

# DUNGEONS

The dungeon contains 5 dungeons, including all combat and non-combat encounters for a range of groups. Creatures, puzzles, traps, skill checks, atmosphere, and rewards are all contained within these pages. Each dungeon contains a minimum of four combat encounters and numerous out of combat challenges to test the strengths and weakness of any party composition. While these do include suggested usages, these dungeons are intended to be free from any external requirements or story, they are merely a set piece you can drop into your own world with little effort. Delve the temples of pure elemental magics and creatures that are drawn to their power and destroy the ancient evil lying dormant within the Tomb of Tarraketh.

These dungeons contain custom monsters which are included in the Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in Nerzugal's Game Master Toolkit, which is available for free on DriveThruRPG. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found at the Bestiary at the end of this Toolkit. Creatures from the Monster Manual will be labeled MM. Going through these adventures, you may see opportunities to try out monsters from other published sources and I would encourage you to do so!

## OVERVIEWS

### THE ELEMENTAL TEMPLES

Four of the dungeons included in this Toolkit are temples dedicated to the following elements – fire, ice, lightning, and water. These can be part of a story arc that you send your players down, or can simply be remnants of an ancient society that worshipped elemental magics. Within each of these temples there is a sphere of pure energy of a type matching the temple. You can use this as conduits of power for creating magical items, as gateways into the various elemental planes, as potential weapons that a villain in your world may be seeking, or something of your own creation.

### THE TEMPLE OF PURE ICE (LEVELS 4-6)

The Temple of Pure Ice lies beneath dozens of feet of thick ice which is often covered in even more feet of snow. The only ones who find it are those who already know where it is, which is an exceptionally short list. After working through the issue of finding the entrance, the challenges have just begun. Adventurers that make their way into this temple will endure battle while leaping across chunks of frozen ice, cross vast chasms with ancient arbalests, slide down twisted frozen pathways, and even be attacked by frozen raptors! But adventurers know that glory doesn't come easy.

### THE TEMPLE OF PURE FIRE (LEVELS 5-7)

Constructed into the side of an active volcano or buried deep beneath the ground lies the Temple of Pure Fire. Within its walls is enough flame and lava to make even the hardiest of adventurers question their decision to pass through its doors. This temple contains grand constructs that have laid dormant for hundreds of years, but stir from their great slumber when they are needed to defend this former place or worship. Grand forges, lava-fueled smelters, and even an obsidian lava transportation vehicle wait within the walls of this ancient temple.

### THE TEMPLE OF PURE WATER (LEVELS 6-8)

Deep beneath the surface of a lake flourishing with aquatic life is the Temple of Pure Water. Within its walls your players will encounter dangerous aquatic flora, a deadly submerged temple, a sea dragon statue with power lurking within, and even a rapid downhill boat ride with sharks. Water in small doses is an elixir of life, but in large enough quantities your players may be left in over their heads as they make their way through this underwater adventure.

### THE TEMPLE OF PURE LIGHTNING (LEVELS 7-9)

While lightning may strike anywhere, there is but a single Temple of Pure Lightning. This temple could be located just about anywhere – out in the middle of an expansive dungeon or even hidden beneath the streets of a bustling city. Regardless, this temple is not for the faint of heart. Within these walls are floors charged with lightning, ancient powerful weaponry, a vast series of winding powered minecarts, and rooms that are filled with eternal storm clouds. Just as dangerous are the aetherspawn that have been drawn to this place of great power and now see it as a home that will not be taken from them by the likes of a few mere adventurers.

### THE TOMB OF TARRAKETH (LEVELS 7-11)

This is an incredibly deadly dungeon that will strain the limits of any party that dares to tread within. I consider this to be a challenge dungeon of sorts, and I would suggest it as a dungeon to throw at players if they ever want to run a gauntlet with new characters. This dungeon is filled to the brim with traps, puzzles, and vicious creatures. It is also quite a long dungeon - be prepared to spend at least two sessions working through the pathways of this horrifying Tomb.

# THE TEMPLE OF PURE ICE

## A DUNGEON FOR LEVELS 4-6

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### SUGGESTED USAGE

The Temple of Pure Ice is buried deep beneath a layer of thick ice at the base of a mountain or up in the far north. The terrain and climate is enough of a threat that only the hardiest of creatures wander through the area. Adventurers may wish to seek out this temple to uncover the pure essence that lies within its walls. They can harness power of this essence to give life to an ancient artifact or as part of a ritual that needs to be performed to stop an approaching threat. Perhaps a creature with malicious intents is after the essence and a set of heroes must get there first and make sure it remains safe. There are also a number of powerful magical items within the temple, an allure that would draw anyone who knows of the temple's existence.

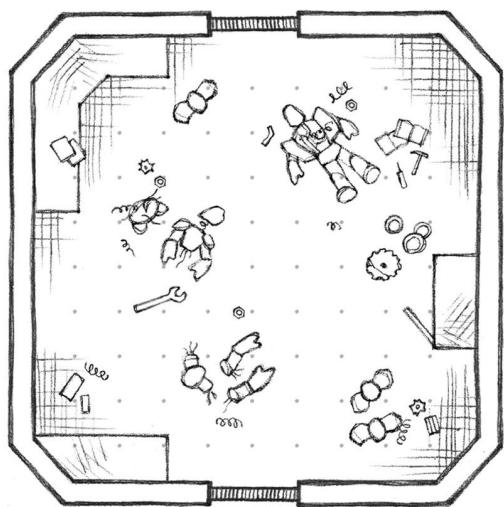
### DUNGEON OVERVIEW

The Temple of Pure Ice holds a massive orb of pure ice energy within its walls. The only way to deactivate the runes that protect it is to assemble the Scepter of Pure Ice whose components are scattered down the three wings of this temple. Each passageway presents its own challenges and defenses your players must overcome to continue and gather the pieces of the scepter. This includes, but is not limited to, navigating across a shattered frozen lake, sledding down an icy slope at high speeds, fighting a pack of frozen raptors, and finding their way across a large gorge.

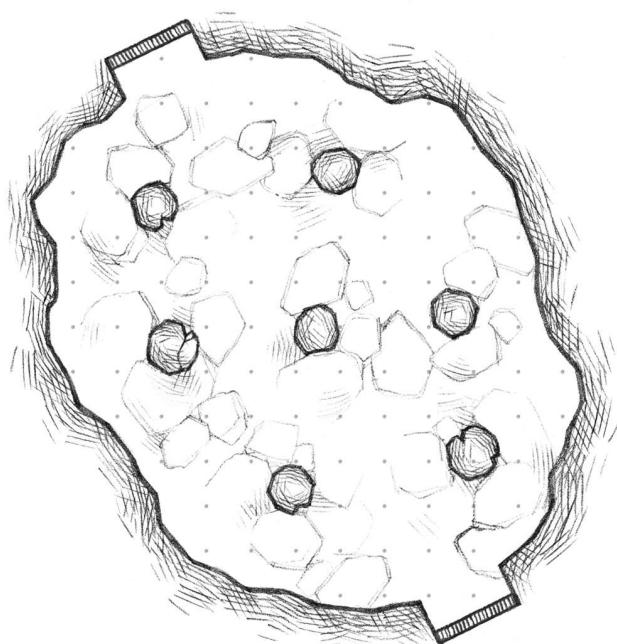
This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

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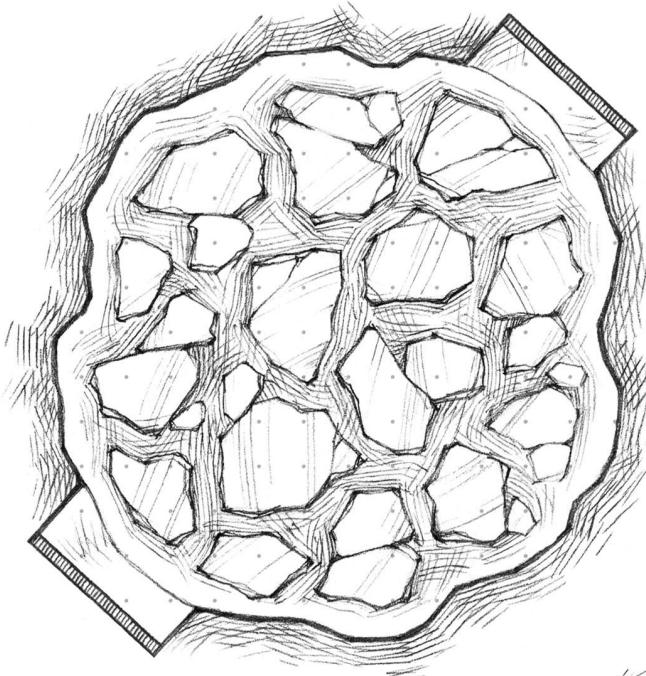
# THE TEMPLE OF PURE ICE



