumble shakes the Maze of Ancients. See the **Final Confrontation** section for information on how to run the end of this adventure.

## 6: Den of the Displacer Beasts

This chamber was once a place of divine meditation within the presence of the Ancients. Held here in temporal stasis are 10 **displacer beasts**. When door F in **Area 2: The Trapezoidal Conflagration** is opened, they are released from their rest, allowing them to hunt freely within the maze. If this door is opened first, these beasts are also released, confronting the PCs with a pack of dangerous, snarling beasts. The displacer beasts don’t necessarily stick together as they prowl through the maze. This chamber once held the desecrated *Letek’re stone*, and was plundered by Tlip Lopodi and his intellect devourers.

**(Displacer Beast:** AC 13, 85 hp; +6 to hit x2, 1d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage plus 1d6 piercing damage [tentacle]; if a saving throw normally reduces an attack to half damage, the displacer beast takes no damage if the saving throw succeeds and half damage if it fails; attack rolls against a displacer beast are made with tactical disadvantage unless it has been hit by an attack since its last turn, it’s incapacitated, or its speed is 0)

## 7: Shrine of the Ancients

This sacred shrine of the Ancients can only be reached by somehow crossing the 10-foot-wide abyss from the pathway to the Shrine. Players are likely to invent any number of ingenious methods by which their characters can cross the gap. Any character with a Strength of 10 or higher can make this jump automatically, provided they get a 10-foot running start. There are only two places where that’s possible and completely safe: running south away from the doors to Area 11, and running west past the door into Area 9.

If characters try to get a running start by running straight across the 10-foot-wide pathway, they must make a successful DC 12 Dex (Acrobatics) check or their foot slips on the last step and they fall off the path; see “Maze Features” above for more information about that experience.

## THE ISLE OF ELIPHAZ

Characters who are clever might hit on the idea of running across the pathway at an angle, to ensure they have enough running room for the jump. This works automatically for characters with Strength 12 or higher. A character with Strength 11 must make the Dex (Acrobatics) check described above, and a character with Strength 10 or less falls short because of the increased jump distance.

Other possibilities include walking or shimmying across a pole, only Small characters are light enough to try this, and it requires a successful DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics) check to walk or DC 8 to shimmy. Remember that flying, levitation, and other magical means of defying gravity don't work within the Maze.

The door to the shrine of the Ancients is trapped with a **falling floor stones trap** that can be detected with a successful DC 17 Wis (Perception) check and disabled with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check. If triggered, the stones that form the floor of the enclosed chamber begin dropping into the void, starting at the center of the chamber and quickly spiraling out to the walls. This effect stops at the door into the chamber, so it's unlikely to send any PCs tumbling into the void, but it leaves Area 7 with no floor, which will become a problem momentarily. If someone does fall, see "Maze Features" above for more information about falling off the Maze.

The Shrine of the Ancients, as it was once known, lies behind a door of solid stone. A character of Lawful Good alignment can push the door open easily and step through the doorway without difficulty, but all other characters find the door impossible to budge and must make a successful DC 20 Wisdom saving throw to step through the doorway into the chamber. Once inside, they can leave again without saving.

The inside walls of the shrine are carved with scenes of a great battle between angelic beings and a gargantuan elemental of stone and fire. The carvings tell the tale of a titanic struggle. The three angelic beings are depicted hurling the elemental into the midst of a small island, creating a massive crater. There the angelic beings set to binding the creatures' arms and feet with chains forged from the elements of air and water.

Floating in the center of the room within a shaft of light is a small disk of purest milky jade, with a hole piercing its center. Very fine writing on the disk in the Druidic tongue matches exactly the writing on the base of the pillar of light in **Area 5**. The disk is a *Letek're stone*.

**Treasure:** *Letek're* (LA 'Teck 'Ray) stone. See the New Magic Item Appendix for details.

## 8: Corrupted Pillar of the Ancients

This light pillar is of a less peaceful and more menacing hue than the others, and there is no Ancient within the light that is present. The runes that would be in the stone below have been desecrated.

