

## Adventure Locales

### The Yew Tree

By Robert Wiese



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*Since this tree is quite large, it would either grow by itself, say in a church yard or noble's field, or in a forest of yew trees. Any of these locations is suitable for this particular tree, though you might find the churchyard one to be less suitable than the others. It all depends on the location of your churchyard. The description assumes that the yew is in the midst of a forest, say the forest of Lethyr or Amtar, so make alterations as needed. This sidetrek is suitable for four 5th-level characters.*

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Of all species of trees that grow in Faerûn, the yew is one of the most regal and impressive. Like the oak, the yew lives for hundreds and even thousands of years, and it can grow to be 10 or more feet in diameter. The wood of a yew is strong and yet flexible, and many prize it for bowmaking. A yew's canopy can reach 50 feet or more and create a clearing underneath the tree. These clearings attract fey creatures, and many a gathering has taken place beneath the poisonous leaves of a yew tree.

Yew trees produce red berries, which are not poisonous, but all other parts of the tree are. Ingesting any of the tree (other than the berries) results in sickness and possibly death.

**Taxine (yew tree poison):** Ingested DC 13; initial damage 1d2 Con; secondary damage 2d6 Con; additive effects (taxine builds up in the system; each subsequent dose of taxine adds +2 to the Fort save DC to resist the poison's effect and adds +1d2 Con damage to the secondary damage); price 100 gp.

Walking along a particular path in a deep woods, one comes upon a clearing some 100 feet wide. A huge yew tree stands alone at the center of this clearing, its branches spanning more than 30 feet to either side of the massive trunk. The trunk is just over 10 feet in diameter, and roots break the surface to bring it nutrients as they reach across the clearing. The tree stands as a king over its neighbors, mocking their shorter lifespans with its huge girth. Nearby, a number of smaller yews, as well as other trees (including an oak tree), have grown at the edge of the clearing, giving space to the giant among them.



Folk in the nearby communities tell tales about this tree. Some say that it is the largest treant to ever live on Faerûn, and they report that it moves. The fact that some have seen it in different locations bolsters this belief. Some say that it serves as a holy place for Silvanus, or Mielikki, or even for the fey gods. A few trappers have reported seeing dancing figures under its branches at night, but they have never identified any of the figures except to say that they were beautiful beyond belief. The tree is famous in the area, and people make the journey just to see it, and to watch it at night to see if any of the stories are true. But no one who has tried to glimpse anything has ever succeeded; the only lucky ones have been those who visited the tree by accident.

#### What Once Was . . .

A great many people visit the site, both for religious and leisure reasons. One thing about the tree is not in dispute: a rather militant dryad makes it her home. She calls herself Camoleene, and she claims to have lived near the tree since it was only half as massive as it is now. She aggressively protects the tree and has exhibited some powers that convince people that she is a sorceress. However, if one shows no intent to harm any trees (especially hers and the yew) and if one greets her with the proper fey greeting upon arrival, she is more amenable to being approached. She teaches the greeting to anyone she befriends so that they can return to visit. Camoleene has a normally sunny disposition that turns suddenly stormy if a threat appears.

The truth behind this remarkable tree is even more remarkable than the tree itself. The tree has stood in this spot for more than 4,000 years. No one can guess how old it really is because it just stopped growing about 1,000 years ago. It doesn't even know how old it is anymore. Just after it stopped growing, a disease ravaged the heartwood, leaving the tree hollow but still very much alive. The tree hides a secret portal to a hidden place several fey call home, and the fey that use it guard it fiercely.

The hollow space within the tree is about 3-1/2 feet wide and 6 feet high (large enough for most Medium creatures to stand). The trunk has been split in a couple of places, and the split on the east side is about 1-1/2 feet wide -- large enough to allow Small humanoids and very thin Medium fey creatures to squeeze into the center space if they are not wearing any equipment. The fey sometimes hide a friend in this space, using illusions to cover the entrance crack.

The second, and narrower, split on the north side of the trunk is about a foot wide and can accommodate thin Small (and smaller) creatures and those who can change shape. The *portal* is bounded by the sides of the split here so that anyone squeezing through here who whispers "Nae saian luume" (translation from Sylvan: "It has been too long.") seems to pass into the center of a tree. Within the new clearing, which is the same size as the one the traveler just left, one sees the edge of the clearing and three passages of sorts that lead into other places that fey beings visit (or even live). The secret of the tree's defense used to be in the hands of its defender, a pixie sorcerer called Piemarchin. The dryad Camoleene is a creation of his illusion powers and his personality. Sometimes he used his *polymorph* spell to reinforce her "reality" to the senses of visitors who might be dangerous. Camoleene forestalled a great many threats. Against the more persistent attackers, she acted to stall and give the other defenders of the realm within the tree time to form a more militant defense. Piemarchin also used his powers to make the huge tree seem to move, as if it were a treant, and other fey have created illusions of the great tree while passing through other parts of the forest to further confuse nonfey of the true nature of the tree. To help bolster the dryad illusion, a permanent illusion of an oak tree is within sight of the yew.

### **... Is No Longer the Case**

However, dark times have come to the yew tree. Piemarchin has been replaced by an evil pixie named Foxlin, who now impersonates the guardian. Having studied Piemarchin's methods extensively, Foxlin copies his dryad illusions to keep anyone from suspecting the truth, but Foxlin has some difficulty impersonating a good creature. Camoleene's personality has changed in subtle but noticeable ways. She has a vacant expression with very red, full lips. She tends to sneer and be sarcastic and intolerant. Anyone who is familiar with Piemarchin's version of Camoleene can attempt a DC 20 Spot check to note that Foxlin's version is a near twin, but not the original.

Foxlin knows of the fey *portal*, and he seeks to control who uses it by controlling the tree. By this plan, he hopes to open it to fey who have his same ambitions so that they can take control of the area beyond the *portal*. Those who used the *portal* when it was under Piemarchin's control have not yet discovered the problem, since Foxlin has been very careful. He hopes to bring in some stronger allies and overwhelm the good fey before they discover his ruse. (DMs are encouraged to create some specific goal that Foxlin wishes to achieve when he gains control of the area, such as power over an artifact that the good fey guard.)

Foxlin plays practical jokes on visitors as well, and sometimes he chooses to pull dangerous ones. He loves to laugh at another's expense. Sometimes, if he is feeling irritable, he simply attacks from within the tree, making his *scorching rays* look as if Camoleene is casting them; he can accomplish this by using his *greater invisibility* power and standing directly behind the illusory dryad when casting the spell. Finally, if it appears that his ruse is going to be discovered, he retreats to the forest and calls his friend, an evil treant that has moved into the grove next to the yew, for assistance against the pesky adventurers. If the PCs stay at the tree or visit frequently, they are sure to come afoul of Foxlin's sense of humor.

**Treant:** hp 66, see *Monster Manual*, page 244.

**Piemarchin or Foxlin:** Male pixie sorcerer 6; CR 10; Small fey; HD 6d4; hp 15; Init +5; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +10 ranged (1d6/x3, masterwork longbow); SA special arrows, spell-like abilities; SQ damage reduction 10/cold iron, greater invisibility, low-light vision, spell resistance 15; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 22. Height 2 ft. 3 in., weight 17 lbs.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +14, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Hide +9, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +3, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6; Dodge[B], Reach Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

**Special Arrows (Ex):** Piemarchin and Foxlin employs arrows that deal no damage but have special effects.

**Memory Loss:** An opponent struck by this arrow must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or lose all memory. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus. The subject retains skills, languages, and class abilities but forgets everything else until it receives a *heal* spell or memory restoration with *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle*.

**Sleep:** Any opponent struck by this arrow, regardless of Hit Dice, must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be affected as though by a sleep spell.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day -- *dancing lights*, *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect thoughts* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *entangle* (DC 17), *lesser confusion* (DC 17), *permanent image* (DC 22, visual and auditory elements only), *polymorph* (self only). Caster level 14th.

**Greater Invisibility (Su):** Piemarchin and Foxlin remain invisible even when they attack. This ability is constant, but they can suppress or resume it as a free action.

**Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/4 per day; caster level 6th):** 0 -- *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (+9 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (+4 melee touch, DC 16); 1st -- *charm person* (DC 17), *ray of enfeeblement* (+9 ranged touch), *shield*, *shocking grasp* (+4 melee touch); 2nd -- *scorching ray* (+9 ranged touch), *touch of idiocy* (+4 ranged touch); 3rd -- *major image* (DC 19).

**Possessions:** Bracers of armor +2, masterwork small short sword, masterwork small longbow, 14 arrows in quiver, cloak of Charisma +2, spell components in pouch, breeches and boots.

**Reach Spell** (from *Complete Divine*): You may cast a spell that normally has a range of "touch" at any distance up to 30 feet. The spell effectively becomes a ray, so you must succeed at a ranged touch attack to bestow the spell upon the recipient. A reach spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Complete Divine](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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## About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

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## Adventure Locales

# The Haunted Glen

By Robert Wiese



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You can place the haunted glen in any forest, but the forest of Cormanthor in the *Forgotten Realms* is its default home. The adventurers can chance upon this place as they travel on some other adventure you have planned for them. As such, it is a curiosity, or a place to assuage their curiosity. This sidetrek is for player characters of 8th level.

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Deep within the forest, a small path opens onto a clearing. Trees and brush surround this glenlike area, but a sense of dark deeds and sadness also presses lightly upon the senses of some who visit here. Visitors never seem to wonder about this though, since more interesting things reside within the glen itself.

The glen is about 100 feet across and vaguely oval in shape. The trees shade only the outer ring of the glen in a swathe about 20 feet wide. Thus, light from the sky can shine down on the center of the glen unimpeded (except on overcast days). Such places in the forest are not that common, and perhaps the prospect of open sky drew the former occupant to the place. Hearty, short grass once covered the clearing, and viewers can see patches of it here and there still, but longer grasses and some bushes have overcome most of this shorter growth over the years. Strangely, though, while it seems untended by anything, the glen has not become swallowed by the woods.

In the center of the clearing stands a small house. Roughly 20 feet square, it is made of logs and possesses a roof of thatch and woven branches. The whole structure stands without any need of joiners. One door set in the north side leads to a main room, and a second door on the east side leads to what was once a bedroom. The main room is 20 feet by 10 feet and takes up the entire northern side of the house. The south section is divided into a bedroom and a smaller room that was used for storage. Doors connect the main room to each of the other rooms on the inside; they stand slightly open and creak from age when moved. The bedroom has one window, and the main room has two windows on the north wall and one on the east and west walls. The windows were once shuttered, but the shutters are destroyed or gone.

The main room still holds a number of pieces of furniture and a few clues to the identity of the previous occupant. A trestle table stands in the center of the room, two wooden chairs of rough make stand against the interior north wall, and a third chair lies on its side under the table. The eastern interior wall has a shelf unit that stands 6 feet high and runs the length of the wall. The shelf holds the tattered remains of a leather book and a small collection of tools that a lumberer and woodcrafter might use. A number of dried leaves and small branches litter the shelves, too, and they probably were blown in through the open windows over the years.

The book is a journal that describes the life and times of a man who served in the local military as a scout, but retired some years ago to this place. The later entries describe a quiet existence in the clearing, and then the arrival of a beautiful fey woman. From the entries, one could infer that the woodsman eventually fell in love with the fey woman. Then the entries stop.

Debris from the forest clutters the floor, and a dark brown substance stains it in two places. One stain is near the chair that is under the table, and the other stain is close to the door from the main room into the bedroom. (The stains are animal blood; some creature attacked the woodsman's wolf companion outside and drove it into this room, where it died. Whatever killed it also took its carcass.)

A rough-hewn wooden frame of a bed lies in the northwest corner of the bedroom; it is nearly 8 feet long and 4 feet wide. Leather straps and wooden slats provided bottom support, and some rotten cloth remnants are all that remains of the mattress. Against the foot of the bed stands a wooden trunk with an intricate peg and slide lock made entirely of wood (equivalent to an average lock, open DC 25). Breaking the lock itself does not release the lid of the chest. The lock must be unlocked, or the chest broken. The chest contains two rotting sets of clothing, a handaxe, a light crossbow and 12 bolts, and some personal effects. All of these objects are in poor condition due to age.

The small storage room is lined with shelves and large wooden boxes set in niches on the floor. The wooden boxes contain odd remnants of foodstuffs that probably grew in the forest (nut shells, dried herbs, fruit rinds, that sort of thing). The shelves hold a few iron pots, some carved wooden bowls and utensils, and three now-empty baskets made of local leaves. The baskets once contained food, but forest animals have eaten every bit of it in the years since the house was abandoned.

Just outside and to the west of the door on the north wall stand two poles set in the ground about 8 feet from the wall. They once served as the supports for a lean-to shelter that connected to the wall; characters can still discern the connection locations on a successful DC 20 Search check. Lightning destroyed the roof

of this lean-to long ago, and the small wood pieces that have not rotted away lie in the deep grass that grows in the clearing.

About 30 feet west of the house stands a second small building: a stable. It too is made of logs and is 15 feet long and 10 feet wide. Its thatch roof has partly rotted away. Within is a single stall with a water trough, and the bedding material is long gone. A shelf mounted on the back wall holds a bridle and bit, a comb and brush for horses, a rotting feedbag, and a few leather straps that could have multiple uses. (The horse ran into the forest and escaped the slaughter.)

### The Story Behind the Location

Once upon a time, a woodcrafter lived in this place alone save for his horse and a wolf companion. Once a scout for some local military, he retired here when he found himself passed over for a promotion that he felt was due him. He lived here awhile and built the structures here by himself or with the help of cooperative forest creatures. A loner at heart, he relished the quiet and tried to maintain peaceful relations with the forest fey creatures and animals.

Some time ago, a fey nymph visited him, fell in love with him, and enticed him to fall in love with her. This love was his undoing, for his paramour was an evil fey from the Unseelie Court. She and a group of evil fey creatures came one night and captured the woodsman, and in a night-long dance ritual stole his soul, or at least a part of it. The ritual so affected the trees that they can no longer grow in the clearing. They carried the body into the forest and hid it; later, animals ate it. Part of his spirit remains, seeking wholeness or rest, but unable really to affect the world around him. (This is the darkness or sadness that presses upon the area.) His former lover knows that his spirit continues in the glen, and alternately fearfully avoids him or comes to taunt him. The whim of fey creatures is hard to understand.

If the player characters spend time here, they can encounter the ghostly woodcrafter (a ghost that cannot affect the physical world and can barely communicate) and possibly the fey woman that stole his existence as well. She is not very dangerous on her own and relies on her wiles to distract foes from harming her. If she feels threatened, she retreats and returns with 1d4+2 satyr allies.

**Glynara:** Female unseelie nymph sorcerer 4; CR 9; Medium fey; HD 3d6 plus 4d4; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19-20, +1 dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19-20, +1 dagger); SA *charm*, corruption of beauty, corruption of nature, spell-like abilities; SQ low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 20.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +15, Climb +10, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +15, Hide +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +9, Spot +10, Ability Focus (*charm*), Ability Focus (corruption of beauty), Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge.

**Charm (Sp):** Any creature that sees the unseelie nymph must make a DC 18 Will save or fall in love with her. This ability works as the *charm person* spell cast by a 7th-level sorcerer. If the creature is male, he treats the unseelie nymph as the love of its life and the center of his universe, and he will do anything short of ending his own life, or violating his basic ethos, to please the unseelie nymph. Those charmed by an unseelie nymph will not leave her side while the *charm* is in effect, and they will defend her to the death. (Note: Defending one's love to the death is different than throwing oneself off a cliff simply because the beloved wished one to do so.)

**Corruption of Beauty (Su):** Once per week, an unseelie nymph can permanently drain 1 point of Charisma and 1 point of Constitution from any creatures under the effects of its *charm* ability. The range of this ability is 30 feet, and each affected creature can make a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist this effect. A male takes a -2 circumstance penalty on this saving throw, since he would willingly give the unseelie nymph anything it requests.