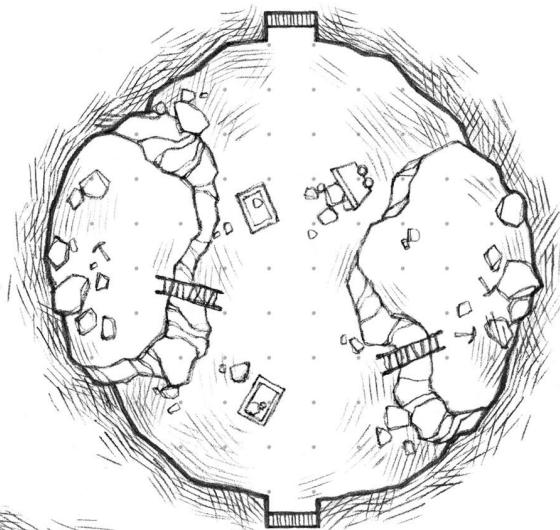
CONSTRUCT ASSEMBLY ROOM



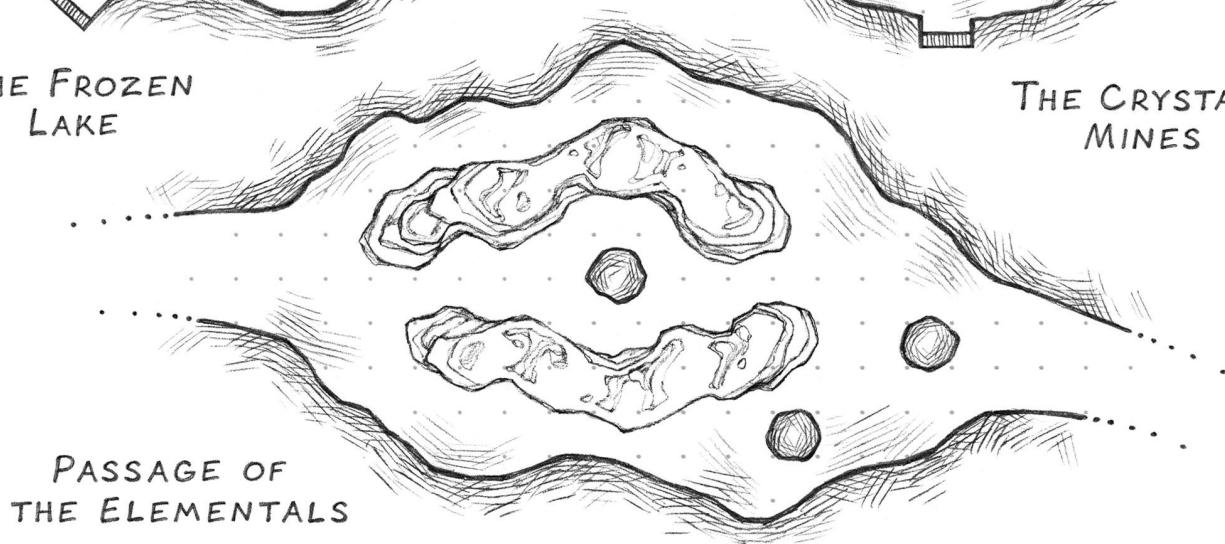
GLACIAL RAPTOR CHAMBER



THE FROZEN  
LAKE



THE CRYSTAL  
MINES



PASSAGE OF  
THE ELEMENTALS

# THE SANCTUM OF ICE

After finally digging through the layers of ice to expose the front entrance of the temple, your players descend a stairwell that takes them deep underground. With every step taken, the air grows drier and colder. All but stoutest of creatures will feel as if their lungs are on fire from the sheer intensity of the environment. At the bottom of this stairwell is a small innocuous wooden door.

## DESCRIPTION

*Opening this door reveals a massive domed chamber. The entire ceiling of the area is alight with vibrant white runes that cover a full 50 feet area of the stone above. These runes periodically shimmer and send down a light dusting of snow that melts immediately upon touching the floor despite the fact that the stone is ice cold. Directly ahead of this main entrance - roughly 80 feet ahead - is a set of wooden double doors. A similar set of doors are on left and right sides of this dome.*

## THE PATH FORWARD

As the players walk through these doors they find a small, dark hallway 15 feet long and 10 feet wide. Words shine along the wall with text that reads:

*"Just as the ice of this temple shall never melt, we shall never give up on our dream."*

On the opposite side of the hall is another set of double doors.

## WALL OF FROST

### DESCRIPTION

*Stepping out of the hallway you are presented with a 30 foot high sheer cliff made of ice that then opens up to another passageway above. It spans the entirety of the 25 foot wide passage and creeps onto the walls along the sides as well. There are a few stalagmites and stalactites scattered about the area, but none of them more than three feet high. The ice has a few imperfections in it, but it still almost perfectly smooth from floor to ceiling.*

### ASCENSION

The party will need to use creative means to climb the wall, for the ice here does not melt when exposed to heat, even magical flames. Have your players make the appropriate skill checks to ascend this wall and continue to the path beyond.

## PASSAGE OF THE ELEMENTALS

### DESCRIPTION

*This long passage is separated into three distinct paths by 5 foot thick walls of ice that extend from floor to ceiling. A few pillars of ice are also scattered through these pathways. The floor here is almost supernaturally slippery and it is easy to imagine sliding the full length of the room if you had a running start. The paths twist and wind and it is unclear what lies ahead.*

The ice here is crystal clear and while creatures on the other side of the ice have their image distorted, they can be easily identified. If a creature does not move at half speed while in this area, it must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw after it makes it 10 feet or fall prone and have all of its movement expended as it slides 1d6 x 5 feet or until it collides with a solid object.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **Passage of the Elementals**.

## DANGER EMERGES

As the players make their way through this pathway, they see a shimmer cascade through one of the walls separating these three distinct paths. It is a strange wave that seems to flow through the ice as it were made of water. If someone moves closer to investigate, a fist flies out of the ice and attempts to pummel them. The ice elemental that lurks within gets a round of surprise unless the player explicitly notes they are being cautious against such an attack.

### Roll for initiative.

The types and number of ice elementals your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 4

- 1x Ice Elemental (66% hit points) (**NEB1**)
- 2x Small Ice Elemental (**NEB1**)

#### • APL 5

- 1x Ice Elemental
- 2x Small Ice Elemental

#### • APL 6

- 1x Ice Elemental
- 4x Small Ice Elemental

The elementals can move through the ice without effort and will use this feature to weave in and out as they make their attacks, risking attacks of opportunity to fade from view after striking. They will attempt to force the party to split up by diving through different portions of the wall. They will stop attacks completely if the party adapts and simply waits for them to appear, choosing to sink into the floor and strike from below before using powerful area of effect attacks to split them up again.

## GALLERY OF THE ELEMENTALISTS

### DESCRIPTION

*This room has a dozen beautifully carved ice sculptures carefully arranged throughout it. One of these is an incredibly detailed futuristic city complete with constructs and humanoids no taller than four inches tall but still make with realistic, distinguishable features. The piece is labeled "The Near Future". Other sculptures depict individuals adorned in beautiful robes and each with a solemn, determined look on their frozen faces. One of these statues has an amulet hanging around its neck that is shimmering with dancing colors. You also notice a set of wooden double doors on the opposite side of the room, beyond the statues and sculptures.*

You can have the figures depicted in these sculptures be of significance to your world's history or they could simply be nameless faces to give the dungeon some flavor and depth. The amulet hanging around the statue's neck is a **Chromatic Amulet (NDMT2)**. There are no living entities in the room, so your players can observe or they can simply press onward.

## THE CRYSTAL MINES

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### DESCRIPTION

*This doorway opens up to an oval shaped room, 50-feet long and 35-feet wide. Along the left and right sides of the room are 15-foot tall ledges with hefty metal ladders propped up against them. Attached to the ceiling are a few hooks and other mechanical instruments with some heavily decayed rope drooping from them. Scattered about the room are small metal buckets, some of which are still filled with bits of stone. There's also a few wheeled carts, though the wheels have become useless in their age. Next to one of these carts are the skeletal remains of one of the former occupants of this temple, dead now for hundreds of years it seems. On the opposite side of this entryway is a fine wooden door that is shut.*

Off on the edges of the room are small tunnels that form shallow mine shafts that sparkle with clear crystals still embedded in the frozen stone. The crystals are shining, but not innately magical in nature. A DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that these are quite effective for storing magical energies. They can be used to craft magical items or perhaps your players can find a way to store a spell within these for a one time use similar to a spell scroll. It is up to you how creative you want to get with these crystals.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Crystal Mines**.

### SLAY OR PARLEY

**As the players step into the center of this area, have them roll a Wisdom (Perception) check.** If anyone rolled at least a 10, they see a bit of stone and dust kick off the ledge on the left. If anyone rolled at least a 15, they also hear some strange giggling coming from up there as well. The giggles and laughter seem to persist, but no voice responds if the players call out. If the players try the door, they will find that it is locked. The key is being held by one of the ice mephits that currently occupy the space. When a player eventually climbs one of the ladders to see what the noise is, they will immediately be hit in the face with a snowball.

Mephits are tricky little devils, but these ones are not necessarily out to kill the players. Your players might lash out the moment the snowball hits, but if not, they have a chance to converse with these creatures. As soon as the snowball is thrown, the top of the room becomes flooded with these tiny icy tricksters. The mephits are fans of powerful items and shiny things. They will gladly trade the key the hold in exchange for the Chromatic Amulet your players found in the previous room or your players may be able to work out a bargain of gold and silver. Keep in mind that these mephits do not speak common, so most of their demands will be made in the form of aggressive hand gestures.

If your players decide to simply kill the mephits, **roll for initiative** after the first attack is made by one of your players.

Some of the mephits will land on the high ground and throw little balls of ice that deal 1d4 cold damage on hit, while others will dive at the players and attack. The ladders remain in place and can be used if a member of the party wishes to get the high ground to fight the mephits.

The number of mephits your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4** - 5x Ice Mephit (**MM Pg. 215**)
- **APL 5** - 8x Ice Mephit
- **APL 6** - 10x Ice Mephit

## ROOM OF THE CRYSTAL

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### DESCRIPTION

*The wooden doors leading to this room are ornately crafted and absolutely breathtaking with its quality of woodwork. The key you received from the mephits fits snugly and opens the lock on the door with a satisfying click. Pushing open these doors reveals a square room 15-feet wide and long. At the center of this room is a stone pedestal with a glass box sitting on top of it. Within this box is a shimmering white crystal that hovers at its center, far different than the ordinary crystals out in the mines. Sitting on a shelf at the back of the room are three flowers crafted of diamond and glass that shine brilliantly in the light of the spinning crystal. The walls are made of a perfectly smooth white stone and the ceiling is pure white and glistening.*

### AVALANCHE IN A BOX

Whenever the glass on the pedestal is removed, the snow that makes up the ceiling of the room comes crashing down. **Creatures within the room will need to succeed on a DC (8 + APL) Dexterity saving throw to dive out of the room before the full 10 feet of snow comes crashing down on them.** Creatures who failed the save take 1d6 \* (APL-3) bludgeoning damage plus 1d6 cold damage and are trapped. These creatures immediately begin to suffocate and will either need to dig themselves out via Strength (Athletics) checks or have allies pull them free from this icy tomb.

