

side trek missions might include stealing a magic item from a drow noble house, gathering unique fungus from a mind flayer's garden, and other potentially deadly tasks. More information on Mantol-Derith can be found in *Out of the Abyss* and the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

NEVERWINTER

Depending on how much time the characters spent in Neverwinter in episode 3, they might have heard tales of how the Spellplague (the great magical devastation that tore across Faerûn more than a century ago) tore a large chasm through the city. This chasm (helpfully known as "the Chasm") has since been sealed, but pockets of blue spellfire and the warping effects of planar energy can often still be seen in the area.

The characters can make use of contacts from episode 3 to determine that agents of the Six appeared recently in Neverwinter and were rumored to have been researching the magic of the Chasm. Tracking down any agents who remain might allow the characters to gain hints regarding the ritual's location. You might also decide that these Six agents have been warped by the latent energy of the Chasm, making them formidable and unpredictable foes.

More information on Neverwinter can be found in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

KRYPTGARDEN FOREST

This dread forest abutting the Sword Mountains is the demesne of the ancient green dragon Claugiyliamatar. That terrible and cruel beast—known as Old Gnawbone for her habit of flying over the forest with a corpse in her jaws as a light snack—has long dominated Kryptgarden with her evil presence.

The forest is also home to a dryad named Ishaldra, who studies how evil magic can alter locations in the world. She can help the characters learn how to detect powerful magical essences, but only if they can elude Claugiyliamatar and the other dark creatures that dwell within the forest.

More information on Kryptgarden and Claugiyliamatar can be found in the adventures *Princes of the Apocalypse* and *Storm King's Thunder*.

THE MOON GLADE

This section expands on one location the characters might journey to as part of their search for the Six's ritual site.

RESEARCH AND REQUISITIONS

As the characters work to perfect their portalometer, they hear of a site deep in the High Forest not far from the Star Mounds, known as the Moon Glade. The waters of the Moon Glade rest upon an intersection of magical ley lines, tied to the weave of the world. The glade's waters are thick like mercury and said to have powerful properties of divination. The characters might also learn that the glade is protected by a powerful natural guardian. Or you could keep that information to yourself.

INVESTIGATING THE GLADE

The characters can use their mobile headquarters to reach the Moon Glade easily enough. When they finally arrive at the site, read the following:

The Moon Glade is a secluded clearing, roughly eighty feet in diameter, with half that space taken up by the pool of water at its center. Huge ancient trees around the perimeter tower overhead, allowing only a narrow slice of sky to illuminate the pool's silvery surface. The pool is surrounded by a circle of huge standing stones, all inscribed with strange writing.

Inscribed Stones. Anyone able to read Druidic can read the writing on the stones, all of which makes reference to divination and magic. The stones of the pool were brought here by visiting druids using large beasts or magical transportation, but any magic they might possess is dormant during this encounter.

Tainted Guardian. The Moon Glade is protected by Garalel, a weeping willow **treant**. She is cantankerous and ancient, and presently has iconic affiliate of the Six features (see "Iconic Faction Features" in appendix B). Garalel became tainted by the Six when Splugoth and other members of that organization recently used the pool to seek out their ritual site.

Garalel initiates combat by animating trees, following up with her Glimpse of the Beyond feature. Characters can see that her bark is covered in dark, foul-smelling moss. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check identifies the bark as magically tainted. Dealing damage to Garalel harms her but also breaks off large pieces of the tainted bark and moss. When she is reduced to 30 hit points or fewer, enough corrupted bark has been sloughed off that the treant regains her senses and stops fighting.

A character can also use an action to throw water from the pool onto Garalel. Each time she is splashed so, it helps cleanse the dark magic binding her and increases the hit point total at which she regains her senses by 10.

If Garalel regains her senses, she apologizes profusely. She allows the characters to approach the pool and tells them how the members of the Six used its waters to determine the ideal location for a dark ritual. Knowing that their actions contaminated the pool, she drew that corruption into herself instead.

COMPLETING THE MISSION

What the characters get out of this side trek depends on where it fits in the longer process of perfecting a portalometer or eliminating possible ritual sites. Depending on the goal, Garalel can allow the characters to use the pool's divination power to seek the ritual site, to take a sample of the glade's magical waters for use in their portalometer, or what have you.