**Corruption of Nature (Su):** An unseelie nymph can twist and corrupt nature itself. For every week that an unseelie nymph lives in an area, she twists, deforms, and kills the plants, and fouls the water. Fouled water cannot support life, so any fish in a lake that becomes fouled by the unseelie nymph die the following week. The unseelie nymph first affects the area around her designated "home," and then she extends her influence in circular patterns of increasing size. Each week the unseelie nymph can corrupt a circle of radius 150 feet, but successive weeks' circles add on to the first. Thus, in the first week the unseelie nymph corrupts a circle of radius 150 feet centered on her home. The following week, the circle of area affected grows to a radius of 300 feet, and in the following week the circle of effect grows to a radius of 450 feet. The maximum area that can be affected by a single unseelie nymph is a circle with a radius of two miles, and this takes 71 weeks to accomplish. Any plant in the area that is sentient and self-willed or controlled by another creature, such as a druid's oak or a treant, can make a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist the effect each week that it remains in the area. Creatures that make this saving throw cannot identify the source of the effect simply from being attacked by it. This is a Charisma-based ability.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day -- *dimension door*. Caster level 7th.

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/8/4; save DC 15 + spell level): 0 -- *acid splash, dancing lights, detect magic, flare, prestidigitation, touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *expeditious retreat, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd -- *invisibility*.

**\*Terrain-Dependent Skill:** Unseelie nymphs who have chosen the forest as their home have a +4 racial bonus on the Climb skill, and this skill is considered a class skill.

**Possessions:** +1 dagger, *ring of protection* +2, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +2, *wand of magic missile* (caster level 7th, 26 charges), *potion of displacement*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*.

**Glynara's Satyrs:** Male satyr barbarian 3; CR 7; Medium fey; HD 5d6+5 plus 3d12+3; hp 44; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, head butt) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, head butt) or +7 melee head butt and -1 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA pipes; SQ damage reduction 5/cold iron, fast movement, low-light vision, rage 1/day, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +11, Diplomacy +5, Hide +14, Intimidate +11, Jump +10, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +19, Move Silently +12, Perform (wind instruments) +11, Spot +14, Survival +5; Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack.

**Pipes (Su):** One of Glynara's satyr can play a variety of magical tunes on his pan pipes. Usually, only one satyr in a group carries pipes. When he plays, every creature within a 60-foot spread (except satyrs) must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be affected by charm person, sleep, or fear (caster level 10th; satyr chooses the tune and its effect). In the hands of other beings, these pipes have no special powers. A creature that successfully saves against any of the pipes' effects cannot be affected by the same set of pipes for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based. One of Glynara's satyrs often uses his pipes to charm and seduce especially comely women or to put a party of adventurers to sleep and then steal their valuables.

**Rage (Ex):** The following changes are in effect as long as one of Glynara's satyrs rages: HD 5d6+15 plus 3d12+9; hp 60; Grp +9; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, head butt) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, head butt) or +9 melee (1d6+3, head butt) and +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SV Fort +7, Will +9; Str 18, Con 16; Jump +12.

**Trap Sense (Ex):** Each of Glynara's satyrs has an intuitive sense that alerts him to danger from traps, giving him a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Glynara's satyr can react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

**Possessions:** +2 studded leather, dagger, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), ["The Unseelie Nymph" website article](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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# Despair on Tap

By Robert Wiese



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*The Bird in Hand Inn exists anywhere on a road that people travel occasionally, but a remote spot in a forest is best for it. What happens at this place would not happen if the inn were too frequently patronized. This inn is a place to stop for the night -- one of many such places that dot the Realms. You can make it into a curiosity only, or use it to start an adventure. You may have to adjust some details to fit this into some locales. This sidetrek is suitable for four 7th-level player characters.*

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Many stops are along the road from point A to point B. A dilapidated inn standing a little off the road all by itself serves as one such stop. Located about an hour's travel from the end of the day (depending on which way you are going), the inn nonetheless entices the occasional traveler with the faint promises of a bed more comfortable than the ground, some hot food, and perhaps even ale. However, these promises are dicey at best given the inn's appearance.

The main building is about 50 or 60 feet square, with a peaked roof. It has the look of age -- as if it had been there since the fall of Netheril -- and seemingly time alone cannot destroy it. The stone chimney, which releases puffs of smoke slowly and reluctantly, leans in toward the building in a precarious way that leads one to believe it can fall at any time. The peaked roof has shingles missing but otherwise looks solid. Paint peels from the walls in places and is entirely missing in other places, and the walls have the look of really old weatherworn boards. Smoke comes from somewhere around the back as well. The door set in the center of the wall looks solid enough, and the sign swinging in the faint breeze proclaims this the "Bird in Hand."

What was once a stable now stands neglected and rundown in the shadows of the trees behind the inn. No one uses it anymore; animals are penned in a small paddock behind the stable and invisible from the road. At any time at least one old nag stands listlessly in the grass, and sometimes as many as nine or ten mounts mill about.

Inside, the dim glow from some candles illuminates a common room that seems to take up the whole ground floor. An open kitchen area in the back, behind the bar, boasts a small and sluggish fire that vents through the wall to the outside. The stone fireplace holds its own sputtering fire that is just hot enough to warm the room. The bar itself has several taps and a number of bottles, but the barkeep doesn't seem to keep it well stocked at all. If asked, the bartender always says that the supplier is late but should show up anytime.

A few patrons sit among the several tables that dot the room in an irregular pattern. During the evenings, some locals come to the Bird in Hand for cheap ale, good talk, and some games of chance. They come from a small farming community to the east (there are woods to the west) and are to all appearances normal people of mixed racial heritage (humans, elves, half-elves, a few halflings). Even the unobservant should notice a contrast between the demeanor of the regulars and the locals.

The regulars include the following:

**Llargo** (human male Warrior 3) is a man who seems to have lost everything worth living for. He has a generally sad expression on his face when he is not crying or staring at nothing with a dead and far-away look in his eyes. He tells anyone who asks that he and his wife stopped here for the night some time back, and during the night werewolves killed her. After the incident, he just lost the will to live. Now he stays here drinking away his memories and yet he cannot muster the courage to leave the last place he saw her.

**Fousakahna** (half-elf female Expert 6) is a caravan master who has been here for nearly six months now. She is drunk most of the time, and she complains bitterly about how life has given her a rotten turn. Six months ago, orcs attacked her caravan about a day's journey to the south (or whatever direction makes sense). Her entire company died at the hands of these orcs, and she herself was left for dead. Someone found her and brought her here, and by the time she felt well enough physically to travel, she had no desire to leave. Now she sees no point in living, but she doesn't really want to die either.

**Koallar** (dwarf or earth genasi Fighter 4) is a mercenary for hire. Koallar has stayed here for a couple months now, and he is not really looking for work. He is loud and grumpy, or quiet and grumpy, and he loves to play dice games. Unfortunately, he has bad luck and loses more than he wins. Further, he bemoans his luck as the reason he is still here. If asked, he says that he was traveling to the south to find work guarding caravans from orcs when he stopped here for the night. He let himself be lured into a dice game by a group of local boys, and he lost all his money. He then drank a lot. When he woke up the next morning, he didn't feel like leaving, though he did feel like winning his money back. He has been trying ever since, and he now owes a few hundred gold to the local farmers. They don't really expect him to pay, but they like playing against him so they stake him every night.

The Bird in Hand is owned by the bartender, **Tilam** (human male Expert 4/Warrior 2), a retired guardsman. He and his beautiful wife **Eliia** (elf female Commoner 5) established the inn here some nine years ago, having purchased the buildings from someone else. They first approached their business and the life to come with great enthusiasm, but in the last year or so they have lost their drive. Now they run the inn almost mechanically -- not really caring whether they do any business or not. Eliia cooks and Tilam watches over the common room. They originally planned to have children, but the desire to have a larger family has left them as well. They comply with requests easily, even unusual ones, but always in a listless manner. They know all the local news, but they report even the most interesting events with utter boredom in their voices.

Among the locals is a woman named **Histenia** (elf female Druid 9), a follower of Talona (or Loviatar if you prefer). She farms a small plot across the community from the Bird in Hand and does not really draw any attention to herself. She comes to the Bird in Hand every night for a little drink, and she seems to be a bit miserable. If asked, she says that her husband died of a plague a couple years ago, and that she has been working the farm alone ever since. She is very lonely, and yet she sees no real hope of changing her situation.

In truth, Histenia is the source of the despair felt by everyone else, and her own growing despair is merely an act. Histenia is experimenting with a despair-causing concoction that she uses on a select few individuals (for now). When ingested, it causes a lowering of spirits and an increased thirst. The poison has a cumulative effect, and it builds up in the body over time. She is quite pleased with the results of this draught, which she makes on her farm, and she has plans to slowly spread the effect throughout the region.

**Histenia's Draught of Despair:** One vial (which contains just a swallow) of this potent alchemical elixir is enough to send someone into a permanent state of despondency. When consumed by itself or mixed with another liquid, it forces the drinker to make a DC 18 Fortitude save. On a failed save, there is no immediate effect, but 1 minute later the drinker falls into a deep blue funk. The victim becomes unable to take an action without making a DC 18 Charisma check. On a failed check, the victim can take only a single standard or move action and also takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, weapon damage rolls, ability checks, and skill checks. On a successful check, the victim can take actions normally, but still takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, weapon damage rolls, ability checks, and skill checks. While affected, a character shows no enthusiasm for anything or inclination to do much of anything. The character feels an overwhelming urge to sit tight and bemoan the misfortunes of his life. The character can be motivated to act by obvious danger or urgings from allies.

The draught's effects are permanent once the victim consumes the draught and the effects begin. A *heal* spell frees a victim from the draught's effects, as does a vial of Histenia's despair antidote.

Craft (alchemy) DC 20; Price 2,500 gp.

**Histenia's Despair Antidote:** A vial of alchemical elixir removes the effects of Histenia's draught of despair from a character. If the drinker is not currently suffering from the effects of Histenia's draught of despair, the drink renders the subject immune to Histenia's draught of despair for 1 hour.

Craft (alchemy) DC 20; Price 500 gp.

Note: Player characters affected by the poison lose the desire to continue their lives. They would rather just sit and drink and stare than become interested in anything. In fact, others find it extremely hard to interest them in anything. Be careful using this in your campaign, since you don't want all the player characters stuck here forever.

If the player characters figure out that Histenia is the source of the problem, she fights them, but not to the death. If she is clearly going to lose, she uses her *tree stride* spell to move as far away as possible; she has scouted the area for many miles around just in case.

**Histenia:** Female human druid 9; CR 9; Medium humanoid; HD 9d8+9; hp 49; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); SQ animal companion (Silvershanks), nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy +11, wild shape (Small, Medium, or Large animal 3/day), woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 14. Height 5 ft. 7 in., weight 151 lbs.

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +3, Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +11, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +9, Heal +11, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +11, Ride +7, Spellcraft +8, Spot +11, Survival +13; Alertness, Combat Casting, Natural Spell, Self-Sufficient, Track.

**Animal Companion:** Histenia has a heavy horse animal companion named Silvershanks as her animal companion. She gains the following benefits from it.

**Link (Ex):** Histenia can handle Silvershanks as a free action or push him as a move action. She gains a +4 bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks regarding her.

**Share Spells (Ex):** Histenia may have any spell she casts upon herself also affect Silvershanks if desired. Silvershanks must be within 5 feet of her at the time of casting to receive this benefit. If the spell has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting Silvershanks if he moves more than 5 feet away and does not affect

him again even if he returns before the duration expires. Histenia may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on Silvershanks (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. Histenia and Silvershanks can even share spells that do not normally affect creatures of the animal type.

**Nature Sense (Ex):** Histenia gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks (included in the numbers given above).

**Resist Nature's Lure (Ex):** Starting at 4th level, a druid gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey.

**Trackless Step (Ex):** Histenia leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. She may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

**Venom Immunity (Ex):** Histenia is immune to all poisons.

**Wild Empathy (Ex):** Histenia can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. She rolls 1d20 and adds +11 to determine the check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. To use wild empathy, Histenia and the animal must be within 30 feet of each other. Influencing an animal in this way usually takes 1 minute. Histenia can also use this ability to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but she takes a -4 penalty on the check.

**Wild Shape (Su):** Once per day, Histenia can assume the form of any animal of Small, Medium, or Large size. This ability functions like the *polymorph* spell, except as noted here. The effect lasts for 9 hours, or until Histenia changes back. Changing form (to animal or back) is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The form chosen must be that of an animal Histenia is familiar with. Histenia loses her ability to speak while in animal form because she is limited to the sounds that a normal, untrained animal can make, but she can communicate normally with other animals of the same general grouping as her new form.

**Woodland Stride (Ex):** Histenia may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at her normal speed and without taking damage or suffering some other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

**Druid Spells Prepared** (6/5/4/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *create water, detect magic, detect poison* (2), *purify food and drink, read magic*; 1st -- *calm animals, cure light wounds, entangle, obscuring mist, speak with animals*; 2nd -- *barkskin, flaming sphere, fog cloud, resist energy, wood shape*; 3rd -- *contagion, cure moderate wounds, speak with plants, spike growth*; 4th -- *dispel magic, flame strike*; 5th -- *tree stride*.

**Possessions:** Quarterstaff, ring of protection +1, tan bag of tricks, ring of counterspells.

**Silvershanks:** Male heavy warhorse animal companion; CR --; Large animal; HD 10d8+30; hp 75; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +16; Atk +11 melee (1d8+5, hoof); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+5, 2 hooves) and +9 melee (1d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ devotion, evasion, low-light vision, scent, tricks (attack, attack unnatural creatures, come, defend, down, guard, heel, seek, stay, track); AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide -1, Jump +13, Listen +5, Spot +4, Survival +4; Dodge, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (hoof), Multiattack, Run.

**Devotion (Ex):** Silvershanks' devotion to Histenia is so complete that he gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against enchantment spells and effects.

**Evasion (Ex):** If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Silvershanks takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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## About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

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## Adventure Locales

# Ship from the Past

By Robert Wiese



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You can place the *Zephyr Rising* in any remote coastal area in the Sea of Fallen Stars, or put it in other coastal areas with small adaptations. Though it possibly serves just as a curiosity or a place to fight some creatures and gain some treasure on the way to somewhere else, this old ship could also start up an adventure that takes the player characters deep into pirate territory. It is suitable for four 9th-level player characters.

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The sea is a dangerous place, especially with Umberlee dwelling within it and sending forth disasters at her whim. A large number of ships sink beneath the waves of the Sea of Fallen Stars, but so many ships ply the waters that those lost are barely noticed overall. Some fall victim to the Queen of the Deep, while others fall prey to pirates. The Sea of Fallen Stars is deep enough that once a ship slips beneath the waves, it is lost forever. However, the most certain thing in the Realms is that nothing is really certain, and sometimes, rarely, ships return from the deep in mysterious ways.

The great pirate king Immurk ruled the Pirate Isles from 1164 DR until he was lost in a great battle around 1201 DR. The pirates of the Isles united as never before during this time, and they became more brazen than at any other time in history. Some say that Immurk would sometimes demand tribute from coastal towns in return for not burning them to the ground, and then he would set them to the torch anyway. Many ships found themselves victimized by pirates under Immurk's command, including enemy pirate vessels. A great many of these ships simply disappeared, never to be heard from again. The navy of Cormyr was hard-pressed to defeat him, and though he finally met his fate beneath the waves, his legends live on.

Along the desolate stretches of the coastline of the Sea of Fallen Stars, people report strange events. Ghostly ships appear and disappear, and pirates emerge from the fog to victimize the unfortunate. In one particularly desolate place, the seas have regurgitated a piece of the past. Rising from the shallow waters of a coastal bay is the hull of an old ship. Nobody knows when the ship first appeared in this spot; locals say that the seabed shifted and heaved and brought up the wreck from the depths. Whatever the true explanation, it is clearly older than its first appearance. It huddles mostly on its side, but a mast stretches along the surface of the water and points slightly into the air. The hull shows some black streaks, as if it were once on fire, and there is a hole in the top side near the back. Though the ship lies 60 feet from shore, the water around it is only about 10 feet deep, thanks to a wide sandbar. Nothing around the wreck suggests how it came to be here. It has lain in this spot long enough that some seaweed has taken root on the submerged portions.

The ship is a two-decked caravel named the *Zephyr Rising*; the name appears in very faded lettering on the side of the bow that is buried in the sea floor. The ship was 23 feet wide, so it is buried 5 feet in the sea floor. The forward mast remains; the other two were destroyed long ago. The ship had a cabin in the back under the wheel, but only part of it remains since the attack destroyed the wheel deck. The cabin area was once two cabins, but now it is one open area partly underwater. Part of the main deck is missing -- also burned in the attack that sank her -- so the hold is easily accessible. However, if she was carrying any cargo, someone took it long ago. The hold now stands empty save for water, sand, some undersea plants that have started to grow here, and a surly dragon turtle that would rather be left alone. It does fight, though, if the player characters seem determined to search the hold.