## 9: Laboratory of the Lich

In the center of the maze is this wedge-shaped construction that appears to be crafted completely from an otherworldly greenish metallic substance. The circular doorway is completely crafted from metal and pulses as if alive as you approach. Symbols similar to others found throughout the Monastery and Mausoleum complex adorn the door in a swirling pattern. The door is held with an *arcane lock* requiring a successful DC 28 Str (Athletics) check to force open while the magic is active. Within the metallic looking building is a single room that seemed to once have been a place of meditation and enrichment for the Ancients that was stripped and desecrated and is now the laboratory of Athransma. Bubbling cauldrons and beakers line the walls of the chamber. Three curious pedestals, pulsing with an unholy arcane light, stand near the back of the triangular room.

Two of the three curiously carved pedestals are empty. The third contains a small disk seemingly carved of jade about a hands-breadth across which floats and gives off a malignant aura. This is one of the three *Letek're stones*, one that has been cursed and warped by the foul magic of Athransma. In using this stone, Athransma was able to force movement from the god of the island. This resulted in the destruction of the third pillar of light and the death of the Ancient contained therein. With these

dark pedestals and the *Letek're stones*, Athransma believes he can actually rouse the god of the island from his slumber. If he succeeds, he plans to use the great elemental as a weapon with which to conquer the world. From there, his goals include placing himself in a position to challenge the gods themselves and join the ranks of the deities. His problem thus far has been the presence of the Ancients themselves, and the divine warding over **Area 7**, which forbids him entrance into the chamber which contains the last two stones. He has found the language of this *Letek're stone* undecipherable even with his magic, not knowing that it is in the lost script of the druids. In his arrogance, Athransma never bothered to study this simple language of the humble servants of nature.

**Treasure:** Tainted *Letek're stone* worth 2,000 gp due to its impurity, 6 vials of alchemist fire, 2 potions of *gaseous form*, 2 potions of *invisibility*, 2 vials of midnight tears poison

## 10: Lair of the Intellect Devourers

A curious-looking door made of solid stone of an unknown origin stands at the end of this section of the Maze.

Behind this locked stone portal is an odd shaped chamber that appears to be only 20 feet deep and 30 feet wide at its widest segment, but is in actuality twice that size due to dimensional warping of space. The room is adorned with strange iconography of an almost alien design as well as four high-backed chairs surrounding a swirling pool of brackish liquid.

Tip Lopodi and three of his intellect devourer kin are servants of Athransma who have joined in the curious research of the Ancients. It is seldom that their kind are allowed such close scrutiny of celestial powers. The intellect devourers eagerly absorb any knowledge they can for use against these powers of good.

Lopodi is a rare creature, in that he has learned a certain amount of spellcasting on his own (not just from devouring brains). His three companions are standard intellect devourers.

**(Tip Lopodi [Intellect Devourer]:** AC 12, 30 hp; an intellect devourer attacks with claws and devour intellect, or with body thief, on its turn; +4 to hit, 2d4 + 2 slashing damage [claws]; range 10 ft., target must make a successful DC 12 Int saving throw or take 2d10 psychic damage and if a 3d6 roll equals or exceeds the target's Intelligence, its Int score drops to 0 and it is stunned until it regains at least 1 point of Int [devour intellect]; if the intellect devourer wins an Int contest against an incapacitated humanoid within 5 ft., it consumes the humanoid's brain, teleports into the now-empty skull, and assumes control of the body; it knows everything the victim knew, including spells; spell attack +3, save DC 11; [at will] acid splash, dancing lights, mage hand; [1st level, x3] grease, magic missile, thunderwave; [2nd level, x2] darkness, ray of enfeeblement)

**(Intellect Devourer:** AC 12, 21 hp; an intellect devourer attacks with claws and devour intellect, or with body thief, on its turn; +4 to hit, 2d4 + 2 slashing damage [claws]; range 10 ft., target must make a successful DC 12 Int saving throw or take 2d10 psychic damage and if a 3d6 roll equals or exceeds the target's Intelligence, its Int score drops to 0 and it is stunned until it regains at least 1 point of Int [devour intellect]; if the intellect devourer wins an Int contest against an incapacitated humanoid within 5 ft., it consumes the humanoid's brain, teleports into the now-empty skull, and assumes control of the body; it knows everything the victim knew, including spells)

**Tactics:** The intellect devourers are aware of the PCs' presence the whole time they're in the Maze, thanks to their ability to detect sentient creatures within 300 feet. They are ready to surprise the characters the moment someone opens the door into their chamber.

