

that the algae can be mixed with other reagents costing 150 gp to make a *potion of water breathing*. Such a potion might fetch up to 500 gp in a city such as Waterdeep or Neverwinter.

### THE WRONGNESS

After turning east from the High Road onto the Triboar Trail, the characters' travel slows a bit. The High Road is frequently traveled by caravans, and so is better kept and easier to traverse. Triboar Trail, on the other hand, sees less frequent traffic and is less well maintained.

After a few hours' travel east, the adventurers come upon the following scene.

Sitting cross-legged in the middle of the road is an odd-looking figure wearing not a stitch of clothing. In one hand, he fiddles with a copper medallion etched with the image of a thin, tangled pair of antlers. He might be a beardless dwarf, or a short and pale half-orc, or a human with a gland condition. Either way, he doesn't look up as he speaks in a voice that sounds like a goat choking on sawdust.

"Fortune has strange and wonderful and terrible things in store for you. So I am here as fortune's lackey. Fair or foul? Weal or woe? Chant or howl? Friend or foe?"

This unfortunate wanderer is named Carkuss (N male human **priest**). A character who has an appropriate background or who succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes the copper medallion as a holy symbol of Beshaba. Known as the Lady of Misfortune, Beshaba is Tymora's twin sister and archenemy. This character knows that Beshaba sends her favored souls out into the world as a focus for bad luck and calamity, and that dealing with a favored soul of the Lady of Misfortune is a risky situation. Interacting with such agents in any way can draw Beshaba's ire, with potentially catastrophic consequences.

**The Hands of Fate.** Now that Carkuss has crossed paths with the adventurers, they are stuck in the strands of his web of misfortune. To avoid the curse of Beshaba (see below), the characters must not harm Carkuss, they must not be overly kind to him, and they must correctly answer a riddle he asks. If successful on all three counts, each character earns a d10. Once before the character's next long rest, they can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw. In addition, by earning Carkuss's favor, the characters might see him when they need good fortune later, if you so decide.

If the characters fail at any of these three tasks, one or more of them (at your determination) earns the curse. If the characters attack Carkuss, he doesn't defend himself, hoping that they slay his miserable form so his soul can be free.

**The Riddle.** After initial interactions with the characters, Carkuss asks the following riddle:

*I stand aloof, alone as a savior.*

*I shine my oily smile across the rippling vastness.*

### BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The "Free-Market Lizardfolk" encounter is just one of the many business opportunities that mark a long-running Acquisitions Incorporated campaign. Forward-thinking adventurers can make a deal with Thetsis and her tribe that might help them corner the market on *potions of water breathing*. The terms of the deal are up to you, but it's best to start small. Once per month, the lizardfolk can meet the adventurers or their agents to sell them algae. As the characters start to hire franchise staff at the end of this episode, this is a perfect opportunity to set up how staff members can conduct franchise business with no direct involvement from the characters—at least not to start.

These kinds of side ventures can easily expand to become adventures of their own. For example, one of the franchise NPCs handling the algae trade might fail to return from the Mere of Dead Men one day. The characters need to find out what happened if they want to keep employee morale from tanking—and to keep the business relationship with the lizardfolk intact. Choices must be made and consequences faced, which are the hallmarks of a great campaign.

The "Franchise Tasks and Downtime" section in chapter 2 has more information about working ongoing business activities into the franchise's campaign story.

*I, with this beaming, attract and repel.*

*Ignore me, and you are lost, one way or another.*  
*What am I?*

The answer is a lighthouse—a foreshadowing on behalf of fate of where the characters will go in episode 3.

**Curse of Beshaba.** Beshaba inflicts her curse upon any cleric character who doesn't worship her, or the character who has the most interaction with Carkuss. She might target more than one character, especially anyone who worships Tymora. While under the curse, a character has disadvantage on saving throws. The subject knows the curse can be ended with *remove curse* or similar magic, or it can be passed to another person.

To pass the curse, the victim can choose a living humanoid within 5 feet of it once per day, making a Charisma check contested by the target's Charisma check. If the cursed victim wins, the curse transfers to the new target. If unsuccessful in transferring the curse, the victim takes 5 (1d10) psychic damage. A target who resists the transfer is immune to the curse of Beshaba for one year. Passing the curse on to an innocent person is an evil act.

An NPC victim of the curse has a chance to die of a terminal case of bad luck. For each day that passes, roll a d20 and a d12. If both dice show a 1, the NPC dies in a freak accident. The curse is gone, but if word of the death reaches the character who transferred the curse, the consequences might live on.

### A HORSE IS A CORPSE, OF COURSE

When the characters move off the Triboar Trail and onto the even-less-used track to Phandalin, they stumble into what looks like a by-the-numbers goblin ambush that turns into something much more bizarre. After an hour's travel, the characters come upon the following scene.