**Dragon Turtle:** hp 138; see *Monster Manual*, page 88.

Getting to the ship should pose no problem, but clambering around in the wreck is not as easy. Since the ship is on its side, few surfaces (other than the hull) are available to walk on. The wood is very waterlogged -- even that above the surface. Too much weight could break sections of the hull, especially near the already-broken edges. If the hull breaks underneath player characters, those player characters fall into the water. The debris falling on them acts as a fusillade of spears trap. The chance for a section of hull to break through is 35% per 10-foot section. For added spookiness, a light fog can blanket the whole wreck most of the time. (See Concealment on page 152-153 in the *Player's Handbook*; this fog could conceivably provide 10% concealment if the DM wants it to.)

**Falling Debris Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; Atk +20 melee (1d4 spearlike pieces of debris per PC for 1d8/x3 each); multiple targets (all PCs within 10-ft. square); Search DC 20 to find weak sections; Disable Device DC 20. **Market Price:** 12,500 gp.

Immurk sunk the *Zephyr Rising* at the height of his power because of something she carried. That something is still on board, waiting to be found. Unlike most pirates, Immurk had several hoard locations. Most of his wealth was "invested" in the Dragon Isle and his fleet, but he did keep some back for a rainy day. Over time, he developed more than one rainy-day hoard. The most secret location was in a cave underwater on the southernmost side of the Pirate Isles. This hoard, he boasted, would be turned over to his successor, and it

contained objects given as gifts to Immurk himself. By these gifts, the successor would confirm his or her claim to Immurk's legacy. The location of the hoard was encoded somehow on a golden statue of a ship, and that statue sat prominently in Immurk's castle. Since Immurk never announced a successor (he did not have time), and the golden ship is long gone, most of the stories passed into legend and what remains of the tale is that Immurk had a secret hoard.

The golden ship disappeared because the captain of the *Zephyr Rising*, in a bold move, stole it from Immurk just before setting sail that last time. Immurk pursued, but he never found the statue on the *Zephyr Rising* before it sank; the captain hid it in a secret compartment in the back wall of the vessel as soon as it was on board, so the crew never knew it was there. And there it waits even now.

The log's covers and binding have rotted away, but its parchment pages are still intact. The PCs can read the pages (which are written in Chondathan) if they first carefully separate them and dry them out. The journal describes several pirate missions, and it lists booty captured and the amounts that the captain shared with the crew and with Immurk. Later entries record the captain's growing dissatisfaction in serving under Immurk, whom he characterized as an uncouth barbarian. The last entries describe the ship leaving port at the Dragon Isle and sailing toward Cormyr. Then, an entry says, "A ship approaches fast and seeks to ram. It flies the flag of Lord Immurk. I fear that my theft has been discovered. I hope I have not led my crew to their deaths." There is no more.

The secret compartment under the captain's bunk is now underwater, and thus harder to find (DC 26 Search check). A simple needle trap that was damaged when the ship heaved into its current location protects it (Search DC 20 to find it). The secret compartment in the stern wall of the vessel, where the golden ship model lies waiting, is cunningly disguised and also partly buried in the sea floor. Once found (DC 28 Search check), the player characters must unearth it before trying to open it. An excellent lock keeps it safe (DC 30 to open), though characters can break in the panel with a DC 18 Strength check. (It is low due to the condition of the wood.) Once someone tries to move the door without opening the lock properly (or when failing to open the lock), a spear trap fires through the secret door.

**Poison Spear Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +15 melee (2d8+4/x3 plus poison, spear); poison (Large scorpion venom, Fortitude save DC 18 resists, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 24. *Market Price:* 26,600 gp.

Finding the ship model, and understanding what it represents, are two different things. In a campaign, the player characters might find the model and later learn that it can lead them to great wealth. By then they may have to recover it somehow. The code on the ship matches markings on a map that Immurk made and hid in his castle on the Dragon Isle. It remained there when he was lost at sea, and the PCs have to find it to attempt to claim the treasure. The golden ship is worth 16,000 gp to a collector, possibly more. The treasure it leads to is worth nearly five times that, at least.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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## Adventure Locales

### The Sea Cave

By Robert Wiese



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You can place this cave encounter on the shoreline of any sea. It fits best where pirates are likely to operate, such as in the Sea of Fallen Stars or the Sword Coast. The Shining Sea is a possibility as well, as are the seas farther south. This place can either be a curiosity and a place to gather some wealth, or a dangerous place that may mean the death of a character. The encounter here is very difficult and is suitable for four 2nd-level characters.

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A meandering path winds along the cliff overlooking the sea. Sometimes it can get down to a few feet above sea level, and sometimes it climbs much higher up the cliffside. The people who wore this path are long gone, but some part of them lives on. This path sees little use nowadays; the locals have easier ways to get to the sea and their fishing places.

As the path reaches the level of the sea yet again, it wanders a little inland, and then rounds a turn to the left and back toward the sea. At this turn, a side path leads into some trees. The side path is almost as wide as the main path, but weeds still overgrow it while the main path remains free of them. About 40 feet down the side path and to the left is a cave entrance. The entrance gapes darkly, though some trees hang down and partially block it. Old and crumpled leaves and debris cover the path and ground before the entrance.

Human smugglers and pirates once used this cave as a base of operations. About six months ago, though, the local navy tracked them to this base. When the locals raided the cave, they found no sign of the pirates. It appeared as if they were away on a raid. The local military watched the cave for a few weeks, and finally determined that the pirates had been scared off. They raided the cave and removed every bit of loot left behind. The fate, or location, of the pirates remained a mystery.

Within the last three months, a few ships have been lost to what is presumed to be pirates. The local military checked the cave again, but they found no sign of life. The local officials then forgot it as they concentrated their search elsewhere.

No humans have been here in more than a month. The last group that entered the cave was a group of smugglers that wanted to use the cave as a base, but the five of them met their end here. A DC 30 Track check allows characters to detect the old presence of humans on the trail. Near the cave mouth, however, the PCs can find some tracks. It takes a DC 29 Track check to locate them. Anyone who finds them can tell they are about two weeks old and made by a humanoid about 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighing about 140 pounds. They appear around the edges of the opening, not in the middle area.

The 10 foot by 10 foot area in front of the cave conceals a pit trap. Pirates originally dug the pit some years ago, and then they dragged planks across it to carry loot in and out. The current occupant of the cavern still uses the pit as a deterrent and warning system. A number of ceramic crocks are piled up at the bottom of the pit where someone is likely to land, so the victim breaks them and makes a lot of noise when hitting the ground. The sound of the victim hitting the crocks echoes into the cave.

**Covered Pit Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (all within 10-ft. square); pit spikes (Atk +20 melee; 1d4 spearlike pieces of debris per target for 1d8/x3 each); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. *Market Price:* 16,000 gp.

The cave entrance itself is about 10 feet wide and about 8 feet high; blackness is the only thing visible within. The cave mouth opens into a cave about 10 feet long by 10 feet wide, with a 5-foot-wide passage going deeper underground on the right wall. This cave has a few bones thrown into a back corner, but nothing else. The bones can be identified as humanoid with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nature) check, and as human with a successful DC 20 check. This cave has shadowy illumination because of the opening to the outside. PCs need light sources or darkvision to make their way down the passage that leads inward.

In the days of pirates and smugglers, goods were broken down in this room into boxes or chests that would fit down the narrow passage. Usually a lookout stood watch here as well. The bones are his.

The narrow passage leads down 10 feet and then turns left (toward the sea) and goes another 10 feet before opening into a chamber about 50 feet wide by 60 feet long. The ceiling is 15 feet high, and a couple of stalactites hang downward about 6 feet. This main chamber of the small cave system is roughly square, but it has small niches every few squares along the walls.

Characters can find a number of items left by past occupants, as well as the remains of a number of these occupants. Bones litter the floor as if some ogre had eaten in here. All the bones are human (Knowledge (local)

or Knowledge (nature) check DC 10 because of the presence of skulls) and strewn randomly. If PCs collect them and compare them, they can determine that about fourteen people contributed their bones to the refuse.

About fifty long wooden poles are stacked near the entrance passage. They are used to rebuild the pit trap's cover.

Two narrow passages exit this cavern. One goes out the opposite wall from the entrance (and toward the sea), and the other goes out the left wall.

A DC 10 Survival check (or a Search check DC 10) allows PCs to notice some watery footprints in the ground. They lead through this chamber from the passage in the back wall to just before the entrance passage, and then return. The prints are of a humanoid and were made with bare feet. They do not appear as if the maker hurried.

The passage entrance on the left wall leads down a 5-foot passage to a smaller irregular cavern where eleven cots and five hammocks are set in as regular a pattern as could be managed in this room. The hammocks hang from bolts in the ceiling rock. A chest sits at the foot of each bed. The chests have been opened and ransacked, but nothing taken (as far as the PCs can tell anyway). The chests all contain clothing and personal effects owned by the former occupants. There is nothing of real value here.

The passage in the rear of the main cavern leads down a winding 20-foot-long passage to a smaller cavern that is half-filled with seawater. At this point, a tunnel goes underneath the path outside and connects with the sea. The cavern is about 30 feet square, though irregular, and the watery section is about 10 feet by 30 feet in the back. The dry side of this small chamber holds another pile of bones, maybe enough for two humans. A successful DC 20 Heal or Survival check reveals that the bones were gnawed on within the past two days.

This chamber is the lair of a sea hag named Maraglynis. About seven months ago, she found this cave and the pirate group. They provided an easy source of food, and by the time the local navy found this cave she had consumed all the pirates and hidden their remains. The officials cleared out the loot but left behind the cots and hammocks in the side cave.

Maraglynis sees this cave as a long-term home and would like to remain undetected. To this end, she reset the pit trap at the entrance and keeps it maintained. She also added the crocks at the bottom, as an alarm system. When she hears the breaking crockery, she moves to see what creatures are entering the cave. She attacks groups that she feels she can overcome, and then clears out remains and gear. She thinks that provided she can keep the cave free and clear of anything new that would tip off the local and those investigating piracy, she can live in peace.

Whether Maraglynis attacks the PCs depends on how they explore the cavern. She might think she can handle them, especially if they bungle around in the dark and use light sources, but if attacking would jeopardize the safety of her hiding place then she might refrain, and lurk underwater until they leave.

**Maraglynis:** Female sea hag rogue 1; CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid (aquatic); HD 3d8+6 plus 1d6+1; hp 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws); SA evil eye, horrific appearance, sneak attack +1d6; SQ amphibious, darkvision 60 ft., skills, spell resistance 14, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Craft (trapmaking) +7, Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Spot +6, Swim +12; Alertness, Toughness.

**Evil Eye (Su):** Three times per day, Maraglynis can cast her dire gaze upon any single creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or be dazed for three days, although *remove curse* or *dispel evil* can restore sanity sooner. In addition, an affected creature must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or die from fright. Creatures with immunity to fear effects are not affected by Maraglynis's evil eye. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

**Horrific Appearance (Su):** The sight of Maraglynis is so revolting that anyone (other than another hag) who sets eyes upon her must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or instantly be weakened, taking 2d6 points of Strength damage. This damage cannot reduce a victim's Strength score below 0, but anyone reduced to Strength 0 is helpless. Creatures that are affected by this power or that successfully save against it cannot be affected again by Maraglynis's horrific appearance for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Maraglynis deals 1d6 extra points of damage on any successful attack against flat-footed or flanked targets, or against a target that has been denied its Dexterity bonus for any reason. This damage also applies to ranged attacks against targets up to 30 feet away. Creatures with concealment, creatures without discernible anatomies, and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are all immune to sneak attacks. Maraglynis may choose to deliver nonlethal damage with her sneak attack, but only when using a weapon designed for that purpose, such as a sap (blackjack).

**Amphibious (Ex):** Although Maraglynis is aquatic, she can survive indefinitely on land.

**Skills:** Maraglynis has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. Maraglynis can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. Maraglynis can use the run action while swimming, provided she swims in a straight line.

**Trapfinding (Ex):** Maraglynis can find, disarm, or bypass traps with a DC of 20 or higher. She can use the Search skill to find, and the Disable Device skill to disarm, magic traps (DC 25 + the level of the spell used to create it). If her Disable Device result exceeds the trap's DC by 10 or more, she discovers how to bypass the trap without triggering or disarming it.

**Possessions:** *Bracers of armor +1, oil of darkness, potion of cat's grace, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility, salve of slipperiness, piece of black coral (100 gp).*

### Alternative Background

Maraglynis could also be trying to find something specific on nearby ships or she could be preying on ships hoping to cause rumors of piracy to be stirred up. Either case could be at the behest of some more powerful evil being who holds her in its sway or who has promised her something in return. If this is the case, make the following changes to the set-up of the cave:

The bones are newer and all show signs of gnawing (Search or Spot check DC 10 on the bones); someone ate these people. Ripped clothing, torn leather armor, and torn packs and sacks and pouches lie thrown in the back corner. A small collection of useful weapons is scattered around as well: 6 rapiers, 8 shortswords, 3 shortbows (no arrows), 9 daggers, and a light mace. Some look like they were dropped, and some are on a crate in the center of the room.

The chamber holds about 35 crates and chests (total), all stacked in a sloppy fashion. The containers hold silks, artwork, ceramics, and bronze pieces worth a total of 1,020 gp (that is what the PCs can sell everything for). Feel free to roll on the treasure tables for specific items if the players are interested. The crates bear the markings of nearby nations. Depending on where you locate this locale, these could include Sembia, Cormyr, Westgate, and Turmish (all on the Sea of Fallen Stars), or Waterdeep, Amn, Tethyr, and Calimshan (on the Sword Coast), or Calimshan, Halruua, Thindol, and Tashalar (on the Shining Sea).

The passage in the rear of the main cavern leads down a winding 20-foot-long passage to a smaller cavern that is half-filled with seawater. At this point, a tunnel goes underneath the path outside and connects with the sea. The cavern is about 30 feet square, though irregular, and the watery section is about 10 feet by 30 feet in the back. The dry side of this small chamber holds another pile of bones, maybe enough for two humans. A successful DC 20 Heal or Survival check reveals that the bones were gnawed on within the past two days.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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### About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

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## Adventure Locales

# The Silent Manse

By Robert Wiese and Skip Williams



---

Ruined and abandoned houses abound in cities in all campaigns, so you can place this one anywhere. If you need a map for the house, you can use the one from the [Haunted House](#) Map-A-Week feature. This adventure locale is suitable for four 3rd-level characters.

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Mansions of the rich and powerful fill the wealthy neighborhoods of cities across Faerûn, from Waterdeep to Ravens Bluff to Skuld. Large or small, they still seem quite impressive to the lowly commoners who pass them. As cities change, the desirable neighborhoods change, too, and some of these mansions end up in less desirable parts of the city as the wealthy move to a new area.

This was the fate of one moderately sized house in the city. When built, it stood in the "right" neighborhood. The neighborhood changed around it, and it now broods in a location of middle-class neighbors. Abandoned now for several years, it has the look almost of a haunted house. Children dare each other to enter the grounds, touch the door, steal something from the grounds, or even spend the night inside the house. No one actually has spent the night in the house, since the door remains locked. Strange lights flicker near the windows from time to time, though no one has found the source. The house even served as the focus of rumors that claimed that undead wandered within its walls and waited to attack the city's populace. Clerics of Lathander investigated the house and found no trace of any undead, but the stories did not die down for a number of months. Among the street people, the stories continue to linger.

The mansion was once the home of a powerful family of traders and politicians. People came and went constantly, and sometimes the visitors and inhabitants decided great affairs of state in the living room, or more usually in the salon or game room. Lavish decorations made the house look opulent internally, and the family enjoyed showing off their power and wealth as much as they enjoyed wielding it. However, their influence and power began to decline when people opposed to their point of view began to undermine their relationships with the rulers. At about the same time, the wealthy had begun constructing even more lavish homes in another quarter of the city to escape what they called the "flood of the middle class," which took the form of rising merchants moving into the district. The ambitions of the owners never faded, but they found it increasingly difficult to wield power. Eventually, or so the stories go, the family packed up and moved elsewhere. No one knows where elsewhere is, but a great many people saw wagons come and remove all the possessions from the house, and they saw the adults of the family enter the family carriage and depart town toward the east. Word was that the children had already been sent away. Everyone expected the family to return, since they did not sell the house, but they never did. And the house sits empty, waiting. Well, almost empty.