The diamond flowers are worth 250 gold each. The crystal is clearly magical, but without the other components of the scepter none of its magical properties can be activated.

With the first piece in their hands, the players need to make their way back to the main entryway. Once the crystal is taken, the ice cliff melts and reveals distinct handholds in the stone that allows the players to easily descend.

## PATH OF THE ROD

As the players walk through these doors, they find a small, dark hallway 15 feet long and 10 wide. As they step to the center of the room, a quote begins to glow on the right wall in a beautiful shimmer of white:

*"A world of impurities. A world that shall be cleansed."*

On the opposite side of the hall is another set of double doors.

## DEFEND AGAINST THE ELEMENTS

### DESCRIPTION

This large open room has half a dozen constructs that are assembled or partially assembled within it. These constructs stand at over seven feet tall and are crafted of iron and steel. Some of these have a large white crystal embedded in their chest, but only some of these crystals glimmer with faint light. Most of these machines are only partially finished – a plate hangs open on its chest cavity or an arm is lying off to the side. On the opposite side of the room is a set of wooden double doors that are closed and partially iced over.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **Construct Assembly Room**.

### SPARKED TO LIFE

When the players approach one of these constructs that contains a glowing crystal or whenever someone attempts to open the door out of this room, some of the constructs spark to life and immediately attack the players.

#### Roll for initiative.

The type and number of creatures your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4**
  - 1x Elemental Defender (**NEB1**)
  - 1x Aetherspawn Guardian (ice) (**NEB2**)
- **APL 5**
  - 1x Elemental Defender
  - 2x Aetherspawn Guardian (ice)
- **APL 6**
  - 2x Elemental Defender
  - 1x Aetherspawn Guardian (ice)

The Aetherspawn Guardians listed above represent a construct that is not fully complete. It can still put up a fight, but perhaps it has a hole in its chest or a missing arm that causes it to be a lesser threat than the completed constructs.

Not all of the constructs in the room come to life and pieces of scrap metal are still scattered about, so players can use these inert constructs and components for cover during this battle.

Once combat has completed, the players can safely move over to the door. It is not locked, but it has been frozen shut so the players will need to use fire or some other source of heat to melt away the ice before they proceed to the next area.

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### DESCRIPTION

This portion of the Temple was clearly undergoing some construction. There is lumber, rope, and tools scattered all throughout the area, most of them now coated in snow and ice. Twenty feet from the door, the floor ends as a ledge drops down and out of view. On the far side of the room is a set of double doors up on another ledge roughly twenty feet higher than the platform you are currently standing on.

Unfortunately, the chasm between these two ledges is sixty feet wide. The area in front of the ledge is currently roped off to prevent any accidental falls and a sign hangs over this rope that reads, "Bridge coming soon. We apologize for any inconvenience." Just to the right of this sign is an arbalest mounted to the stone that seems out of place.\*

### MIND THE GAP

Moving closer to the arbalest, they will find that there is a large hole in the back of the bolt that is currently loaded, as if it were the eye of a very large needle. **Be sure to note this fact!**

If the players search the area, have them make an Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a result of 13 or higher, they spot a box that is almost completely buried in snow. Within it are a few vibrant blue potions. The potions are a **Potion of Insta-Frost (NDMT2)**, a **Potion of Glacial Armor (NDMT2)**, and a **Potion of Ice Giant Strength**.

The drop off of this area is approximately 100 feet down where it ends in a blend ice and stone. The players will have to find a creative solution to get to the far side of the room and to the double doors beyond. The option that is meant to be obvious to the players is to tie a rope to the arbalest bolt, fire it into the stone on the far side of the chasm, and then climb across the rope one at a time. Other solutions are to use some of the rope in the area to descend the cliff and then carefully climb up the other side or simply to cross via magic, but there are certainly other alternatives as well. Simply have your players make whatever skills checks are necessary and be sure to reward them if they are exceptionally creative in their solution to this problem.

Once the players reach the far side, they see that there is a sign on the door leading to the next area that reads, "Danger - Area under protection! Consult elders for safe passage."

## MUCH BETTER THAN A GUARD DOG

### DESCRIPTION

This room is filled with floor to ceiling stone pillars, over a dozen of them in total are scattered throughout this fifty foot wide area. This room also has a full two feet of snow on the floor with extra high piles gathered around the pillars – some of these piles nearing five feet in height. Another doorway can be spotted on the far side of the room, but it does not appear as if anyone has been through here in sometime. The door is covered over three-quarters of the way in snow and will require some digging before you could hope to pass through it.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **Glacial Raptor Room**.

## LURKING BELOW

As the party heads through the area, things seem unnaturally quiet. This ends when they approach the first of the pillars and from beneath the snow leaps out the a mechanized raptor coated in a thick layer of ice. The raptor gets a surprise attack against the front most member of the party as more snow piles around the room begin to stir.

### Roll for initiative.

The number of raptors your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4** - 2x Glacial Raptor (**NEB1**)
- **APL 5** - 3x Glacial Raptor
- **APL 6** - 4x Glacial Raptor

These raptors are mechanical entities for the sake of this fight, so they have these additional traits:

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

This entire room is considered difficult terrain for all non-raptor creatures, so maneuvering is an extra challenge during this fight. The raptors will try to stay together and focus down individual targets as a pack before moving on to the next weakest looking creature.

## EVEN MORE CHALLENGES

If you want to up the difficulty of this encounter even further, consider having small holes hidden beneath the snow. When a creature steps on one of these spaces, it will need to succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone. You could also have the raptors sink beneath the snow when they move, allowing them to make a Dexterity (Stealth) check as a bonus action before springing up on a target to attack with advantage.

Once the raptors are defeated, the party can dig out the door and open the way to the final room in this wing of the temple.

## ROOM OF THE ROD

### DESCRIPTION

*Sitting on a pedestal of ice is an intricate silver rod with three prongs at the top clearly intended to hold something round. There is also a prism shaped slot in the side of the rod. There are large snowflakes drifting around the pedestal, some six inches in diameter. These form delicate patterns that never intersect, nor do they touch the ground.*

Unlike the Path of the Crystal, this pedestal has not been rigged with a trap – this is due to the unfinished nature of this wing of the temple which was meant to act as deterrent enough until they could create a more permanent solution. Once the rod is taken, the players can make their way back to the main chamber.

## PATH OF THE ORB

As the players walk through these doors they find a small, dark hallway 15 feet long and 10 wide. As they step to the center of the room a quote begins to glow along the walls:

*"Trapped beneath the surface, under layers of ice thousands of years old, we found purity."*

On the opposite side of the hall is another set of double doors.

## THE FROZEN LAKE

### DESCRIPTION

*This massive dome-shaped room has a partially frozen lake that fills its center. This lake goes from wall to wall and is a full one hundred and twenty feet across. Distributed throughout this lake are large chunks of ice that are perfectly flat on top, forming platforms at irregular intervals. These platforms are between ten and twenty feet wide each. No two chunks of ice touch, with anywhere from three to ten feet separating them. There is a set of wooden double doors closed on the far side of the lake.*

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Frozen Lake**.

### WATCH YOUR STEP

These platforms of ice are attached to the floor of the lake via thick metal chains. This prevents them from moving around too much, but does still allow them to tilt if weight is not distributed correctly. If more than 2 creatures stand on an individual platform, it will begin to sink into the water. If a creature spends at least 3 turns in this water, at the beginning of each of its turns it will need to make a DC (10 + APL) Constitution saving throw, taking 2d6 cold damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. Consider also giving levels of exhaustion if they fail too many of these saves or spend an extended amount of time in this water.

The party can jump from platform to platform, but will need to succeed on a DC 5-10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. On a natural 1 for this check, the creature slides off the backside and into the water. The difficulty of these checks depends on the distance of the jump. Otherwise, the party can steal lumber from the Path of the Rod to lay across the gaps or use magic to form pathways such as with *Shape Water*.

As the party reaches a halfway point across the lake, some of the platforms begin to shake gently. Moments later, a small ice elemental bursts out from below and an ambush begins.

### Roll for initiative.

The number of elementals your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4** - Small Ice Elemental x6 (**NEB2**)
- **APL 5** - Small Ice Elemental x8
- **APL 6** - Small Ice Elemental x8 (add an additional 1d6 cold damage to all damage rolls)

Some of these elementals will launch ice shards from a distance while others will move in close to pummel their targets. They stay spread out for the most part which makes area of effect attacks much less effective. They move through the ice with ease, so be sure to use their superior mobility to enhance the difficulty of this encounter. **Have elementals occasionally submerge themselves in the water and give a hard shake on the platforms. This causes each creatures upon it to succeed on a DC (8 + APL) Dexterity saving throw or slide into the water. Climbing out of the water and onto a platform uses half of a creature's movement and will provoke attacks of opportunity.**

Consider breaking the elementals up into two or three groups when you make their initiative rolls. This will help to make the combat a bit more fluid - a back and forth exchange between the DM and the players rather than rolling for 6-8 creatures all in one go. This will likely decrease the difficulty of the encounter a bit as well since your players will have time to react in between wave of attacks.

Once the elementals are defeated, the party can continue across the rest of the lake and to the doors on the far side of the room.

## THE SLIDE

### DESCRIPTION

*As the doors open, a world of ice is revealed. The walls, the ceiling, the stalactites – everything is coated. There is a fifteen foot platform directly ahead that drops off and out of view as the cavern slopes down at a rather steep incline. Off to the right of this platform is a wooden structure that holds half a dozen sleds that could each seat two of you comfortably.*

### SLEIGH RIDE

The slope in front of the platform continues down for 80 feet before meeting a rounded corner that curves off to the right and out of view. On the left side of this corner is a large mound of snow. This mound of snow also happens to be hiding a row of deadly spikes. When your players prepare their descent, ask what path they wish to travel. They may wish to hit the snow pile to stop and reorient themselves before going down the next slope! If they hit the mound, the person at the front of the sled immediately takes 2d6 piercing damage as they slam into the spikes.