**Treasure:** Amongst the silks and lacquered boxes of the intellect

## QUESTS OF DOOM: VAMPIRES & LICHES

devourers' chamber are a *potion of superior healing* and a *potion of speed*. The six lacquered boxes are worth 200 gp each. Hanging silks of exquisite craftsmanship are also valued at 200 gp each.

## II: Tomb of Athransma

The PCs can only open these adamantine doors with the key that is found in the magical box from **Area C3**. Casting *detect magic* upon the door reveals these words scribed with *arcane mark*.

"Fools you are to have come this far. Know that you have been warned, Athransma's mercy goes only so far. Enter and be destroyed, says the cat to the mouse when he has tired of his toys."

Beyond the huge adamantine doors lies a chamber of opulence and rot. The dust of centuries clings to what must have once been finely crafted hangings of crushed velvet. The floor is inlaid with a summoner's pentagram exquisitely set with silver and platinum. Paintings with images long since worn away lie in piles with urns of gems and precious coins from antiquity, all finely covered in a film of dust. A large stone dais stands in the center of the chamber dominating the room, its stone slab swirling with arcane markings over every inch. There standing in his glorious rot with a bejeweled crown upon his skull is the face of evil personified: the lich Athransma. A black fire glows from the empty sockets of his eyes as he grasps his staff tightly in his right hand and an opened book in his left. Athransma's grating voice is filled with a millennium of dust from the grave as he hisses his incantations, interwoven with taunts against the PCs for disturbing his tomb.

"Now grave robbers, there is this question. Do I slay you now and be forever done with you and your meddling, or do I respect such power for having survived thus far, and send you on a task for me, sparing your lives in return? Merciful it is said I be, so a merciful fate I offer. In your quest to plunder my tomb, I offer a chance for you now to choose your own doom!"

If the PCs answer that they wish to be spared, Athransma directs them to **Area 7**, hoping that the PCs find a way where powerful liches and intellect devourers have failed, or are destroyed in the effort — which would suit Athransma just fine.

**(Athransma [Lich]:** AC 17, 135 hp; +12 to hit, 3d6 cold damage and the target must make a successful DC 18 Con saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute or until they make a successful save at the end of their turn [paralyzing touch]; spell attack +12, save DC 20; prepares the following spells: [at will] mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost; [1st level, x4] detect magic, magic missile, shield, thunderwave; [2nd level, x3] detect thoughts, invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image; [3rd level, x3] animate dead, counterspell, dispel magic, fireball; [4th level, x3] blight, dimension door; [5th level, x3] cloudkill, scrying; [6th level, x1] disintegrate, globe of invulnerability; [7th level, x1] finger of death, plane shift; [8th level, x1] dominate monster, power word stun; [9th level, x1] power word kill; 3/day can succeed on a saving throw if just failed; has tactical advantage against being turned; can use 3 legendary actions/round [cast cantrip, use paralyzing touch (2 actions), use frightening gaze (2 actions), disrupt life (3 actions)]; 1 creature within 10 ft. of the lich must make a successful DC 18 Wis saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute or until they make a successful save at the end of their turn [frightening gaze];



every creature within 20 ft. of the lich takes 6d6 necrotic damage, or half damage with a successful DC 18 Con saving throw [disrupt life])

In addition to his standard lich abilities, Athransma also has a *staff of power* and the master's amulet for the shield guardian in Area C3. The amulet won't do him much good in this fight because the shield guardian is too far away to be of help, but it could be valuable to the PCs. Athransma seldom uses the *staff of power* in combat; he prefers to rely on his spells. He can use it if the right opportunity presents itself. If it appears that he is doomed to lose this battle against the PCs, however, his final act will be to break the *staff* and trigger its *retributive strike* power. (This is why he seldom uses the *staff*'s spells; Athransma is so spiteful that he wants his final act, if it comes to that, to be as devastating as possible.)