A 10-foot-tall stone wall divides the property from the street. Vines have taken root between the rocks, and they cover a small ridge of sharp glass pieces that runs the length of the wall and is designed to keep out thieves.

**Sharp Glass Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset but always active until destroyed; Atk +15 melee (1d4+1, glass shard); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 16.

From the closed and rusted gate, one can see gardens that once were well-groomed but now appear to be wilderness tracts, with the plants trying to choke each other out in a fierce competition for scant nourishment. A large expanse of lawn to the right of the gate is knee-deep in grass and weeds. A gravel-and-dirt carriageway meanders from the gate through the gardens and to the house, and then around back to the right where the roof of a carriage house pops into sight. Weeds poke through the stones of the carriageway in random patches, and small whirlwinds play about the carriage drive almost all the time.

**Gate:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; break DC 25, open lock DC 24.

The two-story house has seen better days. Weather has taken its toll on the wood and the paint, and some of the ornately decorated pieces have been pried off by opportunistic looters and now adorn other dwellings. The doors are intact and locked against the outside world. Several of the glass windows are broken, but someone has covered them over on the inside with boards, to keep the rain out. The intact windows have boards on them as well, giving the appearance that the house has its eyes closed. In fact, from the outside it appears no inhabitants lurk within at all, though there are chinks in the boards and between them that allows light through when light is present.

**Good Wooden Door:** 1 1/2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18, open lock DC 30.

The carriage house has fared better over time. It was built to match the house architecturally, and most of its decorative pieces remain. Thus, it offers a glimpse of what the house might have looked like years ago. The paint has peeled and cracked, and the wood looks weathered. The single door is barred from the outside. Its

interior contains a place to store carriages, and a small stable juts out from the back of the carriage house. The stable has a second door leading to a grassy (overgrown) field behind it. The stable and carriage house are devoid of contents; only musty hay and a broken table remain.

The interior of the house is stark and empty. All of the possessions that once had places of esteem here, and which once delighted or awed the nobility of the city, left with the former owners. No curtains frame the large windows and keep out drafts, and no remnants soften the geometry of the rooms. Only emptiness greets anyone who enters; room after dark-paneled room stands neglected. (Both the paneling and any wallpaper remain in reasonably good condition, though, because little light gets in.) Quiet pervades the house most of the time -- the kind of quiet that makes one feel that one is being watched.

When workmen moved furniture out of the house, they damaged the stairs that lead to the second floor. Sadly, termites have also been busy on the wooden stairs. Now they are somewhat weak, and if more than 200 pounds rests on the stairs, they collapse.

**Collapsing Stair Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Reflex save DC 20 avoids; 10 ft. fall (1d6, fall); Search DC 25; Disable 21.

**Broken Boards:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Attack +10 melee (1d2 boards, 1d6 each); Search DC 21; Disable -- (can be blocked).

Should one wander the halls of this quiet and almost moody house, one might run into one or both of its humanoid inhabitants. The family knew nothing about the existence of these creatures in their house, though doubtless some of the servants knew of the creatures. They are fey creatures: a brownie and a boggart. This brownie moved into the house when few houses stood around it, and it stayed for so long that the city grew up around the house. Now it fears leaving and wanders the lonely house repairing things that are broken and spending time with the boggart. The boggart came to the house nearly twenty years ago with some guests, and it stayed when it discovered the brownie. It has a mean temper and breaks things or creates messes much of the time. This keeps the brownie busy, and the two actually get along pretty well. They are both wary of strangers, and they hid when the priests came checking the house for undead.

**Brownie**

**Tiny Fey**

**Hit Dice:** 1/2 d6+2 (3 hp)

**Initiative:** +5

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armor Class:** 17 (+2 size, +5 Dex), touch 17, flat-footed 12

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +0/-11

**Attack:** Masterwork short sword +0 melee (1d3-3/19-20) or sling +7 ranged (1d2-3)

**Full Attack:** Masterwork short sword +0 melee (1d3-3/19-20) or sling +7 ranged (1d3-3)

**Space/Reach:** 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Calm animal, spell-like abilities

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 30 ft., evasion, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +8 (+4 magical beasts)

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 5, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13

**Skills:** Balance+9, Climb +7, Craft (any one) +10, Diplomacy+4, Escape Artist +10, Handle Animal +3, Hide +17, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Tumble +8

**Feats:** Agile, Dodge[B]

**Environment:** Temperate and warm forests and plains

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, band (3-6), or company (7-16)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** 50% coins, 50% goods, standard items, plus masterwork short sword and masterwork artisan's tools

**Alignment:** Usually lawful good

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +4

*The creature resembles a very small elf, shorter than a halfling and very slim, with brown hair. It wears brightly colored garments and it carries a belt full of artisan's tools.*

Brownies are benign and exceedingly nimble creatures that may be related very distantly to halflings. Peaceful and friendly, brownies live in pastoral regions, foraging and gleaning their food.

A brownie stands no taller than 2 feet and weighs about 6 pounds. Their garments are usually made of wool or linen and dyed bright colors and decorated with elaborate embroidery or trimmed with silver or gold studs and buttons.

Brownies speak Common, Halfling, and Sylvan, plus one other language (usually Elven or Gnome).

**Combat**

Brownies prefer not to engage in combat, and only do so in response to attacks or clear threats of violence. Angry brownies rarely meet their foes in hand-to-hand combat. Instead, they retreat to a safe distance. They rely on their Tumble skill or ability to hide while being observed to avoid attacks of opportunity. Once safely out of reach, brownies use their spell-like abilities to harass and drive away enemies.

**Calm Animal (Su):** As a free action, a brownie can make an animal calm and docile. The power is similar to a *calm animals* spell as a 7th-level caster, except that it works on a single animal within 30 feet. An animal that has been affected or has made a successful saving throw against this power cannot be affected again for one day. The save DC against this power is 15. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +3 racial adjustment.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** A brownie can use any of the following, each once a day as a 7th-level caster: *confusion* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *daylight*, *dimension door*, *protection from evil*, *ventriloquism* (DC 12).

**Evasion (Ex):** If a brownie is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the brownie takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Ex):** In areas of dim light, tall grass, or heavy undergrowth, a brownie can make itself practically invisible. Under these conditions, a brownie can use its Hide skill even while being observed and without having anything to actually hide behind.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** A brownie retains its Dexterity bonus to AC even if caught flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe. However, the brownie still loses its Dexterity bonus to AC if paralyzed or otherwise immobile.

**Wild Empathy (Ex):** A brownie can improve the attitude of an animal as a 7th-level character.

**Skills:** Brownies have a knack for working with their hands, and they gain a +2 racial bonus on all Craft checks. Most brownies also carry masterwork artisan's tools, and they gain a +2 bonus on checks with the Craft skill for which the tools are made (included in the numbers given above). Brownies have keen senses and receive a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. Brownies use their Dexterity scores for Climb checks.

### Brownie Society

Brownies live in rural areas, making their homes in small burrows, hollow trees, or abandoned buildings. They often live close to or on farms, since they are fascinated by farm life.

Brownies live by harvesting wild fruits and gleaning grain from farmers' fields. Brownies are basically vegetarians who live very comfortably on the gleanings of agricultural life. They make efficient use of leftovers that are too small for humans to notice. When brownies glean from fields, they usually do so after harvest, gathering grains and fruits, which might otherwise be wasted. When they can harvest a few morsels earlier, they often do so if they can without spoiling the harvest.

Being honest to the core, brownies always perform some service in exchange for what they take. For example, a brownie might milk a farmer's cows and take only a small portion for itself.

Some brownies go so far as to become house brownies. They observe the families in a given area, and if one meets their high moral standards, these brownies secretly enter the household. At night, while the residents are asleep, they perform a variety of helpful tasks: spinning, baking bread, repairing farm implements, keeping foxes out of the hen house, mending clothes, and performing other household tasks. If a thief creeps silently into the house, they make enough noise to awaken the residents. Watchdogs and domestic animals usually consider brownies friendly and almost never attack or even bark at them (a result, no doubt, of their ability to calm or influence animals).

All brownies ask in exchange for their labor is a little milk, some bread, and an occasional bit of fruit. Etiquette demands that no notice be taken of them. If the residents boast about the presence of a brownie, the brownie vanishes.

Brownies are not greedy, but they often have small hoards of treasure, which they have taken from evil monsters or received as gifts from humans. A brownie sometimes leaves his treasure in a location where a good person in need is bound to find it.

Brownies quickly note strangers that come to the area where they dwell. They keep careful watch on the newcomers until their motives are established. If the brownies decide that a stranger is harmless, he is left in peace. If not, the brownies unite and drive the intruder out.

Brownies know every nook and cranny of the areas where they live, and thus make excellent guides, if they can be persuaded to serve.

### Brownies as Characters

Brownie characters possess the following racial traits.

-- 6 Strength, +10 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma

--Tiny size: A brownie has a +2 bonus to Armor class and attack rolls and a +8 bonus on Hide checks. A brownie uses smaller weapons than humans use, and his lifting and carrying limits are half of those of a Medium character.

--A brownie's base land speed is 30 feet.

--Darkvision out to 30 feet.

--Low-light vision.

--Calm Animal: As a free action, a brownie can calm an animal. The power is similar to a *calm animals* spell, except that it works on a single animal within 30 feet. An animal that has been affected or has made a successful saving throw against this power cannot be affected again for one day. The caster level for this power is 7 + the brownie's character level. The save DC against this power is 14 + the brownie's Charisma modifier. This is a supernatural ability.

--Spell-Like Abilities: A brownie can use the any of the following, each once a day: *confusion*, *dancing lights*, *daylight*, *dimension door*, *protection from evil*, *ventriloquism*. Saving throws are 10 + spell level + the brownie's Charisma modifier. The brownie's caster level is 7 + the brownie's character level.

-- Evasion (Ex): If a brownie is exposed to any effect that normally allows it to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the brownie takes no damage with a successful saving throw. If the brownie gains a class level that gives it the evasion class feature, the brownie gains improved evasion instead.

-- Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): In areas of dim light, tall grass, or heavy undergrowth a brownie can use the Hide skill even while being observed and without having anything to actually hide behind. This ability does not stack with the hide in plain sight class feature.

-- Uncanny Dodge (Ex): A brownie retains its Dexterity bonus to AC even if caught flat-footed or targeted by an unseen foe. However, the brownie still loses its Dexterity bonus to AC if paralyzed or otherwise immobile. If the brownie gains a class level that gives it the uncanny dodge class feature, the brownie gains improved uncanny dodge instead.

-- Wild Empathy (Ex): A brownie can improve the attitude of an animal as a druid does. The brownie's bonus on wild empathy checks is 7 + the brownie's Charisma modifier. If the brownie gains levels in a class that has the wild empathy class feature, the brownie's bonus on wild empathy checks is 7 + the relevant class level + the brownie's Charisma modifier.

-- +2 racial bonus on Craft checks.

-- Automatic Languages: Common, Halfling, and Sylvan.

-- Bonus Languages: Draconic, Elven, Giant, Goblin, and Gnome.

-- Favored Class: Expert.

-- Level Adjustment +4.

### Boggart

#### Small Fey (Shapechanger)

**Hit Dice:** 6d6+12 (33 hp)

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armor Class:** 22 (+1 size, +7 Dex, +4 deflection), touch 22, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/-2

**Attack:** Shock +11 melee touch (2d6 electricity)

**Full Attack:** Shock +11 melee touch (2d6 electricity)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Confusion, electrical bolt

**Special Qualities:** Deflection, invisibility, immune to electricity, low-light vision, magic immunity, tongues, unstable form

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 25, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16

**Skills:** Balance+20, Climb +8, Escape Artist +18, Hide +20, Jump +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +16, Tumble +20

**Feats:** Acrobatic, Agile, Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Temperate forests and marsh

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or band (3-6)

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** 1/10 coins, 50% goods, 50% items

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic evil

**Advancement:** 7-12 HD (Small)

**Level Adjustment:** --

The creature resembles a disheveled and bare-chested gnome. It wears a pair of dirty leather breeches and goes barefoot. It has wildly disarrayed fair hair, dusky skin, and large eyes.

Many scholars contend that the boggart is an immature form of the will-o'-wisp, and that seems so. The boggart shares many of the will-o'-wisp's most dreaded abilities and also can take a will-o'-wisp form briefly. Elf sages, however, contend that the boggart is a baleful fey creature that only superficially resembles the will-o'-wisp. Unlike a will-o'-wisp, a boggart has no ability to feed on emotions and wreaks havoc with other creatures for the sheer pleasure of doing so.

In its natural form, a boggart is about 2-1/2 feet tall and weighs about 15 pounds. Touching the boggart's skin triggers a harmless electrical discharge, much like a static shock. In its will-o'-wisp's form, a boggart's body is a globe of electrified gas about 1 foot across and weighing about a pound. The globe glows and sheds as much light as a hooded lantern (slightly brighter than a will-o'-wisp).

Boggarts speak Common and Sylvan, though they have a magical ability that allows them to converse haltingly with any creature that has a language.

### Combat

Boggarts love to lure unsuspecting creatures to their doom. They usually employ their shape-shifting abilities to put victims off their guard before attacking. When possible, they use their confusion ability for the initial assault, then use their electrical shock attacks. If a foe proves immune to electricity, they attempt to escape, usually by assuming will-o'-wisp form and flying away.

**Confusion (Su):** A boggart can cause a magical *confusion* effect by keeping up a loud racket for 2 rounds. The boggart can sing, shout, bang pots and pans, or do anything else that makes a great deal of noise. Using this power requires 2 consecutive full-round actions. A single boggart creates a *confusion* effect in a 30-foot spread. Two or more boggarts can cooperate to create a bigger effect. To do so, the boggarts must be within 30 feet of each other and each boggart must make noise in the same general manner; for example, both boggarts might shout out bad poetry or both might sing. Each additional boggart that joins the effort add 10 feet to the spread radius, to a maximum radius of 80 feet. When two or more boggarts produce a *confusion* effect, each boggart produces a spread with the increased size.

The effect works just like the *confusion* spell except that it is a sonic, mind-affecting, compulsion effect. A DC 16 Will save negates the effect. If a creature is subjected to multiple boggart *confusion* effects at the same time, it need save only once (against the effect with the highest DC if they don't all have the same DC). The save DC is Charisma-based. Once a creature has made a successful save against any boggart's *confusion* effect, it cannot be affected again by any boggart's *confusion* effect for 24 hours. A boggart's *confusion* effect does not affect other boggarts.

**Electrical Bolt (Ex):** A boggart can produce an electrical spark that can affect a single target within 40 feet. The boggart must make a ranged touch attack to hit the target, and a hit deals 2d4 points of electricity damage. Once the boggart fires a bolt, it must wait 1d4 rounds before it can fire another.

**Deflection (Su):** No matter what its form, a boggart is continually surrounded by a protective field that gives it a +4 deflection bonus to Armor Class (already figured into the numbers given above).

**Invisibility (Su):** A boggart can become invisible as a standard action. This power works just like an *invisibility* spell, except that it lasts for 3d4 rounds (or until the boggart attacks).

**Magic Immunity (Ex):** The only spells that can affect boggarts are *magic circle against chaos*, *magic circle against evil*, *magic missile*, *maze*, *protection from chaos*, and *protection from evil*. Other spells and spell-like abilities fail just as if the spellcaster had failed to overcome spell resistance.

**Tongues (Su):** A boggart can converse with any creature that uses language. This power works just like a *tongues* spell cast by a 6th-level character, except that it is always active and it allows for only basic communication (only one- and two-syllable simple words and simple syntax).

**Unstable Form (Su):** A boggart can assume its own form or the form of any Small or Tiny humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or fey with a humanoid form. The boggart also can assume the form of a ball of electrified gas similar to a will-o'-wisp, but less tangible. When in will-o'-wisp form, the boggart can fly at a speed of 50, with perfect maneuverability. The boggart also gains damage reduction 10/magic and becomes immune to poison and critical hits. It cannot speak or use its confusion power, but it can use its shock and electrical bolt powers. It has no Strength score, but it cannot enter water. It can, however, pass through small holes or even mere cracks.

A boggart must change form every 3d4 rounds (though it can voluntarily switch forms sooner if it wishes). If flying when forced to change form, the boggart descends 60 feet a round until it lands, and it suffers no falling damage.