After the corner, the path spins a full 180 degrees and continues downward at a steep angle for another 80 feet before it levels out into a blanket of snow in a large room. Near the bottom of the slope is a ramp made of ice in the direct center of the path. Players can choose to hit the ramp or avoid it, but if they take too long to decide they lose their opportunity and miss the ramp. If a player / sled does not hit the ramp, they run into a short wall that is obscured by the snow. This deals 2d6 bludgeoning damage and leaves them flopped on the edge of the wall, so if anyone else comes down the same way right afterwards it will result in an additional collision.

Hitting the ramp sends the creatures flying up over the hidden edge and into a soft bed of snow. It is quite comfortable.

## THE ASCENT

Standing in the large bed of snow, the party can see another slope that goes up at a 30 degree angle to a set of beautiful double doors. This slope is also covered in thick ice, so the players will need to be creative to find a way to the top. Simply running at the ice quickly does not work as there is no footing. They can chip their way through the ice with weaponry to form handholds, use fire to melt away portions of it, or other such strategies. Have them make skill checks appropriate to the strategy they choose.

## ROOM OF THE ORB

### DESCRIPTION

*At the center of this room is a brilliant snow white orb that hovers a few inches above a pedestal made of a combination of ice and marble. Every few seconds, the orb glows bright and then pulses with energy, sending a burst of snow in all directions that settles on the floor around the pedestal. On a shelf behind this floating orb are three small orbs resting in recesses in the stone that appear to have snowstorms flowing through them.*

### REWARDS

Touching the orb does not cause pain, but it is freezing to the touch. It will need to be wrapped in cloth or tucked away to prevent pain from its freezing nature. The orbs on the back shelf are two **Weather Orb - Snow (NDMT2)** and one **Weather Orb - Blizzard (NDMT2)**.

### A SAFE RETURN

Once the orb has been taken, the slopes of ice on the path melt away and reveal large stone stairwells that lead back to the top. The partially frozen lake is also now completely frozen over, allowing for safe travel without needing to jump between chunks of ice.

# UNLEASH THE ELEMENTS

Once all three pieces are gathered, the party can be assembled to form the **Scepter of Pure Ice (NDMT2)**.

Back in the central chamber, the runes on the ceiling glow vibrantly as the scepter nears - as if they are calling out to it. If a creature holding the scepter steps into the center of the room (directly beneath the runes), the scepter begins to pour out torrents of snow. This snow spirals up into the air and flows around the room in a beautiful display. This continues for a full minute until the entire room is covered with a light coat of snow. All the while, the runes on the ceiling flash and glow more vividly than ever. Never are they all lit up at the same time until a final moment when the snowfall stops abruptly and the stone at the ceiling of the room opens up. A 5-foot wide sphere of pure ice begins to gently fall from out of the hole formed. It takes nearly a full minute for it to drift down and finally come to a rest a foot off the floor in the center of the chamber.

## AVIS, THE MAIDEN OF ICE

Moments later, a rift begins to form directly in front of the player holding the scepter. The tip of a scythe slashes through and starts to tear the rift open further as cold air crashes into the room and causes the temperature to immediately drop an additional ten degrees. The scythe splits the opening all the way to the floor before a large gloved hand appears and grabs the edge of the portal.

Then a foot steps through – a large one. It belongs to a Maiden of Ice. She emerges through the rift, standing a solid twenty feet in height. She is wearing armor made from the hide of a massive beast, has hair braided with shards of ice, and holds a scythe over ten feet in length. She informs the party that her name is Avis, the Guardian Maiden. She was created using the energy of the pure essence to protect the essence, but she follows the instructions of the creature that holds the scepter.

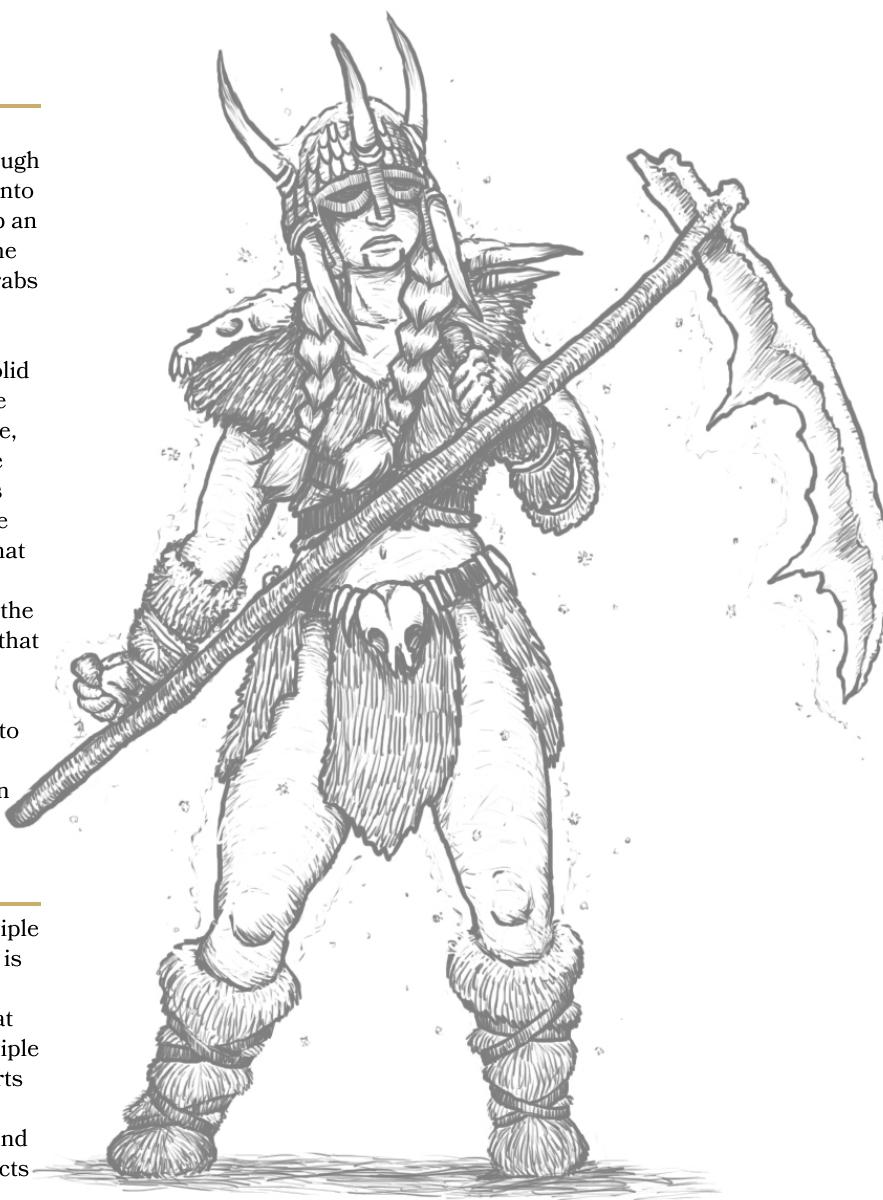
Avis is a creature of immense strength and will bend to the party's wishes as long as they can be interpreted in a way that will help keep the essence safe. She will not destroy the essence, but she can seal the Temple and defend it from anyone else who enters or she could even take it with her to another plane for safekeeping. She can be used to ask questions about ancient magics or even as a guide that can take the party to other planes.

## THE ESSENCE

Streams of ice and snow dance around the sphere in multiple rings that never cross paths. The room containing the orb is freezing and with each step a creature takes towards the sphere, the temperature drops even further. A creature that attempts to touch the sphere will need to succeed on multiple DC 15 Constitution saving throws as they approach or parts of their body will be frozen completely solid. These appendages or limbs become useless even after thawing and require greater restoration to mend. The sphere itself inflicts 10d10 cold damage if touched.

Be sure to warn your players of these dangers by being descriptive with how they are feeling as they approach. Let them know that the biting cold is intensely painful and could cause permanent damage even through protective clothing. Your players are going to be curious, but don't drop permanently crippling detriments on them unless they are perfectly aware of the risks.

As mentioned in the beginning, it is up to you to build a hook around the Essence of Pure Ice stored in this temple. It can be a gateway to other planes, a source of power for an ancient artifact needed to stop a villain, or perhaps the ice is needed for a powerful arcane ritual. The choice is entirely up to you. Decide if this place is at risk of intruders who would claim it for themselves and whether or not Avis will be able to thwart these invaders. Good luck!



## **EXPERIENCE**

The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the entire temple. Feel free to adjust these values.

- **APL 4** - 3,000 XP per player
- **APL 5** - 5,250 XP per player
- **APL 6** - 6,750 XP per player

## **LOOT**

If your players cleared the temple completely they should have received all of the following items:

- Chromatic Amulet
- Potion of Insta-Frost
- Potion of Glacial Armor
- Potion of Ice Giant's Strength
- 2x Weather Orb - Snow
- Weather Orb - Blizzard
- Scepter of Pure Ice
- 3x Diamond Flower (250g each)

These items can all be found in the Magic Items section of this Toolkit, except for the Potion of Giant's Strength which you can find in the DMG. Feel free to adjust the loot as it suitable to your world, as some may not be as magical as others. Replace magic items with valuable works of art or even just coins.

# THE TEMPLE OF PURE FIRE

## A DUNGEON FOR ADVENTURERS LEVEL 5-7

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### SUGGESTED USAGE

The Temple of Pure Fire is embedded in the side of an active volcano or deep underground. The smeltery that lies within the temple uses enchanted lava as fuel. This could be a requirement for your players to craft a powerful artifact to defeat a massive threat. The pure essence that the temple safeguards has immense destructive power and if harvested by the wrong individuals it could spell disaster for the world. Perhaps your players wish to seal it away forever or ensure that only people they trust are given access to such power. Or maybe your party merely wishes to uncover the secrets and leftover magic items that reside within these subterranean walls..