Athransma has found through his research and the otherworldly knowledge possessed of his ally Tlip Lopodi that it was the Ancients who bound the mighty Eliphaz within the volcano. It is these same Ancients whose inanimate forms keep Eliphaz deep in his slumber through some unknown combination of arcane and divine power. The great mage Athransma made it his goal during his lifetime to uncover the secrets of the Ancients, knowing that to possess the power to bind a primeval god unmoving for ten thousand years is true power. When age began to wear upon Athransma prepared the proper phylacteries and performed the powerful rituals, transforming into a mighty lich. Now, with an unlimited lifespan to work with he could continue his research of the Ancients and attempt to rouse Eliphaz from his slumber. Failing this Athransma seeks to twist to his will the Ancients, a pair of astral devas locked for an eternity within the pillars of light.

**Treasure:** 3,400 pp, 2,500 gp in gems, three golden ewers (200 gp each). Several of Athransma's old spell books are on a shelf along the back wall containing, all of Athransma's 1st- through 5th-level spells, a *Letek're stone* bearing the same script as the base of the pillar in **Area 4**, a tiny replica of a locked chest (linked to Athransma's *secret chest*), and a scroll detailing the ritual for raising Eliphaz, which mentions the *elemental belt*.

## THE ISLE OF ELIPHAZ

His higher-level spellbooks are hidden in a *secret chest* that's linked to the tiny replica chest from the bookshelf. Destroying the replica ends the *secret chest* spell and recalls the hidden chest to this location. The *secret chest* is protected with a *glyph of warding* that triggers a *cloudkill* spell when anyone by Athransma opens the chest.

# Final Confrontations

The following section details the possible ramifications of freeing Eliphaz from his slumber, or of dirty dealings with Athransma.

### If PCs slay Athransma and free Eliphaz

In this scenario, the PCs, having defeated Athransma, use the *Letek're stones* and rituals described in Athransma's personal effects to raise Eliphaz from his prison in the dead volcanic cone. Eliphaz goes into a rage, attacking the characters with every power and weapon at his disposal. It should be noted that using the *Letek're stones* in this manner destroys the Ancients forever.

Ten rounds after PCs exit the Maze of Ancients, the top of the volcano collapses. A huge being made of stone rippling with waves of heat rises from the center of the volcanic crater where the tower stood. Over 25 feet tall and armed with a greatsword glowing red-hot in his massive fists, Eliphaz roars with rage and exultation at being freed after all these thousands of years. Eliphaz waves his hand and summons a **fire elemental**, an **earth elemental**, and an **efreeti** to guard his resting place. With a rumble that seems as if it could rip the world asunder, the mighty god Eliphaz steps from the crater, his lavalike, glowing eyes seeking the devas. He speaks, his voice a roar like a lava flow:

“Arisen from my prison in the earth, Eliphaz shall slake his thirst, destruction to things green with sap and red with blood, for they do not respect the living stone, and seek to shape it as their own. Eliphaz shall teach them to rue their insolence!”

Eliphaz moves quickly to do battle with the devas, ignoring the PCs unless he is attacked and takes damage from one of them, at which time he unleashes his fury upon the pathetic mortal offenders.

Within the crater where the tower once stood is an island surrounded by a 20-foot-wide ring of lava. Three great warding stones lie broken at the bottom where the elemental's hands and feet were bound. Upon an outcropping of rock is a wide belt fashioned of rare stone. Eliphaz uses his summoning abilities to summon guardians for the *elemental belt*. All three fight as a team and must be overcome before the *elemental belt* can be won. See the **New Magic Item Appendix** for details.

Written upon the stone where the *elemental belt* sits are the following words written in the Druidic tongue:

“Servant of Nature Blessed Be through earthly magic set we free, in turn to do the celestial task. Let the elemental belt set thee on the path for from the earth's great fire he comes at last with Primal Fury and Volcanic Blast, perform the task lest ye sojourn and bind forever the Elemental in his otherworldly home. Speak the words written here:

Eliphaz return to that place of fire from whence you came! Your ties to this world are torn asunder! Let the earth open up and swallow you under!

Say three times with a commanding voice; he must obey and has no choice.”

Only a druid can use the *elemental belt* to command Eliphaz to return to his home plane, never to bother this world again. The druid must make a successful DC 20 Wisdom check and spend one round chanting the above incantation. Eliphaz, of course, attempts to disrupt the druid from the task,

if he can. At this point, if the astral devas are still alive, they do their best to distract him as he turns to rush against the one calling the words to send him home.