The boggart does not regain any hit points for changing its form. When changing form, a boggart retains its fey types and shapeshifter subtype. It gains the size of its new form, along with the natural weapons, natural armor, movement modes, and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. The boggart retains its own special qualities and does not gain any special qualities of its new form except as noted above the will-o'-wisp form. The boggart retains its own special attacks except as noted above the will-o'-wisp form. The boggart retains its own ability scores except as noted above the will-o'-wisp form. The boggart is effectively camouflaged as a creature of its new form, and it gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks if it uses this ability to create a disguise.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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## About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

**Skip Williams** keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of **Dragon Magazine** for 18 years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the **Monster Manual**. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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## Adventure Locales

# The Shrine Along the Way

By Robert Wiese



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This shrine can be placed along any road anywhere in Faerûn due to its peculiar nature. It serves as a roadside place to rest, so roads that are used with regularity are better. Like most of the entries in this feature, this place can be the setting for a dangerous encounter and discovery of an interesting secret, or it can be a mere oddity that tweaks the curiosity of the adventurers as they make their way somewhere. This adventure locale is suitable for four 12th-level characters, but it can be very dangerous if they stay too long.

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Religion is one of the most powerful forces in all Faerûn. The deities take a personal interest in the affairs of mortals, and occasionally they appear to their faithful. The Time of Troubles taught the people of the Realms that though the gods are powerful, their worshipers can influence them -- even shape them. A deity's worshipers serve as his or her primary tool for affecting the world. Because of these realities of the divine, places of worship are the most common structures anywhere in the land. Huge temples form the centerpieces of powerful metropolises, and shrines exist in smaller towns, villages, and even along the road.

Along the road, somewhere between here and there, travelers come upon a smallish shrine. It stands alone by the side of the road, maybe 20 feet from the roadway itself. Built of common stone from the area, it appears very old indeed. The stone is very weatherworn, but still very sturdy and solid. Around the shrine the traveler sees a number of common native plants forming a garden of sorts. The plants have become overgrown a bit, but still the rows and paths can be made out. The whole shrine radiates an aura of peaceful rest, as if it remains undisturbed by what takes place around it.

The single door to the shrine is closed, but it opens as someone approaches. In the wall beside the door is carved "The Shrine of Need," which is the name of this place. Within, a dim light from windows near the roof reveals a room about 30 feet square, with a stone table nearly against the wall on the far side of the room. One could just walk between the wall and the table. On the wall above the table is inscribed a brightly colored image of a god's holy symbol -- the symbol of the god that the visitor worships! This seemingly is a shrine to the visitor's own deity. Four stone figures stand in alcoves along the sides of the room, two to the left and two to the right. On the left stand a warrior in armor and a monk in a ready pose. On the right stand a philosopher leaning against a quarterstaff and a priestess with hands outstretched toward an imaginary follower. Each of the figures is garbed in the clothing appropriate to its role in the visitor's religion via illusions (see below). The walls are otherwise bare, and the glass-paned windows near the ceiling are too narrow for anyone larger than a gnome to slip through. The interior is clean and free of dust, or any sign that anyone else has visited this place.

The Shrine of Need is a very strange place. It dates back to the earliest days of humans in Faerûn. Created when civilizations were few and far between, it served as a place to worship any of the gods. To this end, its unknown makers infused it with the ability to transform aspects of the shrine via illusions to better suit the beliefs of each of its visitors. When a visitor approaches, the shrine uses the equivalent of a *detect thoughts* spell (cast at 17th level) to determine the deity that the visitor worships. If a group enters, the holy symbol illusion shifts to reflect the religion of the person who looks upon it. Those without chosen deities see nothing. The shrine reflects the visitor's true religious beliefs, even when the visitor's thoughts and alignment are otherwise protected. Not even a *mind blank* effect can interfere with the shrine's power to reflect a visitor's beliefs.

The four statues in the room are stone golems, created to protect the shrine and clean it up as needed. The golems animate if any violence is committed inside the shrine, and they attack everyone involved. They do not follow opponents outside, since their main programming is to end any violence within the shrine. As many golems animate as seem appropriate to deal with the situation. If the golems are damaged, they retreat to their alcoves, which close off (sliding stone walls from below). Within the alcove, the golems are slowly repaired by the magic imbued into the shrine. Repairing a golem takes a month, so it is possible to visit the shrine and see only three statues and a wall where a fourth alcove would be.

**Stone Golems (4):** CR 11; hp 110; see *Monster Manual* page 136. This combat spans the range of EL 11-15, depending on how many golems animate.

Bodies are absorbed through the floor in a process that takes about a day. Beneath the floor, there is a vast mulching tank that is filled with small organisms that eat dead flesh. The dead are mulched and then directed toward the roots of the plants surrounding the shrine. Equipment from the dead is not absorbed through the floor, but once the bodies are gone, a golem animates, cleans everything out and dumps it all in a pit behind the garden in back of the shrine. The pit is not visible at a casual glance (Spot DC 25 to see signs of it), because the top is partly overgrown by a matted vine plant. The golems just drop things through the plant.

Within this 20-foot-deep pit are the following items (though DMs are encouraged to adjust this list to suit their campaign needs): three suits of chainmail, one badly rusted; a +2 frost wooden scimitar; and a quantity of rust

dust beneath the items. All the items look to have been dropped here within the last year.

The pit is also the home of a mated pair of rust monsters. The monsters live in a hollowed-out side of the pit, which is not visible from the surface. They have found the continual supply of metal to be to their liking, and they have no plans to move. They also have no plans to die and will flee if overwhelmed.

Also, an ethereal filcher hangs around the area. The filcher carries off any magic items that survive the attentions of the rust monsters after a few days.

**Rust Monsters(2):** CR 3; hp 27; see *Monster Manual* page 216.

**Ethereal Filcher:** CR 3; hp 22; see *Monster Manual* page 104.

Some time ago, the shrine developed a kind of sickness. A priest of Bane (Hextor in the standard D&D pantheon) was fleeing some avenging do-gooders when he ran across the shrine. Happy to unexpectedly find a shrine to Bane in the middle of nowhere (so to speak), he ran inside. He prayed to Bane for deliverance, and the Black Lord sent help in the form of a malebranche sorcerer. This powerful devil attacked the forces of good immediately, in company with the priest. However, they were outmatched and were forced to retreat to the shrine. The priest died in the retreat. The devil did not die, but it also did not return to the Hells. Instead, Bane caused it to join with the shrine and lose its own body in the process.

Now the shrine has an evil bent, and it is slowly being turned completely to evil. This becomes evident if one stays a while there. After an hour, elements of the holy symbol on the wall are replaced with elements of the holy symbol of Bane. This should appear as a gradual corruption, so that Bane's part is not recognized for a few hours. After 2 hours, the stone golems animate and attack anyone in the shrine, acting as if violence was detected. Eventually, the holy symbol turns to that of Bane, and an *unhallow* spell is cast inside. The mood starts to get darker and feel more oppressive. After 6 hours, the malebranche starts casting spells at the intruders, which seem to originate from the holy symbol. Once everyone leaves, and someone reenters, the whole process is reset and it takes another hour for the devil to start to exert its nature.

Freeing the shrine requires considerable power. A successful *dismissal*, *banishment*, or *dispel evil* spell forces the malebranche out of the shrine and back into its own body. It appears in the center of the shrine and attacks immediately. A successful *wish* or *miracle* spell returns the malebranche to its own plane.

**Malebranche Sorcerer:** Male malebranche sorcerer 10; CR 14; Huge outsider (baatezu, evil, lawful); HD 16d8+112 plus 10d4+70; hp 279; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (average); AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +21; Grp +41; Atk +31 melee (2d4+12, claw) or +31 melee (2d4+12, claw) or +32 melee (3d6+18/19-20, masterwork trident) or +32 melee (3d6+18/19-20, masterwork trident); Full Atk +31 melee (2d4+12, 2 claws) and +29 melee (2d6+6, gore) or +31 melee (2d4+12, 2 claws) and +29 melee (2d6+6, bite) or +32/+27/+22/+17 melee (3d6+18/19-20, masterwork trident) and +29 melee (2d6+6, gore) or +32/+27/+22/+17 melee (3d6+18/19-20, masterwork trident) and +29 melee (2d6+6, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA charge, fear aura, improved grab; SQ baatezu traits, damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., outsider traits, regeneration 8, resistances (acid 10, cold 10), spell resistance 20; AL LE; SV Fort +21, Ref +15, Will +16; Str 34, Dex 12, Con 25, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +3, Bluff +22, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +5, Hide -7, Intimidate +24, Jump +33, Listen +18, Move Silently +20, Search +19, Spellcraft +10, Spot +18, Tumble +22, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (trident), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack.

**Charge (Ex):** In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, the malebranche sorcerer can make a single gore attack (+33 melee) that does 6d6+18 points of damage. It can make this charge while flying or while moving on the ground.

**Fear Aura (Su):** As a free action, the malebranche sorcerer can produce a fear effect like a *fear* spell (caster level 22nd; Will save DC 20 to resist), except that it affects everyone within a 15-foot radius of himself. A creature that saves cannot be affected again by this power for 24 hours. All baatezu are immune to this ability.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** If the malebranche sorcerer hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with a claw attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +41). The malebranche sorcerer has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use its claws to hold the opponent (-20 penalty on grapple check, but the malebranche sorcerer is not considered grappled). In either case, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals claw damage.

**Baatezu Traits:** The malebranche sorcerer is immune to fire and poison. It has resistance to acid 10 and cold 10. As a supernatural ability, it can see perfectly in even magical darkness. It can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language as a supernatural ability.

**Outsider Traits:** A malebranche sorcerer cannot be raised, reincarnated, or resurrected (though a *limited wish*, *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection* spell can restore life). It has darkvision out to 60 feet.

**Regeneration (Ex):** A malebranche sorcerer takes normal damage from acid, from holy weapons, and from attacks that deal holy damage.

*Sorcerer Spells Known* (caster level 10th): 0 -- *acid splash* (ranged touch +22), *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (ranged touch +22), *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st -- *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*, *shield*; 2nd -- *eagle's splendor*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (ranged touch +22), *see invisibility*; 3rd -- *displacement*, *fireball*, *ray of exhaustion* (ranged touch +22, DC 16); 4th -- *bestow curse* (DC 17), *greater invisibility*; 5th -- *feeblemind* (DC 18).

Note: If the player characters fight the malebranche, you might want to add an additional EL 14 treasure to the pit out back.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Monster Manual II](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#).

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## About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

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## Adventure Locales

### The Bog

By Robert Wiese



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This adventure locale is best suited for a plains area, such as the Shining Plains or the Greenfields near the Dragon Coast, the Ride near the Moonsea, or the Shaar. With suitable adjustment, it could be set in a forested area as well. The unique nature of the place, however, can follow the heroes around for quite some time before they discover the truth and find a way to rid themselves of the consequences of spending too much time here. This adventure locale is suitable for four 6th-level player characters.

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As the road (or path) winds through the grasslands, a small house (a mimic) slowly comes into view near the horizon and along the road. It is quite alone in this part of the world, but travelers may hope it offers some shelter for the night. Those who approach can see that the 15-foot-square house stands on short stilts in the middle of a shallow bog or heath. The watery grassland stretches some 200 or more feet away from the road, and is about 120 feet wide. Tall grasses protrude above the water's surface, as do other bushes and a couple of small trees. A look into the water from the roadside can reveal turtles, snakes, or even a beaver. Wetland birds such as warblers, killdeers, go about their business in the area. On the far side a pair of blue herons stands in the water. In trees a few hundred feet away one might find the nest of some ospreys or hawks. In the late afternoon sunlight it is quite peaceful here. Only a closer examination reveals the strangeness of the place. Nothing here is quite as it seems. No immediate danger is apparent, but that is no true indication of the peril that awaits the unwary.

No regularly used campsites are around the edge of this bog, and nothing indicates that people stop here. Certainly people travel on the road, and sometimes stop to water here, but everyone who regularly uses the road knows not to stay here or to be here after dark.

Crossing the bog is easy, since the water is only 3 feet deep at its deepest points. The average depth is only 2 feet. The animals that make this place their home avoid anything walking through the waters. Treat the whole area as a shallow bog; movement through the area is hampered and the DC for any Tumble check increases by +2. See page 88 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on bogs.

Upon reaching the house, one can see that the roof is covered in bird droppings, mute testimony to the time the old house has been here. The house seems unoccupied, since no one within answers any hails. Though perhaps 50 years or so old, it appears very sturdy. The wood may have come from somewhere far away, since it has a reddish hue similar to that of a redwood tree, which is not a tree that grows in this area. Though the building seems weathered, the red coloration shows plainly, as if valiantly resisting the work of time. The door stands slightly ajar, and one of the two windows on the front side appears open. The other is shuttered. Windows on each side give the owner a view of the surrounding bog. One can imagine that this is the home of a druid.

In fact, the house is actually a Huge mimic that has lived in the bog for decades, slowly changing as a result of its exposure to the bog waters. To the casual observer, the mimic looks exactly like a small house set on stilts. The windows around the sides and back seem to be shuttered. At the front of the house, a shutter and the front door seem to be ajar, with only blackness behind them. Both window and shutter seem stuck in place -- neither one moves when the wind blows.

Characters who examine the house should make Spot checks opposed by the mimic's Disguise check to detect what the "house" might truly be. Anyone touching the house automatically becomes stuck to the mimic and needs a DC 16 Strength check to break free. The mimic also can use its slam attack to **grapple** foes. Foes grappled after being slammed cannot get free without first neutralizing the adhesive.

The mimic immediately uses its slam attack when anyone touches it or prods it with an item. If the foe has not noticed that the "house" is really a creature, the mimic surprises the foe. In most cases, the mimic slams the foe that touches it, but it's smart enough to ignore a fairly weak character who touches it and becomes stuck in favor of attacking a more dangerous foe.

The mimic feels a compelling need to remain in the waters of the bog, and in any case it cannot flee the faster player characters anyway. Thus, it tries to neutralize all attackers (usually by rendering them unconscious) before finishing anyone off.

Around the base of the house, buried in the mud of the bog floor, the player characters can find a few items left by previous victims. These include a +1 greatsword (or other appropriate weapon for your player characters), a suit of masterwork chainmail, 21 gp, and a *wand of shield of faith* (+2) with 3 charges remaining.

However, the greatest danger facing any explorer of the bog is not the mimic, but the bog itself. About 320 of years ago, this site was the home of a powerful and mentally unbalanced wizard. He was called Hedge in derision by the people who lived close by at the time, which only fueled his growing madness. During one

horrible experiment, something happened that no one understands. The mage's tower was obliterated as if it had never existed, and the bog spontaneously appeared in its place. Theories abound, but no one can know the truth because all records have disappeared along with Hedge himself.

The bog is the physical manifestation of a rupture in the Weave. A small amount of magic slowly leaks from the rupture. The bog has a faint aura of transmission magic at all times, as do any creatures that have been infused with the magic of the place.

Any creature that has been in the waters of the bog begins to absorb magic from the site. The amount of magic that can be absorbed is finite, but still a body normally cannot hold the raw magic of the Weave. After 1 hour in the water, a creature acquires the magic-infused creature template described below.

At night, the bog produces magical light effects similar to *dancing lights* spells, and the lights shimmer and dance all across its surface. To someone who didn't know about the bog, it appears that a group of will-o'-wisps has come out in the darkness to play. The lights never approach anyone, but they put on an eerie show all around the watery area. The bog doesn't have any intelligence; the light effects are random. Though unnerving, they are not harmful to anyone.

#### New Template: Magic-Infused Creature

In some rare places in the world, the magic of the Weave leaks out and pools. In these places, living creatures can absorb the magic and carry it within them. This changes the creatures in subtle but discernible ways. Most creatures that have absorbed magic in this way live out the rest of their lives without realizing what has happened and with just a few unusual changes that they cannot explain.

"Magic-infused" is an acquired template that can be added to any living corporeal creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature). A magic-infused creature used the base creature's statistics and special abilities, except as noted below.

**Special Qualities:** A magic-infused creature retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those described below.

**Aura of Magic (Sp):** The creature always detects as magical under spells that detect the presence of magic. The type of magic is transmutation, and the strength is "faint."

**Infused with Magic (Ex):** The creature's whole body is infused with magic, which permeates the creature the same way that water does a human. This infused magic never leaves, and it never grows in strength unless the creature is further exposed to a source of infusing magic. Removing the magic absorbed in this place requires a targeted *dispel magic* spell that succeeds against a 24th-level caster, or a *wish* or *miracle* spell.