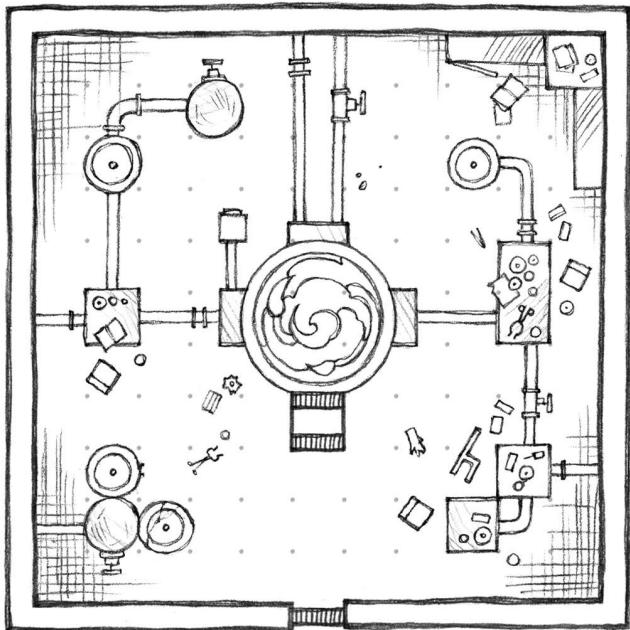
### DUNGEON OVERVIEW

The Temple of Pure Fire holds a massive orb of condensed elemental flame behind a large set of magically locked doors. The only way to open these doors is to assemble the Amulet of Pure Flame whose components are scattered across the three wings of this temple. Each passageway presents its own challenges. Flames and fire elementals erupt from the grates underfoot in one room, in another the temperature rises with each creature that enters so your players will have to be cautious in their approach. The players even get to take a ride in an obsidian submarine that is able to travel through lava without risk.

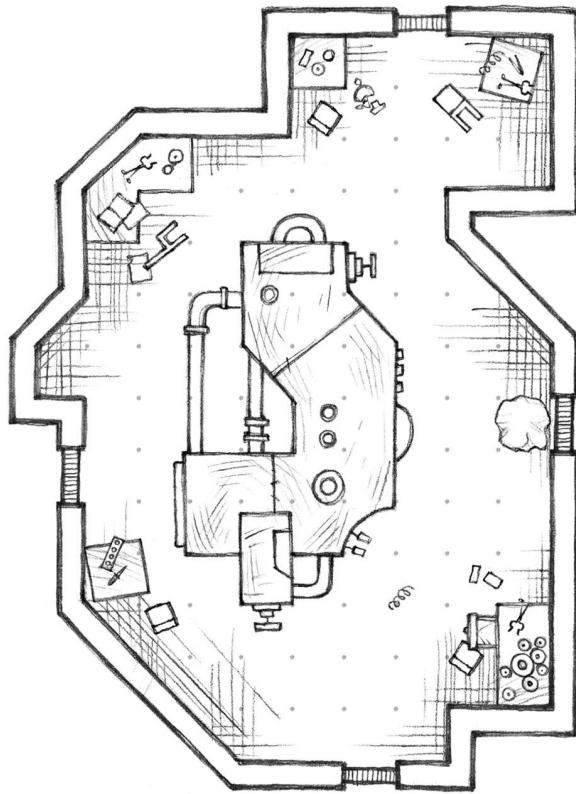
This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

This module contains custom monsters which are included in the Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in Nerzugal's Game Master Toolkit, which can be purchased for free on DriveThruRPG. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found in the Bestiary at the end of this Toolkit.

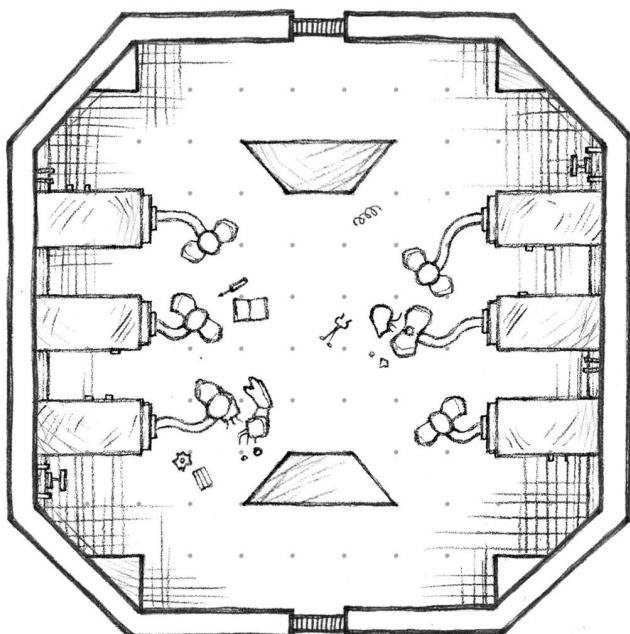
# THE TEMPLE OF PURE FIRE



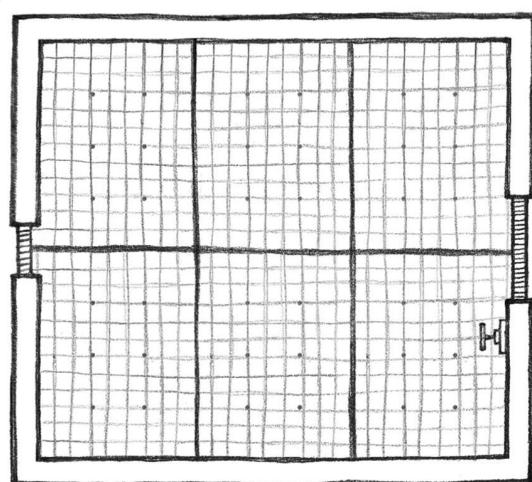
THE FURNACE



THE OBSIDIAN  
SMELETRY



THE ROOM  
OF RISING HEAT



THE HELLISH GRATES

# THE SANCTUM OF FIRE

## DESCRIPTION

You step into a massive dome-shaped room. At its center is a large glyph ablaze with magical energies, shooting brilliant waves of yellow, orange, and red lights across the walls and ceiling. On the far side of the room is a hulking, ominous door with similar runes surrounding it. To the left of this grand door is a platform of stone that leads out over a pool of lava where a strange, rounded black object rests in the molten stone. On the left side of the dome are a set of double doors that are currently closed.

The giant door protects the Essence of Pure Fire and requires the Amulet of Pure Flame to be assembled before it can be accessed. In the back-left corner is a 20-foot wide pit of lava with a large obsidian sphere resting in the center (though only the top of this sphere is visible). This is an obsidian submarine, but your players don't know this just yet. There is a platform that extends over the lava and gives a pathway to this strange object. On the top are the visible cracks of a hatch, but there is no way to get a grip to open it. In the center of this hatch is a round recess roughly three inches in diameter.

The doors to the left lead to the The Furnace, and is where the party must first go if they hope to continue.

## THE FURNACE

### DESCRIPTION

Opening the double doors, you are presented with a mazing network of tubes and pipes feeding into a grand obsidian cylinder at its center. The cylinder is roughly twenty feet in diameter and has a door with a small, round glass window facing you. Past this door is a small, enclosed room with a secondary door - also with a small window. Scattered about the room are various tables, workstations, and instruments used to run experiments and take measurements.

Looking in through the window on the cylinder reveals a small, glowing red orb suspended about 12 feet off the ground in the center. This is the orb needed to open the hatch on the obsidian submarine back in the main chamber. It is also completely enveloped in lashes of flame.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Furnace**.

## THE AMBUSH

To enter the cylinder unprotected is a death sentence, but fortunately for the party, there is a single flame resistant suit hanging on a rack on the left side of the room. It will only fit a medium sized creature and is snug enough that anything above light armor would cause it to tear. The rest of the room seems to be a sort of research facility, but most of the equipment is worn down and rusted away. Along with the mess of pipes and tubes are vats that can hold lava or water with drains at the bottoms. There are numerous stone tables, some of which still have beakers and vials resting atop them.

When the person wearing the suit enters the chamber, the door slams shut behind them and swiftly locks. On the outside, the players can hear gears shifting and twisting. Moments later, a flurry of mephits explode into the room, squeezing out of various pipes and drains with their amorphous forms. They are dripping with magma, but one is nearly twice the size of the others with a makeshift crown on its head - also made of lava.

The leader of these mephits, the magma mephit king, points to the party and makes a gesture for them to hand over their weapons. He then points to one of his underlings that is positioned next to a large valve on a pipe that feeds into the top of the obsidian cylinder. Through some of the glass on the pipe, the party can see that it is filled with lava ready to pour into the cylinder the moment the valve is turned.

## TIME TRIAL

The king mephit gives out a laugh and once again demands the players hand over their equipment. At this point your players may have already fired at the mephits, but if not, the mephit next to the valve spins it and lava begins to flow.

After 6 rounds, lava will enter the chamber and begin melting the player within, despite the protection of the suit. The lava can visibly be seen moving through the pipes and they must hurry to defeat these small but deadly foes.

### Roll for initiative.

The number and types of mephits depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 5

- 1x King Magma Mephit (**NEB1**)
- 3x Magma Mephit (**MM Pg. 216**)

#### • APL 6

- 1x King Magma Mephit
- 4x Magma Mephit

#### • APL 7

- 1x King Magma Mephit
- 1x Imbued Magma Mephit (**NEB1**)
- 2x Magma Mephit

While combat is raging on the outside, the player within the cylinder must find a way to retrieve the orb which dangles midway up the chamber. It is held in place by magics that requires a significant amount of force, so something like mage hand will not get the job done. The player will need to make Strength (Athletics) checks to try to run off the wall and jump up to the orb or conceive some other way to get up to it and retrieve it while there is still time.

## RESCUE

Once the mephits have been dealt with, the player within the cylinder will need to swiftly make an escape to safety with the orb or be cooked alive. The valve can be turned to stop the flow of lava, but any residual lava in the tubes will still pour into the central chamber. Try to make the escape dramatic, lava pouring in just as the inner door closes behind them.

## THE DESCENT

Once the mephits are defeated and the orb retrieved, the party can move back to the main room and insert the orb into the obsidian submarine. Red lines erupt from the orb and branch around the exterior of the vehicle. A handle rises up out of the obsidian. When pulled, the hatch opens with little resistance and reveals a ladder that leads into the interior of the submarine.