Once the druid has managed to shout the incantation three times, the earth beneath Eliphaz opens in a fiery abyss. The great elemental god screams in rage and is swallowed whole in a great flash of light.

### If PCs also free the Ancients

After the second Ancient is freed from his pillar of light, the Maze of Ancients begins to rock and sway with the shocks of an earthquake. Every time a character starts its turn on a pathway in the quaking Maze of Ancients, he or she must make a successful Dex saving throw. The DC is 11 for the first saving throw, 12 for the second, 13 for the third, and so on. If the saving throw fails, the character tumbles off the pathway into the bottomless void, but gets one last chance to grab the edge of the path by repeating the same saving throw, only this time, it's made with tactical disadvantage.

Upon escaping from the maze, characters are greeted by the sight of a great rumbling from the volcano on the Isle of Eliphaz. The Ancients appear within a moment before the PCs, warning them that the slumbering one is awakening. The Ancients reiterate their plan if the PCs are still reluctant to stop Athransma and Eliphaz. They intend to do their best to draw off Eliphaz, but the PCs must enter the elemental's bed of stone as soon as he rises and seize the *elemental belt*. With the *elemental belt*, a druid might find it possible to command the elemental to rejoin the earth forever.

The devas offer to fly the characters over to the island of Eliphaz and set them down near the volcano's edge, but can only move two players at a time. In the coming battle, they help however they can, unafraid of death but very concerned about the consequences of defeat.

### If PCs return the *Letek're stones* to Athransma

Should the PCs return to Athransma with the *Letek're stone* from **Area 7: The Shrine of the Ancients**, Athransma cackles with glee:

“At last I have them! Now the pillars of the Ancients fall and Eliphaz shall rise again and the world will see Athransma's true mercy! Thank you, fools. Take whatever you desire, for the treasure I now possess is greater than any shipload of shining gold or mountain of twinkling gems.”

Athransma quickly attempts to depart the chamber via *dimension door*, heading to **Area 9**. As a parting shot he unleashes a *disintegrate* spell on the toughest looking player character. Once within his laboratory, he begins the ritual to bring down the pillars of light, destroy the Ancients, and take control of Eliphaz as his personal slave. The ritual takes 10 rounds to complete, and he cannot be interrupted in this time or the ritual fails. If the ritual fails, the Ancients are destroyed and Eliphaz is freed, but Athransma has no control over him. Eliphaz then seeks to destroy everything, but especially Athransma. At the end of the 10 rounds, the roof of **Area 9** disappears. The entire room experiences a *plane shift*; it is now hovering over the volcano as Eliphaz rises from his slumber, completely under the command of Athransma.

When all three *Letek're stones* are placed on their special altars within the laboratory of Athransma, the entire laboratory gains a flying speed of 30 feet, and it flies according to Athransma's mental commands. Only Athransma knows the command words to make the laboratory fly.

### All is not lost

Should this unfortunate series of events take place, remember that the characters might still have the box from **Area C3**. Simply getting back

## QUESTS OF DOOM: VAMPIRES & LICHES

poison, stun, unconsciousness

to the larger island and turning the key causes the floating laboratory to crash to the ground, leaving Athransma with only his undead powers to protect him. Of course, there is still Eliphaz to deal with, but without the magic of the *Letek're stones* to control him, he quickly turns all his fury against Athransma. If the characters help Eliphaz destroy the lich, he thanks them for his freedom and offers them the *elemental belt* as a token of his respect. Soon after, he departs the Material World for his true home on a demiplane of fire and earth, and he never returns (unless the GM has a particularly juicy idea for him ...)

# New Magic Item

## Elemental Belt

Wondrous Item, unique (requires attunement)

The *elemental belt* consists of four very thin plates of jade, malachite, bloodstone, and obsidian attached to a wide belt made from various animal pelts. These fine stone plates are ornately carved with symbols of the four elements of fire, earth, water, and wind.