**Minor Polymorph (Sp):** The infusing magic affects the body of the magic-infused creature. Minor changes occur to the creature's form that the creature cannot control or remove without ridding itself of the infusing magic. These minor appearance-changing effects can include horns, a forked tongue, reddish or bluish skin tone (or any other color), change in hair color or length, baldness, and the sudden appearance of tattoos linked thematically to the creature in some way (such as an orc skull with an arrow through it on a ranger whose favored enemy is orcs). These changes do not affect class abilities, and remain with the creature if it changes its form via *polymorph* or similar magic. Creatures with the shapeshifter subtype can revert to their true forms in 1 round, as usual, but the appearance changes return a round later. They remain until the infusing magic is removed from the creature.

**Infused Shielding (Su):** The infused magic acts as a versatile, but weak, magical shielding. Each round, the shielding can absorb 1d6 points of damage from magical attacks. Deduct the damage from the first attack that strikes the creature (an attack that deals damage always deals at least 1 point of damage). Apply any leftover shielding to subsequent attacks. For example, the 1d6 roll for a round indicates the shielding can absorb 6 points of damage this round. If the shielded creature is then struck by a *magic missile* spell that deals 5 points of damage, the shield absorbs 4 points of damage, the creature takes 1 point of damage, and the shielding can absorb 2 point of damage from further magical attacks this round.

**Level Adjustment:** +1.

**Magic-Infused Advanced Mimic:** CR 7; Huge aberration (shapeshifter); HD 15d8+75; hp 142; Init +4; Spd 10 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +11; Grp +27; Atk +18 melee (1d8+8, slam); Full Atk +18 melee (1d8+8, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA adhesive, crush; SQ *aura of magic*, darkvision 60 ft., immunities (acid), infused shielding, infused with magic, mimic shape, *minor polymorph*; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +10; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +17, Disguise +20, Hide -8, Jump +2, Listen +12, Spot +12; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Disguise), Weapon Focus (slam).

**Adhesive (Ex):** A magic-infused advanced mimic exudes a thick slime that acts as a powerful adhesive, holding fast any creatures or items that touch it. An adhesive-covered mimic automatically grapples any creature it hits with its slam attack. Opponents so grappled cannot get free while the magic-infused mimic is alive without

removing the adhesive first. A weapon that strikes an adhesive-coated mimic is stuck fast unless the wielder succeeds on a DC 18 Reflex save. A successful DC 18 Strength check is needed to pry it off. Strong alcohol dissolves the adhesive, but the mimic still can grapple normally. A mimic can dissolve its adhesive at will, and the substance breaks down 5 rounds after the creature dies.

**Crush (Ex):** A magic-infused mimic deals 2d6+8 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Aura of Magic (Sp):** The magic-infused advanced mimic always detects as magical under spells that detect the presence of magic. The type of magic is transmutation, and the strength is "faint."

**Infused Shielding (Su):** The infused magic acts as a versatile, but weak, magical shielding. Each round, the shielding can absorb 1d6 points of damage from magical attacks. Deduct the damage from the first attack that strikes the creature (an attack that deals damage always deals at least 1 point of damage). Apply any leftover shielding to subsequent attacks. For example, the 1d6 roll for a round indicates the shielding can absorb 6 points of damage this round. If the shielded creature is then struck by a *magic missile* spell that deals 5 points of damage, the shield absorbs 4 points of damage, the creature takes 1 point of damage, and the shielding can absorb 2 point of damage from further magical attacks this round.

**Infused with Magic (Ex):** The magic-infused advanced mimic's whole body is infused with magic, which permeates the creature the same way that water does a human. This infused magic never leaves, and it never grows in strength unless the creature is further exposed to a source of infusing magic. Removing the magic absorbed in this place requires a targeted *dispel magic* spell that succeeds against a 24th-level caster, or a *wish* or *miracle* spell.

**Mimic Shape (Ex):** A magic-infused advanced mimic can assume the general shape of any object that fills roughly 3,375 cubic feet (15 feet by 15 feet by 15 feet), such as a small hut, or a large toolshed, or some other structure. The creature cannot substantially alter its size, though. Its body is hard and has a rough texture, no matter what appearance it might present. Anyone who examines the mimic can detect the ruse with a successful Spot check opposed by the mimic's Disguise check.

**Minor Polymorph (Sp):** The infusing magic affects the body of the magic-infused advanced mimic. Minor changes occur to the creature's form that the creature cannot control or remove without ridding itself of the infusing magic. These minor appearance-changing effects can include horns, a forked tongue, reddish or bluish skin tone (or any other color), change in hair color or length, baldness, and the sudden appearance of tattoos linked thematically to the creature in some way (such as an orc skull with an arrow through it on a ranger whose favored enemy is orcs). These changes do not affect class abilities, and remain with the creature if it changes its form via polymorph or similar magic. Creatures with the shapeshifter subtype can revert to their true forms in 1 round, as usual, but the appearance changes return a round later. They remain until the infusing magic is removed from the creature.

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## Adventure Locales

# The Floating Island

By Robert Wiese



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Because this is an island, this adventure locale could be encountered along a coast, such as along the Shining Sea or the Sea of Fallen Stars. Player characters can also sight it from a ship sailing any of the great seas of Faerûn. By placing it in the middle of a sea you might have more flexibility. The encounter text assumes that the heroes sight it from the shore. This locale is suitable for four characters of 12th level.

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The road leads along the coast, and as twilight shades the sky, a suitable campsite comes into view. The sea looks clear, but as the heroes prepare camp, the water begins to churn and form whitecaps. The sky darkens with clouds, but no rain or violent storm comes. As darkness settles in, something large can be seen out in the sea in the distance. It is impossible to tell from here what the shape might be without using magic, but it is large even at this distance. Whatever it is, it appears blanketed by clouds or fog. During the night, the island floats toward shore, stopping about 200 feet away. It then moves along the coast and starts out to sea again in the morning. It moves about 1/4 mile per hour.

Note: If the Floating Island is encountered from a ship, the sea does not become choppy around it. The choppiness is due to the interaction of the island with the mainland. However, the sky does become cloudy. The clouds are an effect of the curse contained on the island.

The large object is a floating island -- a rock about two miles across that has come loose from the sea floor and now poses a hazard to navigation and to life on Faerûn. Once, not long ago, a cleric of Istishia exiled himself here. This cleric incurred Umberlee's anger by using his divine powers to save a ship that Umberlee planned to sink. She smote him with a terrible curse: a wasting disease that eats away at the sanity as well as the body. Since it was highly contagious to humanoids, the cleric fled civilization to live out his life on this lonely island. The few dinosaurs that lived there posed no threat to him, and they actually helped keep others away. In the end, the disease killed him, and just as he died, he uttered a final prayer to Istishia and cast himself into a small lake in the center of the island.

Because the curse did not die with the cleric, Istishia then used his power to cut the island loose from the sea floor and set it adrift. The god then placed a black dragon servant on the island to keep the curse safely away from anyone who would suffer from its effects. Umberlee, who vastly enjoyed the floating island of doom, struck down the black dragon. Before it died, however, it mated with several of the dinosaurs on the island so that they could defend the island. Now the island is nothing more than a floating death trap, which is something that Umberlee really appreciates.

The terrain is mostly plains, with a large lake on the east end and the smaller lake in the center. A mountain rises on the west side, and it was in a cave here that the black dragon lived. The island has a population of six half-dragon deinonychuses, two elasmosauruses in the large lake, a small herd of hylaeosauruses (herbivorous dinosaurs about 12-15 feet long), and the half-dragon tyrannosaurus that protects the lake of the curse. In addition, some smaller mammals, turtles, and fish live on the island or its lakes.

Perpetually covered in a low fog, the island is surrounded above by clouds. The fog pours out of the lake in the center of the island due to an element of the curse. In fact, the fog carries the curse, and any humanoid that stays on the island for more than an hour risks contracting the wasting disease. Many a ship's crew has fallen to this illness after stopping over for water. Anyone on the island must make a Fortitude save every hour to resist the infection.

**Umberlee's Touch:** Infection by inhalation; DC 25 Fort save; incubation 1 day; drain 1d4 Con and 1d2 Int. This disease causes rotting of the flesh and insanity. It is very contagious; any humanoid coming within 10 feet of an infected humanoid risks catching the disease (DC 25 Fort save). A *remove disease* spell cast by an 18th or higher level caster is required to cure this disease; it cannot be cured without magic. This disease affects only humanoids.

If the PCs spend the night on the mainland within sight of the island, they receive a visit. A couple hours after midnight, when the island is closest to the camp, four half-dragon deinonychuses swim from the island looking for food. They hunt as a pack and try to capture something they can bring back to the island.

The black dragon did accumulate some treasure, which is stored in the cave in the mountains where it lived. The treasure is valued at 84,000 gp and consists of a *major cloak of elvenkind*, a *hand of glory*, a *strand of prayer beads*, and an emerald worth 200 gp. Feel free to modify this to fit your campaign and player characters.

### Dinosaurs of the Island

**Hylaeosaurus:** Use bison stats (*Monster Manual*, page 269) with an additional +6 bonus to natural armor because of heavy armor plating; also this is a CR 3 creature.

A hylaeosaurus is a four-legged armored dinosaur with a long tail. It has spikes along the sides of its body. A hylaeosaurus is about 12 to 15 feet long. The hylaeosauruses roam the island, but stay away from the center where the half-dragon tyrannosaurus lives.

**Elasmosaurus:** hp 111; see *Monster Manual*, page 60.

**Advanced Deinonychus:** CR 4; Large animal; HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Init +6; Spd 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (2d6+5, talons); Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+5, talons) and +4 melee (1d3+2, 2 foreclaws) and +4 melee (2d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./15 ft.; SA pounce; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +8, Jump +27, Listen +11, Spot +11, Survival +11; Improved Initiative, Run, Track.

**Pounce (Ex):** If an advanced deinonychus pounces, it can make a full attack, even though it has moved.

**Skills:** An advanced deinonychus has a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot, and Survival checks.

**Half-Black Dragon/Half-Advanced Deinonychus:** CR 6; Large dragon; HD 7d10+35; hp 73; Init +6; Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+9, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+9, 2 claws) and +8 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +8 melee (2d4+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon (60-ft. line of acid), pounce; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities (acid, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 28, Dex 15, Con 21, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +12, Jump +35, Listen +15, Spot +15, Survival +15, Swim +17; Improved Initiative, Run, Track.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Once per day, a half-black dragon/half-advanced deinonychus can breathe a line of acid 60 feet long that deals 6d8 points of acid damage (Reflex save DC 18 for half damage).

**Pounce (Ex):** If an advanced deinonychus pounces, it can make a full attack, even though it has moved.

**Skills:** A half-black dragon/half-advanced deinonychus has a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot, and Survival checks.

Half-dragon deinonychuses resemble normal deinonychuses (*Monster Manual*, page 60), but they have a black scaly pattern to their skin and smaller versions of the horns that adorn black dragon heads. They also have a vestigial bony ridge along their necks, reminiscent of those of black dragons. They are pack hunters and work together. They maintain their own population at this size because they are smarter than average dinosaurs and know that the island cannot support more of them. They roam the island in groups of at least two, so PCs can encounter them anywhere. These particular half-dragons have a swim speed instead of a fly speed.

**Half-Black Dragon/Half-Tyrannosaurus:** CR 10; Huge dragon; HD 18d10+117; hp 216; Init +1; Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +13; Grp +34; Atk +24 melee (1d8+13, claw); Full Atk +24 melee (1d8+13, 2 claws) and +19 melee (3d6+6, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (60-ft. line of acid), improved grab, swallow whole; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities (acid, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +8; Str 36, Dex 12, Con 23, Int 4, Wis 15, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +4, Listen +17, Move Silently +6, Spot +17, Survival +7, Swim +18; Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Toughness (x3), Track.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Once per day, a half-black dragon/half-tyrannosaurus can breathe a line of acid 60 feet long that deals 6d8 points of damage (Reflex save DC 25 for half damage).

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a half-black dragon/half-tyrannosaurus must hit an opponent up to one size smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** A half-black dragon/half-tyrannosaurus can try to swallow a grabbed opponent up to two sizes smaller than itself by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes 2d8+10 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the half-dragon tyrannosaurus's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. The gizzard of a Huge half-black dragon/half-tyrannosaurus can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

**Skills:** A half-black draon/half-tyrannosaurus has a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

**Istador:** Male half-black dragon/half-tyrannosaurus favored soul 6: CR 10; Huge dragon; HD 18d10+117 plus 6d8+36; hp 279; Init +1; Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +17; Grp +38; Atk +30 melee (1d8+13, claw); Full Atk +30 melee (1d8+13, 2 claws) and +28 melee (3d6+6, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (60-ft. line of acid), improved grab, swallow whole; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities (acid, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, resistance (fire 10), scent; AL CE; SV Fort +24, Ref +19, Will +15; Str 36, Dex 12, Con 23, Int 5, Wis 15, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +12, Hide +4, Listen +17, Move Silently +6, Spot +17, Survival +7, Swim +18; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Run, Toughness (x3), Track, Weapon Focus (warhammer)[B].

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Once per day, Istador can breathe a line of acid 60 feet long that deals 6d8 points of damage (Reflex save DC 25 for half damage).

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, Istador must hit an opponent up to one size smaller than itself with his bite attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** Istador can try to swallow a grabbed opponent up to two sizes smaller than himself by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes 2d8+10 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from Istador's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. Istador's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

*Favored Soul Spells Known (6/7/5/3 per day; caster level 6th): 0 -- create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, resistance, virtue; 1st -- cure light wounds, divine favor, entropic shield, shield of faith, lesser vigor\*; 2nd -- bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, lesser restoration, resist energy; 3rd -- bestow curse (DC 15), contagion (DC 15), cure serious wounds.*

\*Spells can be found in *Complete Divine*.

Istador is a black tyrannosaurus with a horned head, scales, and big black wings. Favored of Istishia because of his mission, he has acquired levels in the favored soul class (from *Complete Divine*). His father, the dragon, died before he was born, so he learned everything he knows about fighting like a dragon from racial memory and practice. His mother died soon after he was born, and now he is the only animal of his kind on the island. He is quite smart for a dinosaur, and he fights with cunning. He knows that he can heal himself, and he casts *lesservigor* before any battle if he has the opportunity.

### Spells from *Complete Divine*

*Vigor, lesser:* Gain fast healing 1 for 10 + 1 round per caster level (max 15 rounds).

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#), [Complete Divine](#).

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### About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

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## Adventure Locales

# The Steaming Demon

By Robert Wiese



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Due to the extent of the Underdark in the **Forgotten Realms**, this adventure locale can go anywhere. It makes sense to place it near some volcanic mountains, but that is not required because lava flows can exist between the surface and the Underdark almost anywhere. It can even go underwater, though some modification of the creatures presented below is required. The text assumes the locale exists in a plain or foothills area, so alter as needed. This sidetrek is suitable for four 7th-level player characters.

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In a clearing ahead, the heroes come upon a strange sight: a stone demon. At least, that is what it looks like. As they get closer, they see that the statue was carved from stone that is part of the natural landscape -- in other words, its creator did not carve it from stone found elsewhere and then move it here. The demon is fierce to behold, stands over 15 feet tall, and possesses massive muscles. Its stone face combines the aspects of a snarling wolf and an expressionless insect. Its bulbous eyes glow red as if a fire burned within the stone. Its jaws gape open hugely, baring two rows of teeth the size of daggers. Its body is bipedal and looks vaguely human, but black scales that shine in the light cover its entire form. The scaled tail protruding from its rear is at least 8 feet long and it ends in a stingerlike tail.

The most unusual aspect of the statue, or creature, is that steam hisses forth from its mouth in a great cloud as the characters approach, giving it the appearance that it is coming alive in their presence. It is not, but the steam is very real and gives a hint as to the danger that lurks here should the characters do more than stop for a short rest.

The statue is hollow inside and sits atop a natural steam vent in the earth. Far below, a lava river flows beneath stone slabs, constantly heating them enough to boil water on their surface. Closer to the surface, an underground river flows near the same spot. An earthquake some centuries ago opened up the underground riverbed, causing the water to fall down onto the heated slabs. Some of the water then runs into a new channel created in the many years since, but some is turned instantly to steam. That steam rises to a chamber underneath the demon statue, where the pressure builds up over a period of several hours. Every 9 hours or so, enough pressure builds up to push up a stone and allow the steam to escape all at once into the statue. It then rushes out the mouth in a great cloud for a few seconds, causing the appearance that the demon statue is belching forth the steam. The eyes glow red because they were carved from a special stone with unusual heat capacity, and they absorb and store the heat from the steam readily.