When the players climb in, they find comfortable seating for twelve. There is a large lever at the front of the vehicle that simply has an up or down state which is currently set to up. The lever will not budge while the hatch to the vehicle remains open, but as soon as the hatch is latched and secured, it moves freely. Flipping the lever causes the vehicle to lurch to life and pull the group down into the depths. They are bounced and tossed around for a full minute before the vehicle finally comes to a rest and there is a loud beep as the hatch on the roof pops open.

## THE BRANCHING PATH

When the submarine comes to a halt, the players can step out into a new area. The submarine rests in a pool of lava similar to the one upstairs with another platform to allow creatures to climb down to solid ground without cooking.

In the center of this room are various statues depicting heroes of the organization that constructed this temple hundreds or thousands of years ago. Feel free to use it to bring some lore into your world or perhaps to give a clue to some greater puzzle. Or it can simply be the faces of nameless men and women if you don't want to provide any additional significance.

There are three doors leading out of this room. One is directly across from the landing platform, another is to the left, and the final door is to the right. The players will need to explore all three to complete the Amulet of Pure Flame, but the order of their completion is not significant.

## TO THE LEFT

This door leads to a small hallway carved into obsidian stone. While the stone is as black as night, words etched into the wall cast vibrant orange light into the hall:

*"Flames as intense as our passion for progress."*

On the far side of this hall is a set of double doors.

## THE GLASS TUNNEL

### DESCRIPTION

*Opening the doors reveals an incredibly long hallway of glass that seems to be set under an entire lake of lava. You are immediately hit with a wave of heat upon opening the door. Lava can be seen dripping very slowly through portions of this glass and small hills of stone have formed beneath these weak spots where the dripping lava has cooled. At the far end of this hallway, which must be at least three hundred feet long, is a metal door that is slightly ajar.*

As the party moves through this area, they can see something clearly moving out in the lava and at some point a pair of glowing eyes and claws press up against the glass. This is merely a scare tactic to cause your players to make haste and invoke fear about what may occur on the return trip. They may even waste valuable spell slots in preparation.

## THE OBSIDIAN SMELTERY

### DESCRIPTION

*Through the metal door is a smeltery crafted of obsidian. It is in the center of a grand room filled with vats, moulds, anvils, smithing tools, workbenches, and anything that might be needed to craft armor and weaponry. The smeltery is a piece of machinery so complex in nature that without having the schematics, it is impossible to determine how all of the pieces work together. It is over forty feet long and fifteen feet high, occupying almost half of the room. Even after all of these years, the obsidian used to craft the machine is in pristine condition. There are also a few other doors branching off this room, but all of them are currently closed.*

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Obsidian Smeltery**.

Sitting on one of the tables in this room is a set of **Inferno Gauntlets (NDMT2)**. About ten feet from these masterwork gauntlets is a dusty cloth draped over a large object that sits directly in front of an ornate door. The structure it covers is large with many jagged features, but most of it is concealed by the fabric. Pulling away this veil of secrecy reveals a dragon crafted from a variety of metals. A red crystal still gleams in its chest, and as it is exposed to air once again, the dragon's ruby eyes begin to glow with intensity and a claw scratches against the floor. Its face turns to the party and fire begins to swell within its chest cavity.

### Roll for initiative.

The number creatures and types of creatures depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 5

- 1x Red Dragon Wyrmling (**MM Pg. 98**)
- 3x Magmin (**MM Pg. 212**)

#### • APL 6

- 1x Red Dragon Wyrmling
- 4x Magmin

#### • APL 7

- 1x Red Dragon Wyrmling
- 6x Magmin

The dragons scrapes to life and begins to attack. This is a mechanical entity so it has the following traits in addition to the traits provided for an ordinary red dragon wyrmling:

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

On the second round of combat, there is some rumbling from deep within the smeltery and magmin begin to find their ways out through various openings, much like the mephits in the previous fight. They hear the commotion and want to get involved. Add them to the initiative as creatures hostile to the party.

When the dragon is defeated, the party can extract the crystal in its chest which is a **Medium Elemental Shard - Fire (NDMT2)**.

## THE RUBY

Once the dragon is out of the way, the party can move to the door that it appeared to be guarding. They find that it is not locked and opens up to a small office. There is a fine stone desk with many trinkets and tools scattered about with a dozen half-finished projects in the works.

Sitting in a beautiful glass display case at the center of a small table in front of the desk is a lightly glowing ruby. The glass can be removed without issue and the players can grab the gemstone which is warm to the touch. This is one piece of the Amulet of Pure Flame.

Next to the ruby is a small bottle that has some smoke swirling within. This is a **Bottle of Whispers (NDMT2)**. Feel free to have the message captured within give insight as to what happened to this temple or perhaps relevant information about some great history in your world.

Most of the items on the desk are parts of a tinkers' tools set along with some smiths' tools, but there are also three gorgeous ruby flowers sitting on the desk. These are each worth 250 gold.

## OTHER ROOMS

These other rooms are mostly to give depth and flavor to the dungeon and not to provide any sort of challenge to the players. Feel free to have one of them contain some sort of rare metal that they could have crafted into powerful weapons or armor. Perhaps there are some leftover potions the party could use during the rest of the dungeon. Another option would be moulds that might be left over and could be sold to a blacksmith if recovered.

## THE PATH FORWARD

The door straight ahead from the submarine's landing point leads to a small hallway. Along the wall is written the text:

*"Like the phoenix rising from the flames, our research will see a world reborn in glory!"*

Beyond this is a set of metal doors that are warm to the touch, more so than any of the other doors despite the fact that the entire temple is filled with lava and flame.

## RISING HEAT

### DESCRIPTION

Along the left and right sides of this eighty foot long room are large metal tubes with spheres of glass interrupting periodically. These spheres of glass are being regularly filled with lava and then drained shortly thereafter. The tubes start by plunging into the stone floor and ends by feeding into the walls at the far side of the room. Branching off of these glass containers are additional devices designed to hold shards of crystal or metal bars. There are smaller, flexible tubes leading from the glass spheres to these devices to charge the crystals or metal with pure elemental energy. Near each of these charging stations are constructs of various sizes - some bulky and armored while others are small and nimble.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Room of Rising Heat**.

### INTO THE INFERO

Near each of these charging stations are various constructs. Some are hulking in size and seem brutally powerful and difficult to damage, while others are smaller and more agile. Only a few of them hold crystals in their chests, however.

The door on the far side of the room is enchanted with a magical glyph that when touched will activate the constructs in the room and instruct them to attack. This also causes the door to seal shut until the constructs are defeated. They will also spring to life and defend themselves if any of them are damaged. The glyph on the far door is invisible, but can be removed with *dispel magic*, allowing players to potentially avoid combat all together. Otherwise, when the glyph is triggered...

#### Roll for initiative.

The level of heat and the danger this heat presents depends on the number of people in the room:

- At 2 people, the heat is deeply uncomfortable
- At 3 people, each creature takes 1 fire damage on initiative count 20
- At 4 people, each creature takes 1d4 fire damage on initiative count 20
- At 5 people, each creature takes 1d8 fire damage on initiative count 20
- At 6+ people, each creature takes 1d12 fire damage on initiative count 20

The constructs will do their best to take cover and lure the players into the room if they hope to attack, exposing them to the extreme heat.

The number of creatures and types of creatures depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 5 -

- 1x Elemental Defender (fire) (**NEB1**)
- 2x Aetherspawn Guardian (fire) (**NEB2**)

#### • APL 6

- 2x Elemental Defender (fire)
- 1x Aetherspawn Guardian (fire)

#### • APL 7

- 1x Dragon Knight (fire) (**NEB1**)
- 2x Aetherspawn Guardian (fire)

These are mechanical entities so they have the following traits in addition to the traits provided ordinarily:

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

## THE PATH OF HOT COALS

Once the creatures have been dispatched, the heat in the room continues to be unbearable with multiple people in it, so they will need to proceed with caution. Opening the door on the far side of the room reveals a simple passageway roughly 75 feet long whose floor is made entirely of red hot coals. These coals are blazing hot and will melt through boots or catch clothing on fire with even limited exposure. The party will have to use some creative ideas to get past this area or take fire damage with each step. Simply trying to sprint across the coals will result in 4d6 fire damage being taken by that creature, so painful, but not deadly.

On the far end of the room is a metal door that is unlocked.

## THE CHAIN

### DESCRIPTION

*In the room beyond the metal door are the remains of a human sitting in a chair behind a desk. The skeleton holds a beautiful sword in one hand and the other hand is clenched tight, forming a fist. In the center of the skeleton's chest is a gaping hole formed by the blast from some sort of magic spell. They were wearing elegant clothing that has almost completely fallen apart over the years and the smell in this room is wretched. Through some of the rotted holes in the bones, there is a glimmer of silver within the skeleton's clasped hand.*

This is a magically enchanted chain, seemingly unbreakable, and is part of the Amulet of Flame.

There is also a sack of coins tipped over on the floor and bits of silver and gold are scattered all across the area. There is 322 gold and 744 silver if the players take the time to collect it all. In addition, the sword that the dead body still holds is magical. It is a **Scorch (NDMT2)**.

## TO THE RIGHT

The door to the right opens to a small hallway whose floor is a set of iron grates rather than solid stone. On the wall is glowing text similar to the other hallways:

*"Unlike the stars in the heavens, our flame will never burn out."*

At the far end of the short hallway is a set of double doors made of thick ornate metal. The decorations on it are quite lovely and resemble a roaring fire. These doors lead to a controlled inferno.

## THE HELLISH GRATES

### DESCRIPTION

*The floor of this sixty by thirty foot room is a massive iron grate similar to the hall you just passed through. It is divided into six distinct sections, each twenty feet by ten feet. Every twelve seconds, three of these sections erupt with flame. It is easy to determine where the flames will erupt, for the floor glows for the few seconds beforehand. When the flames emerge, they reach all the way to the ceiling which is a full twenty feet above the floor.*

*Hanging up near the ceiling of the room are thick chains that are running along a pulley system. The chains echoing off the chamber walls is deafening and causes creatures more than a few feet away from each other from being able to hear. Hanging from these chains are bulky hooks intended to hold large slabs of metal as there were superheated by the flames. As it stands, the chain still moves but there is nothing left to be heated in these vicious flames.*

*On the far side of the room is a large set of double doors with a valve off to the right.*

Any creature caught in the flames when they erupt immediately takes 6d6 fire damage. The valve on the far side opens the door, but takes a solid 20 seconds of turning even for the strongest of individuals to open the doors enough for someone to squeeze through.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Hellish Grates**.