The *elemental belt* grants a druid the following benefits:

- A +4 increase to Strength, a +4 increase to Wisdom, and a +3 bonus to AC while the belt is worn. These benefits do not stack with other items that grant similar bonuses, with the exception of AC.
- The druid gains resistance to fire damage.
- The druid can cast *stoneskin* once per week without using a spell slot and with a duration of 1 hour (no concentration requirement).
- The *elemental belt* allows the druid to command any elemental of up to Huge size once per day. The targeted elemental comes under the complete control of the druid for up to 24 hours unless it makes a successful Wis saving throw. This power includes elementals summoned by others, which the druid can turn against their master.
- If the druid is wearing the *elemental belt* when he or she uses wild shape, the druid can cast up to 2nd-level spells while in animal form.

## Letek're Stone

Wondrous Item, very rare (requires attunement)

*Letek're stones* are made from a single piece of a solid jadelike stone that is impossible to break. They were carved in ancient times by the first Great Druid, and the carvings tell the story of the traditional druidic creation epic. Their value as works of art is well over 5,000 gp each. The magic in the *Letek're stones* is subsumed as soon as either the Ancients are freed or Eliphaz is deposed. The stones serve no other magical purpose, but they can be used as focus objects by druids.

# New Monster: Eliphaz

This massive elemental appears as a nearly perfect humanoid specimen made completely of semi molten stone. Waves of heat pour off of its rocky skin. As it moves cracks appear revealing spider-webs of glowing lava across its surface. It wields within its great fists of stone a greatsword of red glowing iron that its swings with deadly ferocity.

## Eliphaz

**XP** 18,000 (CR 17)  
**CN** Huge elemental  
**Initiative** +2

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19 (natural armor)  
**hp:** 237 (19d12 + 114)

**Saving Throws:** Str +14, Con +12, Wis +9, Cha +13

**Resistance:** Bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons; acid and lightning damage  
**Immunity:** Fire and poison damage; paralysis, petrification,

### OFFENSE

**Speed:** 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

**Multiaction:** Eliphaz attacks twice with its magma greatsword or once with a magmaball.

**Melee Attack—Magma Greatsword:** +14 to hit (reach 10 ft.; one creature). **Hit:** 2d12 + 8 slashing damage plus 3d8 fire damage. The magma greatsword's attacks are treated as magical.

**Area Attack—Magmaball (recharge 5, 6):** automatic hit (range 120 ft.; all creatures within 15-ft. radius of impact). **Hit:** all creatures within 15 feet of the magmaball's point of impact take 6d10 fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 20 Dex saving throw.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 27 (+8), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 23 (+6),

**Int** 20 (+5), **Wis** 16 (+3), **Cha** 25 (+7)

**Languages:** Common, Ignan, telepathy 120 ft.

**Senses:** Tremorsense 120 ft., truesight 120 ft.

### TRAITS

**Final Eruption:** When Eliphaz is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes. Every creature within 30 feet of Eliphaz takes 12d10 fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 20 Dex saving throw. Unattended, flammable objects in the area are set ablaze.

**Magic Resistance:** Eliphaz has tactical advantage on saving throws against magic.

**Summon Elementals:** 1/day, Eliphaz can summon 1d3 fire elementals, earth elementals, efreet, or salamanders.

**Volcanic Heat:** At the start of Eliphaz's turn, every creature within 10 feet of the elemental takes 2d10 fire damage. A creature that strikes Eliphaz with a melee attack from a distance of 10 feet or less takes 2d10 fire damage, or half damage with a successful DC 20 Dex saving throw.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment:** Any land, but especially volcanoes

**Organization:** Solitary

Eliphaz is a wild elemental spirit. In the days when the world was young, it felt great anger that things of flesh and blood, sap and leaf were given higher standing in the mortal realm than things of fire and stone. Quietly its rage built until at last it began taking its vengeance out upon all living things. After a great battle in which many demons and celestial beings were destroyed trying to vanquish its indomitable force of elemental will, three deva finally bound Eliphaz within a volcano. There they too were forced to bind themselves to the mortal world in the event Eliphaz should ever escape and again make war upon living things.

Eliphaz typically uses its summoning ability, followed by throwing a magmaball into the largest gathering of enemies, even if they are at his feet, since it can ignore the exploding magma. Then it simply wades in and smashes or burns every living thing it can find.

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