No one knows who carved this object originally, and no clues remain on the statue itself. Local lore states that it was one of a number of huge stones that the earth pushed up here in the earthquake that created the steam. The unknown artist, driven by his or her own demons no doubt, merely took advantage of the circumstances.

This environment has become the home for a pair of steam mephits, who live in the chamber where the steam collects. Their passage up to the statue and back causes the statue to belch steam at irregular intervals, and thus almost no one has figured out the pattern of the steam buildup. The mephits use the scary statue and the steam, and their own abilities, to intimidate and rob passers-by. They prefer small groups or individuals, because even though they have egos the size of a treant, they are realistic about their capabilities. They prefer to take what they want without revealing their true nature. They store their loot in the chamber where they live (twice standard treasure for level 7).

The statue hides a darker secret than the mephits, however. The statue has a secret entrance on the back of its base. Though it is a tight squeeze, a Medium creature can crawl into the statue and down into the steam chamber (if he or she can lift the cover or wait until the steam lifts it). On the way down there, a concealed door leads to a passageway 5 feet square that leads 30 feet westward and slightly downward to a metal hatch set into the ground. Runes inscribed to keep something from passing through cover the hatch.

Some 200 years ago, a priest of Lathander confronted a group of vrocks on this very spot, and the sole survivor fled underground once it realized it was stuck here via the priest's *dimensional anchor*. The priest followed, determined to end its existence. In the end, the priest cornered it in the room beyond the hatch, but could not destroy it. In a weakened state from the battle with the priest, it was easy to trap inside the room. The priest sealed the chamber with the hatch and the most powerful binding spells he could manage, and there the vrock has stayed to this day. Opening the hatch (break DC 25) releases the spells that hold in the vrock, which then tries to escape. However, its anger has built after all these years, and it spends a little while taking out its aggression on the poor player characters that released it. It flees by teleportation as soon as it feels truly threatened.

**Gorsshhh:** Male steam mephit bard 4; CR 7; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 3d8 plus 4d6; hp 27; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +7 melee

(1d3 plus fire, 2 claws); SA breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ bardic knowledge +2, bardic music 8/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage +1), damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to fire, outsider traits, vulnerability to cold; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +12, Diplomacy +4, Escape Artist +8, Hide +16, Intimidate +4, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Perform +6, Spot +6; Dodge, Extra Music (*Song and Shadow*), Improved Initiative.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 10-foot cone of steam, damage 1d4 fire, Reflex DC 12 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by burned skin and seared eyes unless they have immunity to fire or are otherwise protected. This effect imposes a -4 penalty to AC and a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** Once per hour Gorsshhh can surround himself with a plume of vapor, duplicating the effect of a *blur* spell (caster level 3rd). Once per day, he can create a rainstorm of boiling water that affects a 20-foot-square area. Each living creature caught in the storm takes 2d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 13 half; caster level 6th). This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

**Bardic Music:** Gorsshhh can use bardic music four times per day. See the bard class features on page 29 of the *Player's Handbook*. **Countersong (Su):** Gorsshhh can use music or poetics to counter magical effects that depend on sound. **Fascinate (Sp):** Gorsshhh can use music or poetics to cause one or more creatures to become fascinated with him. **Inspire Competence (Su):** Gorsshhh can use music or poetics to help an ally succeed at a task. **Inspire Courage (Su):** Gorsshhh can use music or poetics to bolster his allies against fear and improve their combat abilities.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Gorsshhh heals only if he is touching boiling water or is in a hot, humid area.

**Bard Spells Known (3/3/1 per day; caster level 4th):** 0 -- *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *ghostshard* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*; 1st -- *cure light wounds*, *distort speech* (DC 13, *Magic of Faerûn*), *ventriloquism* (DC 13 with interaction); 2nd -- *invisibility*, *sound burst* (DC 14).

**Voosss:** Male steam mephite sorcerer 4; CR 7; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 3d8 plus 4d4; hp 23; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +1; Atk +6 melee (1d3 plus fire, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3 plus fire, 2 claws); SA breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to fire, outsider traits, vulnerability to cold; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +9, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +7, Hide +11, Intimidate +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spellcraft +2, Spot +6; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 10-foot cone of steam, damage 1d4 fire, Reflex DC 12 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by burned skin and seared eyes unless they have immunity to fire or are otherwise protected. This effect imposes a -4 penalty to AC and a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** Once per hour Voosss can surround himself with a plume of vapor, duplicating the effect of a *blur* spell (caster level 3rd). Once per day, he can create a rainstorm of boiling water that affects a 20-foot-square area. Each living creature caught in the storm takes 2d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 14 half; caster level 6th). This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Voosss heals only if he is touching boiling water or is in a hot, humid area.

**Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/4 per day; caster level 4th):** 0 -- *acid splash* (+6 ranged touch), *detect magic*, *electric jolt* (+6 ranged touch, *Magic of Faerûn*), *mage hand*, *open/close*, *resistance*; 1st -- *obscuring mist*, *scatterspray*, *shield*; 2nd -- *Igedrazaar's miasma* (DC 15, *Magic of Faerûn*).

**Vrock:** hp 140; see *Monster Manual*, page 48.

**Extra Music:** You can use your bardic music ability four extra times per day.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#), [Magic of Faerûn](#), [Song and Silence](#).

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## About the Author

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## Adventure Locales

# The Ruined Village Square

By Robert Wiese



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Since this adventure locale requires a nearby village, you can use a place with a sparse population of rural folk, such as the Shining Plains, the Greenfields, or the Western Heartlands. The area should have a history that goes back 600 to 1,000 years, but just about everywhere in the Realms fits this description. Locations in Mulhorand, in the Underdark, and on remote islands are not as appropriate. This adventure locale is suitable for player characters of any level.

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As the day winds to a close, a breeze brings the smell of cooking food to you. Ahead of you on the road stands a tavern and inn, and light shines weakly through very small windows.

Inside, over piping-hot food and delicious drinks, the PCs can hear a little about the village and about the ruins to the east.

Not far east of this village sits the site of the old village. That village was built centuries ago, or so the stories go. It lasted for quite a while. No one is sure how long, but local legend agrees that a war was fought in the area and that the fighting led to the destruction of the old village. All that remained was the village square and a few buildings that surrounded it. These buildings were in surprisingly good shape given the destruction wrought around them.

Decades or centuries later, the village, which had been moved away from the exact older village site for unknown reasons, started encompassing the ruins of the old one. The old buildings were torn down one fair day, leaving the square open to the winds, and the villagers planned the construction of new structures.

The night after they had torn down these older structures, however, people reported hearing voices in the old square and seeing the old buildings sitting intact. In the morning, the ruined buildings were standing where they had been, and all signs of the new construction were gone. This went on for weeks, without explanation. Clerics, scholars, and sages came and examined everything. They reported hearing the voices, but saw no one. And they saw the old buildings fade into ghostly, and then material, existence. The people became too spooked to live near the old ruins, and they moved the whole village to its present spot. But some say that at night you can still hear voices in the old village square. Also, a few of the more superstitious villagers have reported seeing ghostly forms in the square.

Further, three people from the village have gone to the old ruins at night and have not returned. Two were the children of the blacksmith, and one was the ranger son of a local farmer. Though the villagers made careful searches of the entire area on the days following the disappearances, the missing people were never found. Because the searchers discovered no traces at all of the missing people, everyone has a pet theory about what happened. For instance, some suspect the children have simply run away, while others believe some evil force snatched the two. Similar theories abound about the missing ranger.

### The Ruins

If the adventurers decide to check out the square, you can use the following description, broken up or paraphrased as necessary as the PCs explore.

The square itself is about 50 feet across, with an old dry fountain in the center. The fountain, which is about 10 feet across, has the remains of a statue of a human female in the center, and one small arch flows gracefully from the top of her pedestal to the rim of the fountain. The stone from the other arch lies scattered in the fountain basin. A large open expanse surrounds the fountain, and, at the north end, timbers that once supported a platform of some kind sink into the ground. The timbers are broken off at ground level, so they are not easy to see (Spot DC 17). Four broken stone benches stand around the fountain, but they are hardly usable now.

Walls of ruined buildings surround the square, and rubble remains of those walls that fell over. The stone walls that still stand once supported structures that are missing now, but one can see where the remaining walls would have been, and thus how large each structure was. By examining the remnants of the structures, you can see that five streets of varying widths came into the square.

DMs may want to ask for DC 15 **Search checks** (and allow dwarves to use stoncunning) to notice that while the ruins are indeed ruins, the destroyed stonework doesn't look weathered -- the destruction looks fresh.

During the day, nothing interesting happens here. The ruined walls can be torn down, the fountain destroyed, or the earth plowed up. However, anyone here at night sees a very strange sight. As the sun disappears below the horizon, a ghostly image of the ruins begins to appear. This image is not visible if the ruins are intact, but the

image appears over any changes that have been made to the area. For example, if one of the walls is torn down, a ghostly wall appears in its place. If a tent is placed where the old wall was, the ghostly image forms in the tent.

As the night progresses, bodiless voices drift in the square. They are indistinct but sound like a large number of people talking in normal voices, with all the voices overlaid. Sometimes one even sees flickering ghostly forms moving around in the clearing, but these glimpses are brief. As the night progresses, the ghostly images of the ruins become more solid, and any changes or additions become more ghostly. By dawn, the ruins return to their original state and any modifications disappear. Objects in the same space as the returning ruins disappear. Any objects sitting in open space in the ruins remain where they are.

### The Story Behind the Ruins

Dungeon Masters have a few choices regarding the story behind the odd happenings in this area. For those who want an opportunity to deal with time travel and have a few ideas regarding options for getting characters back to their home time (if that is desired), read A Twist in Time. Otherwise, DMs can use the option called A Malfunctioning Portal?

### A Twist in Time

The secret to the strange stories in this area originates during the time the ruins were first created. As local rumor suggests, a battle raged in the area, but most of it happened a few miles away. However, a spillover skirmish between powerful mages moved through this area. The resultant release of magic destroyed the village and caused an unexplained rift in time that connected the past to the present. The particular past is 591 DR, just after the time of the destruction of the village, and the people are assessing the damage and what to do next. If the voices could be made distinct, that is what a listener would hear: people discussing the battle and the devastation and what to do next. The strange magic opens the connection every night, bringing the ruins (but not living creatures) forward to the present, where they replace anything that is "in their way."

None of this explains what happened to the three people that are missing from the village, though. They were victims of a *portal*-like effect centered on the fountain. If one stands in the fountain at midnight on certain nights (perhaps during a certain moon phase that matches the one that existed at the time of the destruction of the village), one is transported back to the time of the voices and the overlap period. The creatures and any possessions they carry appear in the fountain in the distant past. The fountain is working at that time period (one of the few things to survive the destruction), so a bath is the first surprise that any travelers get. When they arrive, they see a few people still out talking, and these people view the newcomers with suspicion due to the magic used in the battle that destroyed their town. The villagers of the past are otherwise friendly or neutral in disposition.

The second big surprise is that getting back is very difficult. This is not a *portal* in the normal sense, and so the return trip must be done by exchange. Specifically, if someone from that fateful day is standing in the fountain at midnight, and if someone is standing in the fountain in the present at midnight during the appropriate phase of the moon, the two are exchanged in time. Other than figuring out this exchange, one would have to find a powerful wizard who could develop magic to breach time (a nearly impossible task), or exist long enough to catch up with one's former life.

### A Malfunctioning Portal?

Back in the past (591 DR), an eccentric wizard created a clever (and rather small) *portal* framed by the fountain's arching structure as a means to get around a bit faster. She had a tower being built nearby, and she didn't mind getting her feet wet for the time being. However, when the battle raged, the wizard was called to fight, and she died while defending the area against another very powerful magic-user. The release of magic between the two dying spellcasters destroyed the village and affected the *portal* oddly -- it now acts as a malfunctioning *portal* (see page 61 in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*).

In addition to the now-faulty *portal*, other strange things started happening. People in the present who enter the area at the right time can hear the voices, which are actually people talking just after the time of the destruction of the village when the inhabitants are assessing the damage and figuring out what to do next. If the voices could be made distinct, that is what a listener would hear: people discussing the battle and the devastation and what to do next. The strange magic opens the connection every night, bringing the ruins (but not living creatures) forward to the present, where they replace anything that is "in their way."

None of this explains what happened to the three people that are missing from the village, though. They were victims of a *portal*-like effect centered on the fountain. If one stands in the fountain at midnight on certain nights (perhaps during a certain moon phase that matches the one that existed at the time of the destruction of the village), the malfunctioning *portal* affects those standing within 5 feet of the intact arch. When the *portal* has a normal result, creatures and any possessions they carry appear at the destination point (which the DM can choose so as to tailor the locale to her campaign). Otherwise, use Table 2-2 on page 61 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

### The Sole Inhabitant

The three people who were lost from the village died (either due to the passing of time or unlucky mishaps with the *portal*), but only the farmer's son became a ghost and started haunting the ruins. This ghost is the form that one occasionally glimpses in the square, and he is restlessly trying to find a way home. He may choose to interact with the PCs if they stay in the ruins area for at least 2 hours. His name is Fronn, and he came to realize how he was transported via the fountain; though he died, his spirit remained behind at the site of the *portal*. Because of this, he tries to keep other people out of the fountain during the times that the *portal* is active. The villagers have not encountered him because none of them come here at night anymore, nor do they stay very long even when they come during the day. Fronn materializes only near midnight, and only if creatures are in the ruins. Since his method of keeping people out of the fountain involves scaring them, he is likely to be perceived as an enemy at first. He defends himself if attacked, but he'd rather return to the Ethereal Plane than hurt someone.

Note: If the time option is chosen, Fronn could have started out as a farmer and gained his skills over time in the past. If he dies due to a *portal* malfunction, then he walked into the effect as a 9th-level ranger. Some tweaking of his personal history (including some back story as to why he became a ranger) may add some interest to the setting.

**Fronn (against Material Plane Opponents):** Male human ghost ranger 9; CR 9; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 9d12; hp 58; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +9; Grp --; Atk or Full Atk --; SA corrupting gaze, frightful moan, manifestation; SQ animal companion, evasion, favored enemy giants +4, favored enemy elves +2, incorporeal subtype, rejuvenation, swift tracker, turn resistance +4, undead traits, wild empathy +12, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 2, Dex 13, Con --, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +1, Hide +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +17, Move Silently +10, Search +16, Spot +17, Survival +12; Dodge, Endurance[B], Improved Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track[B], Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting[B].

**Corrupting Gaze (Su):** Fronn can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 17) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma drain.

**Frightful Moan (Su):** Fronn can moan as a standard action. Every living creature within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by Fronn's moan for one day.

**Manifestation (Su):** Fronn's ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane, and as an ethereal creature, he cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, he partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal there. A manifested ghost can strike with his touch attack, a ghost touch weapon, or a manifested weapon. A manifested ghost also remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where he is not incorporeal. He can be attacked by opponents on either the Material or Ethereal Plane. Fronn's incorporeality helps protect him from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane. When manifested, the ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. He is immune to all nonmagical attack forms and has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as magic missiles, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons). When manifested, he can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will. His attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields, though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally. He always moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

**Animal Companion:** Fronn may have one or more animal companions, but he has none at this time.

**Evasion (Ex):** If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Fronn takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

**Favored Enemy (Ex):** Fronn gains a +4 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against giants. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage.

Against elves, he gains a +2 bonus on these skill checks and on weapon damage rolls.

**Incorporeal Subtype:** Fronn can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities; immune to all nonmagical attack forms; 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as magic missiles, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons); can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will; attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields (though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally); moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

**Rejuvenation (Su):** Fronn's ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts in 2d4 days with a successful level check (1d20 + 9) against DC 16. To prevent him from rejuvenating, Fronn's physical remains must be found and buried in the village's cemetery. (If the DM chooses to make the *portal* a malfunctioning one, she is encouraged to pick out a likely spot that may have caused Fronn's quick death; keep in mind that he is a 9th-level ranger at the time of the *portal* malfunction if the time option is not chosen.)