### A BURNING SURPRISE

As the party steps through the area, their footsteps echoing loudly off the grates below, they detect movement from the flames beneath them. After the next burst of flame, fire elementals are scattered about the room, lingering where the flames were a moment ago. They immediately move to attack the party.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number and types of elementals depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 5**
  - 6x Small Fire Elemental (**NEB1**)
- **APL 6**
  - 8x Small Fire Elemental
- **APL 7**
  - 1x Fire Elemental (**MM Pg. 125**)
  - 2x Small Fire Elemental

The elementals disregard the flames that erupt from the grates completely, but the players will have to constantly maneuver or be cooked by the immense heat. Once the elementals have been defeated, the players will have nothing left to stop them from carefully opening the far doors via the valve.

## THE LAVAFALL

### DESCRIPTION

Just through the doors is a large hook sticking up out of the floor that follows along a narrow track until it meets a slope of actively flowing lava twenty feet down the hall. This slope is approximately twenty-five feet long and when the lava reaches the bottom, it flows down below the stone and disappears. At the top of the slope is a flat stone walkway, but you will have to find a way to get past this flowing lava to reach it.

The walls of this area are made of stone and the passage itself is about 15 feet tall and wide. The stone is not perfectly smooth and can be climbed, though doing so is incredibly dangerous for falling is likely lethal.

At the top of the slope is a lever that closes the flow of the lava and allows other to climb up without difficulty once the ground has had some time to cool, but at least one person still needs to reach the top before the path can be made safe.

The path continues on for a few hundred feet. Multiple rooms branch off of this main path, some simply alcoves but others are entire workshops. This is where blacksmiths would pull molten metals and work them into fine armor and weapons before sending them off to the armory a bit further up. These workshop areas are almost entirely cleaned out with only a few tools and scraps left behind.

## ARMORY REMNANTS

At the far end of the path above the lavafall, is an armory that once housed all of the amazing creations forced in the temple. Unfortunately, it seems most of it was taken when the temple was abandoned, and what is left is largely unusable due to age. That being said, there are a few items that have survived the test of time and your players can take advantage of this.

- 1x Large Elemental Shard - Fire (**NDMT2**)
- 1x Cloak of the Renowned Champion (**NDMT2**)
- 1x Scroll of Fireball
- 1x Scroll of Wall of Fire
- 2x Potion of Fire Breath

Past the armory is still one more door. It is a fine iron door that is locked and has had a few shelves hastily shoved in front of it to try to conceal its location, but if anything it only draws more attention to it. Even though the door is locked, it has become weakened from the extreme heat on the other side of it and can be broken down with enough force, or a player trained in Thieves' Tools can succeed on a DC 15 check to pick the lock.

## THE AMULET BASE

### DESCRIPTION

Opening this door reveals a slow swirling whirlpool of lava roughly twenty feet across. Down fifteen feet, near where most of this lava funnels down into the floor and disappears, is a three foot square platform of obsidian with a tiny round object sitting upon it, gleaming in the heat of the flames. Hanging from the ceiling is a large hook and a broken steel chain.

The object down on the platform is the base of the amulet that needs to be combined with the ruby and the chain. Your players will need to find a way to retrieve the amulet base by whatever means necessary. There is no right or wrong way to do so and it could be something as simple as mage hand given the distance. Have your players make whatever skill checks are necessary for their chosen strategy.

## UNLEASH THE ELEMENTS

Once all three pieces are gathered, they can be assembled to form the **Amulet of Pure Flame (NDMT2)**.

Once the amulet is assembled, the players must return to the obsidian submarine and take it back to the Sanctum of Fire. When they step out of the submarine, they will immediately notice that the large sealed door in the room has lava running through the cracks of its design. The runes that protect it flash with great intensity and licks of flame periodically erupt, some of which lash out at far as twenty feet.

As the player wearing the amulet approaches the door, the lava grows more intense, surging into the room at the base of the doorway. Slowly the door begins to melt away. It sinks into this pool of lava at the base which never seems to grow in size despite the fact that the door is disappearing into it. After one minute, there is nothing left of the once massive doors and the lava cools and turns to smooth stone.

Suspended in the newly exposed alcove beyond is a large sphere of flame. It is perfectly round, though a few strands of flame occasionally find their way out of its grasp and quickly disappear. The light it produces is far more powerful than an ordinary flame, illuminating the entire sanctum and causing the party's shadows to tower on the walls.

## ASHMAW, THE GUARDIAN OF FLAME

Shortly thereafter, runes begin to go alight one by one at the center of the room. Each of them is a magnificent blue color and as they continue to spark to life, eventually forming a circle. When the last of the runes awakens and the circle is complete, a pillar of blue flame extends from floor to ceiling in this area. A shadow starts to move from within the flames, but it is not particularly large, only a bit taller than an ordinary human.

The flames disappear abruptly as a sword slices through the edge of the wall of fire. Left standing in the center of the room is a creature clad in so much armor than none of its physical characteristics show through. It stands at nearly seven feet tall and holds a mighty longsword in one hand and a shield in the other. The armor and weapon are both made of the same obsidian that the party has seen all throughout the temple with bits of lava flowing at the connection points.

The shield depicts the face of a dragon with rubies for eyes, both of which glow brightly with power. Its helmet has a set of horns, also similar to those of a dragon, that curl down and rest near the creature's shoulders. When the entity turns to address the party, its blade breaks into multiple segments, with a single thick strand of lava running through the center.

The creature introduces itself as Ashmaw, the Guardian of Flame - a set of armor given life through the essence that lies in the alcove. It is bound to the one that holds the Amulet of Pure Flame, but unlike the other guardians, this one is without a moral code. It is a construct with no guiding principles or thoughts of its own. It is a dangerous weapon, or a powerful guardian.

## **THE ESSENCE**

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As mentioned in the beginning, it is up to you to build a hook around the Essence of Pure Fire stored in this temple. It can be a gateway to the Plane of Fire, a source to destroy a relic of great evil, or perhaps its flame is needed to craft an almighty weapon that your players need to save the kingdom. The possibilities are up to you. Think about the history of your world and how something like this can tie in and build an even more expansive universe for your players to explore.

## **EXPERIENCE**

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The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the entire temple. Feel free to adjust these values.

- **APL 5** - 6,000 XP per player
- **APL 6** - 8,000 XP per player
- **APL 7** - 10,000 XP per player

## **LOOT**

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If your players cleared the temple completely they should have received all of the following items:

- Obsidian Gauntlets
- Bottle of Whispers
- Scorch
- Scroll of Fireball
- Scroll of Wall of Fire
- 2x Potion of Dragon's Breath
- 1x Medium Elemental Shard - Fire
- 1x Large Elemental Shard - Fire
- Amulet of Pure Flame
- 3x Ruby Flower (250g each)
- Bag of Coins (322 gold and 744 silver)

All of these items except for the scrolls can all be found in the Magic Items section of this Toolkit. Feel free to adjust the loot as it suitable to your world, as some may not be as magical as others.

# THE TEMPLE OF PURE WATER

## A DUNGEON FOR LEVELS 6-8

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### SUGGESTED USAGE

The Temple of Pure Water lies deep beneath the surface of a large lake plentiful with aquatic life, not all of which is friendly. Adventurers may wish to seek out this temple to get to the pure essence that lies within before a malevolent force can do so. Or perhaps they need to commune with a powerful water elemental or gain passage to the Plane of Water or to summon a terrifying tempest. The Temple also contains ancient magical items that could draw in a set of adventurers seeking power.

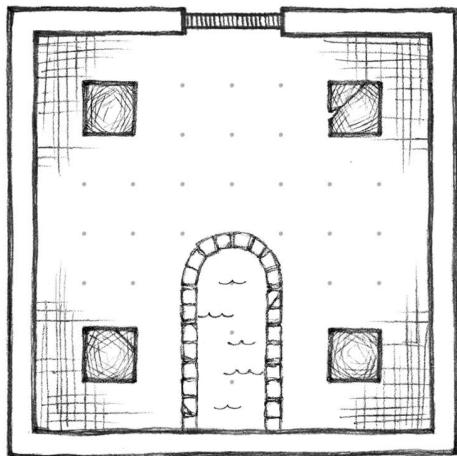
### DUNGEON OVERVIEW

This temple contains a sprawling area within a large extradimensional space, allowing it to span miles without interrupting the world around it. When the players finish the temple, they can obtain the essence of pure water that this structure protects. To unlock the door that guards the sphere, your players must assemble the Ring of the Hydromancer, the pieces of which are scattered across three wings of the temple. Each of these wings provide a unique set of challenges for your players including navigating a puzzle within a submerged pyramid, a downhill boat ride while being pursued by sharks, and facing off against elementals while giant waves of water slam over the battlefield.