**Swift Tracker (Ex):** Fronn can move at his normal speed while following tracks without taking the normal -5 penalty. He takes only a -10 penalty (instead of the usual -20) when moving at up to twice normal speed while tracking.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** Fronn is treated as a 13-HD undead for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempts.

**Undead Traits:** Fronn is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing.

**Woodland Stride:** Fronn may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at his normal speed without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (caster level 4th): 1st -- resist energy.

**Fronn (against Ethereal Plane Opponents):** Male human ghost ranger 9; CR 9; Medium undead; HD 9d12; hp 58; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +2 longsword) and +10 melee (1d61/19-20, short sword); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +2 longsword) and +10/+5 melee (1d61/19-20, short sword); SA corrupting gaze, frightful moan, manifestation; SQ animal companion, evasion, favored enemy giants +4, favored enemy elves +2, rejuvenation, swift tracker, turn resistance +4, undead traits, wild empathy +12, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con -, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +8, Hide +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +17, Move Silently +10, Search +16, Spot +17, Survival +12; Dodge, Endurance[B], Improved Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track[B], Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting[B].

**Corrupting Gaze (Su):** Fronn can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 17) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of permanent Charisma drain.

**Frightful Moan (Su):** Fronn can moan as a standard action. Every living creature within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by Fronn's moan for one day.

**Manifestation (Su):** Fronn's ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane, and as an ethereal creature, he cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, he partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal there. A manifested ghost can strike with his touch attack, a ghost touch weapon, or a manifested weapon. A manifested ghost also remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where he is not incorporeal. He can be attacked by opponents on either the Material or Ethereal Plane. Fronn's incorporeality helps protect him from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane. When manifested, the ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. He is immune to all nonmagical attack forms and has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as *magic missiles*, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons). When manifested, he can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will. His attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields, though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally. He always moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

**Animal Companion:** Fronn may have one or more animal companions, but he has none at this time.

**Evasion (Ex):** If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Fronn takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

**Favored Enemy (Ex):** Fronn gains a +4 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against giants. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage.

Against elves, he gains a +2 bonus on these skill checks and on weapon damage rolls.

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**Undead Traits:** Fronn is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. He is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to his physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. He cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing.

**Woodland Stride:** Fronn may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at his normal speed without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect him.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (caster level 4th): 1st -- *resist energy*.

*Possessions:* +2 longsword, short sword, spell component pouch, cameo.

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#)

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#### About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry Department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

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## Adventure Locales

# The Dragon's Skeleton

By Robert Wiese



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*While it works best in the plains or foothills, this locale really can go anywhere in the Realms. It could be close to the known home of dragons, such as the Forest of Wyrms or the Lizard Marsh in the Western Heartlands, or the foothills of the Deepwing Mountains in the Vilhon Reach. It could also fit very well into the plains of the Shaar or the Shining Plains. Even far-flung Vaasa could host this unique site. However, secret dangers make this place dangerous for lower-level heroes. This locale is suitable for four 12th-level player characters.*

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The road winds through the wilderness toward a known local curiosity. Stories in the nearby villages tell of the giant dragon's skeleton and the ruins beneath it, and these same tales hint at dark secrets of magic and brutality associated with the site. Dark rituals to Tiamat are performed there, say some. Others speak of lizardfolk tribes that have lived there and raided the nearby villages in years past. And others speak of a foul half-dragon wizard that resides in the ruins, planning dark deeds against the villages. These stories, and the nature of the site itself, pull a great many people to come and see this wonder of the Realms, and at one time some even stayed to study the bones and the ruins. No one in the last few years has disappeared at the site, or even suffered any harm. Nowadays people see the strange sight and continue on their way; the sages have studied and gone, so the bones are left in peace at night.

### Getting to the Skeleton

Anyone in the region can describe how to reach the site, and some even hire themselves out as guides to the gullible. The road reaches a fork; to the left the road goes to the skeleton, and the right leads around it and on toward the next village. Trackers searching at the intersection see a great many tracks going toward the right road, though very few tracks go toward the left fork and the skeleton site.

Taking the left fork, one walks about a mile around some trees and a rock pile, and comes upon a strange sight indeed. The skeleton of a dragon sits in the center of a clear area about 600 feet across.

### The Worn Remains

Most of the dragon's bones still arch upright, piercing the air, with the massive head lying on the ground facing the traveler. Many of the features that once marked the face have worn away with time and weather, leaving only empty eye sockets, a long nose, a few teeth, and a pair of curved horns. The neck winds backward to the massive torso, which sits on the ground with the ribs embedded in the earth. The space underneath the torso is over 100 feet across and 150 feet long, which some say makes it the most massive dragon ever to live on Toril. The remains of a tail stretch away across the plain; what remains clearly indicates that the tail was probably 150 feet long as well. Nothing remains of the wings or legs, though shattered bone fragments litter the entire area and have worked into the soil.

Within the torso, one sees the ruins of at least 12 buildings and a main square of some kind. The buildings look to be about 120 years old, and though they appear to be decaying with time, they are in decent shape. Most still have roofs, and the stone walls look to be laced with bones. Excavation would show that at least three towns have been built on this spot, and abandoned, since the great creature fell to the earth. Even the remains of a fortification wall surround the skeletal ribs (very minimal, but one can tell a wall stood there once). The ruins have been picked clean, and they now serve as only a curiosity.

No one knows how long this dragon has been here, or what killed it, or even what kind of dragon it is. Some sages (of a religious bent) theorize that the remains belong to some dead god, while others think that it might have come to this world through a *portal* and then found itself unable to sustain its life here. No *portal* to another world exists nearby, so those sages are hard-pressed to fill in the gaps of their theory, but one bright fellow suggested that the *portal* was destroyed in some magic cataclysm ages ago. The rural folk who have lived nearby for generations don't presume to theorize anything; the creature is dead, so they don't have time for worrying about where it came from. All they care about is that the peace that usually marks the area remains intact, and, until recently, that was its most notable feature -- though the nearby neighbors haven't yet discovered that this has changed. No longer are the ruins the safe curiosity that they once were.

### New Residents

Just a couple of days ago, new occupants arrived at the ruin site. Kaflaa, a half-dragon (deep) half-troglodyte and his band of gifted troglodytes found themselves forced out of their Underdark home a month or so ago, and they have been looking for a new place from which to exact revenge and gain power. The ruins seemed perfect to Kaflaa, who has draconic heritage of his own. He and his minions moved into the lower levels of the ruined buildings, and they have cleared enough room for themselves. They now occupy two former cellars of adjacent

buildings in the ruined city; these cellars were built before the current ruins existed, which means they are effectively two levels down. From a cellar dating to the current ruins, a secret trapdoor leads down to their new base. Further, they have dug themselves an escape tunnel that goes westward and emerges in a clump of thick brush about 50 feet away from the skeleton.

Kaflaa and his minions come out only at night, and they spend the nights scouting the nearby territory. Since hardly anyone ventures out at night alone in this rural community, they have learned a lot without being discovered. They know the populations and locations of the surrounding communities, as well as what resources the communities are likely to have. They steal cattle to eat, but have only done so once and the owner has not even noticed that the cow is missing yet (since he has several hundred head and pays little attention to them). If encountered, the troglodytes would likely try to regroup and handle any adversaries together. They especially want Kaflaa, their powerful leader, to be present for any battle.

During the days, one or another of the troglodytes watches the ruins and what visitors do there. So far no one has approached where they are hiding, and the band is ready to dispatch anyone who does. Troglodyte stench would be an obvious giveaway even if no troglodytes are seen. They attack if they feel they will be discovered. In this case, they come at intruders from the cellar and from the secret escape tunnel, hoping to pin them down.

Kaflaa plans to remain in hiding for another month and build his supplies, and then begin to strike at caravans and farmers to spread terror. Eventually he plans to assume control of the region and attract more of his race to his banner. If his plans succeed, he will lead his army against the hated duergar and drow that drove him from the Underdark.

**Kaflaa:** Male half-deep-dragon/half-troglodyte ranger 5/blackguard 3; CR 11; Medium dragon (reptilian); HD 5d10+15 plus 5d8+15; hp 54; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +14 melee (1d4+5, claw) or +16 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 longsword) or +9 ranged (1d8+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow [+4 Str bonus]); Full Atk +14 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +12 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +14/+9 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 longsword) and +13 melee (1d63/19-20, +1 short sword) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow [+4 Str bonus]); SA breath weapon (30-ft. cone of flesh-corrosive gas), command undead 3/day, poison use, smite good 1/day, stench; SQ aura of despair, aura of evil, dark blessing, darkvision 90 ft., detect good, favored enemy elves +4, favored enemy dwarves +2, immunities (*charm*, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, wild empathy +5; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +3, Concentration +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +3, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +1, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Spot +7, Survival +7, Tumble -1, Cleave, Endurance[B], Improved Sunder, Multiattack[B], Power Attack, Track[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Cone of flesh-corrosive gas (acid) 30 feet long and wide, 6d8 points of damage, Fortitude save DC 14 for half damage.

**Command Undead (Su):** Three times per day, Kaflaa can command or rebuke undead, forcing them to obey or cower from the channeled power of his deity. He turns undead as a 1st-level cleric would.

**Poison Use:** Kaflaa is skilled in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a weapon.

**Smite Good (Su):** Once times per day, Kaflaa may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds a +1 on his attack roll and deals an extra 3 points of damage.

**Stench (Ex):** When Kaflaa is angry or frightened, he secretes an oily, musklike chemical that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. All living creatures (except troglodytes) within 30 feet of Kaflaa must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by Kaflaa's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonuses on saving throws.

**Aura of Despair (Su):** Kaflaa radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to take a -2 penalty on all saving throws.

**Aura of Evil (Ex):** The power of Kaflaa's aura of evil (see the *detect evil* spell) is equal to 3.

**Dark Blessing:** Kaflaa applies his Charisma bonus on all saving throws. (This modifier is already figured into the statistics given above.)

**Detect Good (Sp):** Kaflaa can use *detect good* at will, as the spell.

**Favored Enemy:** Kaflaa gains a +4 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against elves. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage.

Against dwarves, he gains a +2 bonus on these skill checks and on weapon damage rolls.

*Blackguard Spells Prepared* (caster level 3rd): 1st -- *cause fear, inflict light wounds*.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (caster level 2nd): 1st -- *entangle*.

*Possessions:* +2 chain shirt of silent moves, +1 longsword, +1 short sword, masterwork composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) with 40 arrows, cloak of resistance +1, brooch of shielding.

Kaflaa's appearance matches his troglodyte blood, with the exception of the black shiny scales covering his skin. He is arrogant and proud, and not that smart, but he does possess cunning. He also looks to the long-term. He speaks Draconic and Undercommon only.

**Troglodyte Rangers (2):** Male troglodyte ranger 7; CR 9; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +8; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +11 melee (1d8+2/19-20, +1 longsword) or +8 ranged (1d6/x3, masterwork shortbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +7 melee (1d4, bite) or +9/+4 melee (1d8+2/19-20, +1 longsword) and +8/+3 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +8/+3 ranged (1d6/x3, masterwork shortbow); SA stench; SQ animal companion (viper; link, share spell), animal companion benefits, darkvision 90 ft., favored enemy humans +4, favored enemy elves +2, wild empathy +7, woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Spot +10, Survival +12; Endurance[B], Improved Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Multiattack[B], Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track[B], Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (longsword).

**Stench (Ex):** When a troglodyte ranger is angry or frightened, he secretes an oily, musklike chemical that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. All living creatures (except troglodytes) within 30 feet of him must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the troglodyte ranger's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonuses on saving throws.

**Animal Companion:** Each ranger has a Medium viper as an animal companion. Its statistics are as given below.

**Viper Companion:** Male medium viper; CR --; Medium animal; HD 4d8; hp 18; Init +4; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +7 melee (1d4-1 plus poison, bite); SA poison; SQ evasion, low-light vision, tricks (attack, come, defend, down, guard, heel, seek, stay); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +12, Climb +12, Hide +13, Jump -13, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +7; Dodge, Weapon Finesse.

**Poison (Ex):** Bite, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con; Fort DC 11.

**Evasion (Ex):** If the viper companion is exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, he takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

**Animal Companion Benefits:** Each ranger gains the following benefits from his companion.

**Link (Ex):** The ranger can handle the viper as a free action or push it as a move action. He gains a +4 bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks regarding the viper.

**Share Spells (Ex):** The ranger may have any spell he casts upon himself also affect the viper if desired. The viper must be within 5 feet of him at the time of casting to receive this benefit. If the spell has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the viper if he moves more than 5 feet away and does not affect him again even if he returns before the duration expires. The ranger may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on the viper (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. The two can even share spells that do not normally affect creatures of the animal type.

**Favored Enemy (Ex):** Each ranger gains a +4 bonus on his Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against humans. He gains the same bonus on weapon damage.

Against elves, he gains a +2 bonus on these skill checks and on weapon damage rolls.

**Woodland Stride:** Each troglodyte ranger may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at their normal speed without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect them.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (caster level 3rd): 1st -- *magic fang, resist energy*.

*Possessions:* +2 chain shirt of silent moves, +1 longsword, masterwork short sword, masterwork shortbow with 40 arrows, 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, potion of bull's strength.

**Troglodyte Wizard:** Female troglodyte wizard 7; CR 9; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+4 plus 7d4+14; hp 44; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d4, bite); SA stench; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +13, Hide +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Listen +1, Spellcraft +12, Spot +1; Empower Spell[B], Eschew Materials, Multiattack[B], Scribe Scroll[B], Signature Spell (*scorching ray*), Spell Mastery (*scorching ray*), Spellcasting Prodigy.

**Stench (Ex):** When the troglodyte wizard is angry or frightened, she secretes an oily, musklike chemical that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. All living creatures (except troglodytes) within 30 feet of the wizard must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the wizard's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonuses on saving throws.

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (caster level 7th): 0 -- *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost* (+3 ranged touch), *touch of fatigue* (+3 melee touch, DC 14); 1st -- *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (+3 ranged touch), *shield*; 2nd -- *invisibility*, *scorching ray* (+3 ranged touch), *touch of idiocy* (+3 melee touch), *web* (DC 16); 3rd -- *fireball*, *fly*, *haste*; 4th -- *fear*.

**Spellbook:** as above, plus 0 -- *acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st -- *cause fear*, *charm person*, *feather fall*, *identify*, *sleep*; 2nd -- *bull's strength*, *ghoul touch*, *knock*, *see invisibility*; 3rd -- *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *suggestion*; 4th -- *contagion*, *greater invisibility*.

**Possessions:** *Cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of intellect* +2, *wand of magic missiles* (5th-level caster, 50 charges).

**Troglodyte Cleric:** Female troglodyte cleric 7 of Laogzed; CR 9; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA rebuke undead 3/day (+0, 2d6+7, 7th), stench; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +6, Hide +2, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Knowledge (religion) +1, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Spellcraft +0; Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Multiattack[B], Silent Spell, Spellcasting Prodigy.

**Stench (Ex):** When the cleric is angry or frightened, she secretes an oily, musklike chemical that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. All living creatures (except troglodytes) within 30 feet of her must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the cleric's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonuses on saving throws.

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (caster level 7th): 0 -- *create water*, *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1st -- *bane* (DC 14), *bless*, *cure light wounds* (2), *inflict light wounds*[D] (DC 14), *shield of faith*; 2nd -- *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength* (2), *hold person* (DC 15), *silence* (DC 15); 3rd -- *bestow curse*, *contagion*[D] (DC 16), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*; 4th -- *cure critical wounds*, *inflict critical wounds*[D] (DC 17).

[D]Domain spell. Deity: Laogzed. Domains: Death (death touch 1/day, damage 7d6); Destruction (smite 1/day, +4 on attack, +7 damage).

**Possessions:** +2 *chain shirt of silent moves*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges).

**Game Resources:** To use the material in this article to its fullest, check out the following resources: [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#), [Player's Handbook](#), [Monster Manual](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#), [Player's Guide to Faerûn](#).

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## About the Author

**Robert Wiese** is a veteran of the **RPGA** offices, where he worked for seven years and has been a member since early 1991. In that time he has written over 60 adventure scenarios for the club, a couple of articles for **Polyhedron**, and the **Living Force Campaign Guide** (the last one with Morrie Mullins). He also got the **Living Greyhawk** and **Living Force** campaigns off the ground and into the hands of wonderful members to develop. Now he works at the University of Nevada at Reno in the Biochemistry Department, proving that you never can tell where you'll end up.