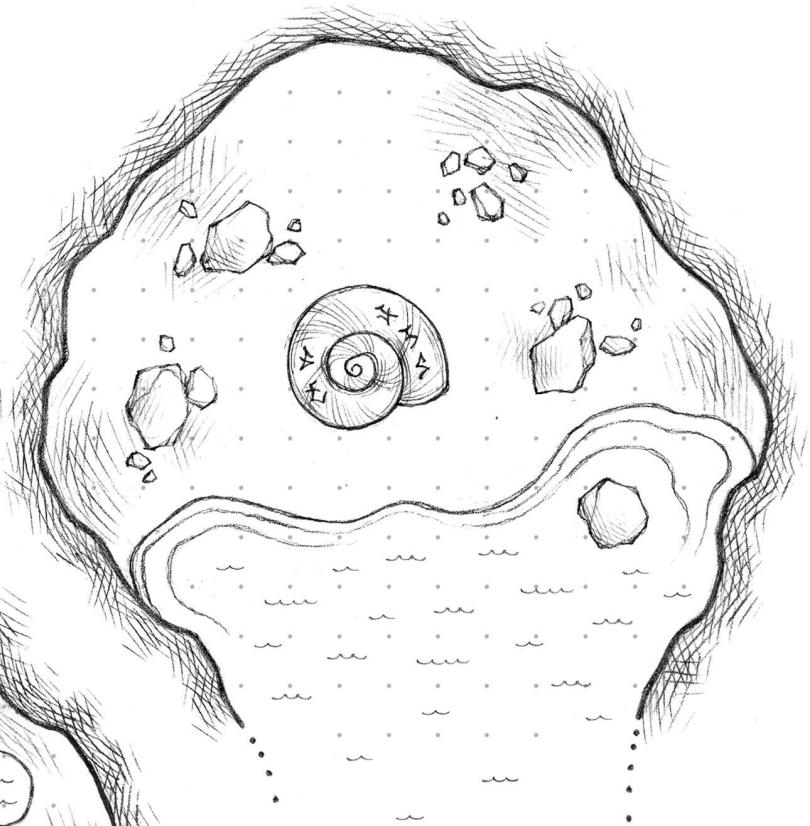
This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

This module contains custom monsters which are included in the Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in Nerzugal's Game Master Toolkit, which can be purchased for free on DriveThruRPG. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found in the Bestiary at the end of this Toolkit.

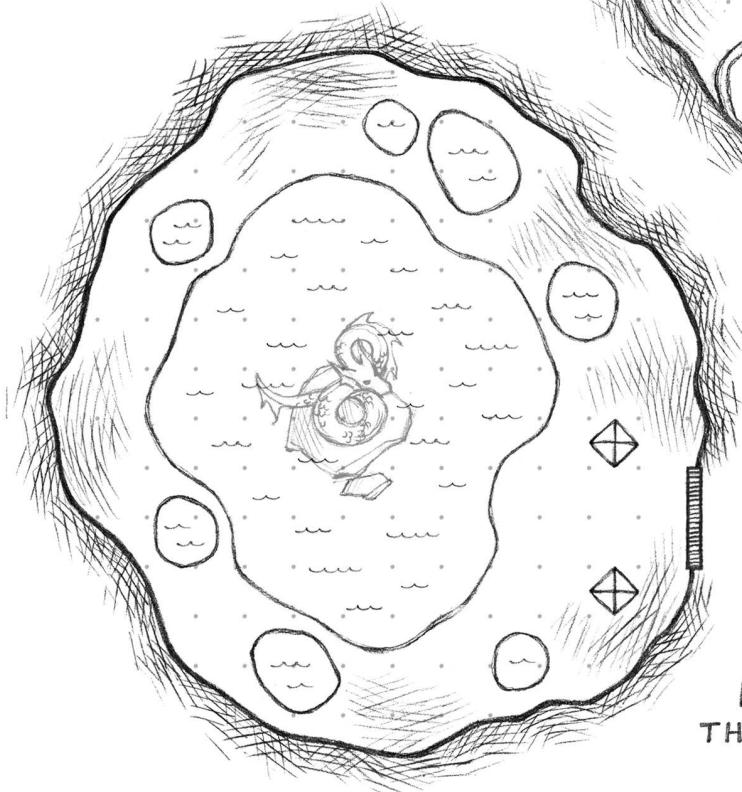
# THE TEMPLE OF PURE WATER



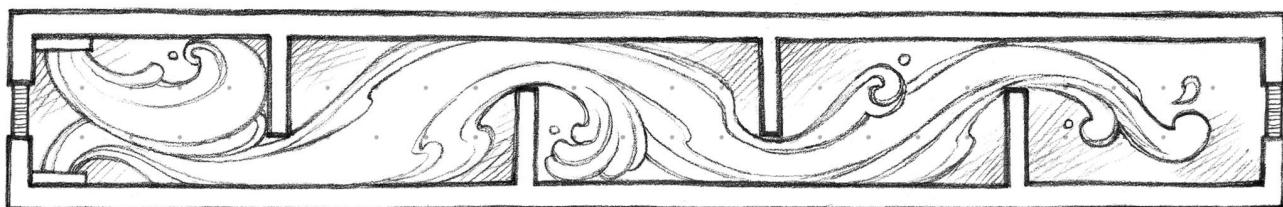
THE FLOODGATES  
ROOM



THE BEACHFRONT



DEN OF THE  
SEA DRAGON



THE HALL OF CRASHING WAVES

## THE MAIN ENTRANCE

### DOWN WE GO

The entryway to this temple is in a small stone structure that rests at the bottom of the lake. It is quite difficult to see as it is covered in aquatic flora and is deep enough that no sunlight can reach it. There is a barrier at the doorway that prevents water from entering, but this only provides a moment of respite, for to descend into the core of the temple the party will need to get wet again.

On the back wall of this structure is a large tube of water that quickly drops out of sight and into the depths below. Tossing an item into this tube sends it shooting off into the current and over the edge into the darkness. The party will have to jump into this water which immediately grabs them and pulls them downwards, spiraling upside down on two occasions before they are shot out into a pool of water in a large domed chamber. The room is 80 feet wide, but a pool dominates the central 50 feet. The pool itself is over thirty feet deep and the bottom of it is lined with magical runes that spread into the nearby stone and illuminate the pool. This causes the water to shine a brilliant sapphire color. Beneath these runes is the Essence of Pure Water, so make sure the players are aware of their significance and power even if they cannot dispel the runes just yet.

There are three doors leading out of this main chamber, one directly ahead and one on the left and right sides of the pool. Each of these paths are behind a set of heavy wooden doors, but they are not locked and open quite easily. There is no forced path through the dungeon so the players can choose to start down whichever branch they'd like.

## THE WESTERN PATH

On the other side of the double doors is a small hallway with the following quote etched into the stone along the wall and glowing faintly:

*“Even the gentlest stream can level a mountain given sufficient time.”*

At the far end of this hallway is another tunnel of water. The players will have to dive into this tube to continue.

## THE FLOOD GATES

### DESCRIPTION

*After another exciting ride down one hundred feet, you are spit out into a small pool of water. This pool is a mere twenty feet wide in a room that is forty square feet. There is a pillar near each corner of the room that serve as supports and are beautifully decorated. They have thin streams of water running through an intricate track of carvings along the outside. On the opposite side of the room is a large metal door. Besides these features, the room contains nothing of note.*

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Floodgates Room.**

## OPEN THE FLOODGATES

When a creature moves to the metal door and first touches it, the pillars in the room go alight with runes. The water that flows along the pillars begins to overflow and spill into the area at an alarming rate. Three whirlpools form shortly after at separate corners of the room and from these emerge powerful entities that seem to climb out of the stone itself.

### Roll for initiative.

The number of creatures and types of creatures depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 6

- 2x Water Weird (**MM Pg. 299**)
- 1x Chuul (**MM Pg. 40**)

#### • APL 7

- 2x Water Weird
- 1x Ancient Fisherman (**NEB1**)

#### • APL 8

- 2x Water Weird
- 1x Abomination From The Deep (**NEB1**)

The water in the room rises rapidly - a rate of 3 feet per round. The room is only 15 feet tall, so the party will have 5 rounds before they are completely submerged. After the first round of combat, the entire room becomes difficult terrain. After 3 rounds, creatures will have to start using underwater combat rules.



Once all of the creatures have all been defeated, their bodies fade away to water and the door on the far side of the room opens. The water within the drains away shortly after. Beyond this door is a solid wall of water illuminated by glowing orbs that have been embedded into walls of stone. An additional slot in the wall also opens up when the creatures are defeating, revealing a set of 12 devices that can be inserted into one's nose and throat to give the ability to breath underwater. This should provide useful as the party proceeds to the next challenge.

## AQUATIC GARDENS

### DESCRIPTION

*In this spiraling submerged tunnel is a vast array of beautiful, luminescent platlife. Strange blood red vines coat the walls of the tunnel and shimmer with a pulse of light every few seconds as the plant seems to breathe. Pieces of kelp up to ten feet in length gently wave back and forth across the pathway, constantly changing in color from royal purple, cyan, deep blue, and other cool colors. The rest of the wall is coated with vibrantly colored flowers. These range the full color spectrum and there are dozens of different species present, but each casts out light in some way or another.*

This area is filled with an overgrowth of dense plants with various magical properties. Anyone with a background in alchemy or herbalism can easily determine that these could be used to brew some potent potions. They can also tell that these have been free to grow and spread without control for a very long time. Some of these plants grow centimeters a year and have span down entire hallways now. Small motes of light float in the water and webs of luminous fibers coat entire walls. The pathway is a hundred and twenty feet long, spiraling left and right along the way. At the end of this hallway is another set of double doors that leads to the next area. The players can move through this without risk... well except for a few pesky plants:

### BLOOD MOON CREEPING VINES

**DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check to identify**

These plants coat the wall with a dimly glowing red light that slowly pulses. If a creature touches one of these vines, it will immediately lash out and grab hold of that creature, causing it to become restrained. That creature will also need to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw against poison or become paralyzed. The creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the paralysis on a successful save. If the creature fails an additional 2 times in a row, it takes 8d6 piercing damage as the plant's vines pierce into its flesh and drains its blood before freeing the creature from its grasp, now sated. While afflicted with this poison, the victim's veins glow red like the plant. These are fairly easy to avoid and will only come into play if a player is curious of these vines and their mysterious glow.

These vines can be used with 50 gold of other ingredients to make a potent poison, but must be carefully harvested.

### PSYCHO-LUMINESCENT KELP

**DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check to identify**

This kelp waves gently back and forth, taking up nearly the entire path. The longest strands are over ten feet in length and six inches wide near its center. The kelp changes from royal purple to blue to cyan and then cycles back in a cool, enchanting display of colors. They seem innocent enough, but one touch and the curious creature will be assaulted by a horrible psychic attack. The creature must make a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw, taking 3d6 psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Hitting these kelp with any kind of damage causes them to retreat for one minute.

This kelp can be used to make power hallucinogens, but those applications are up to the DM's discretion.

### PRISMATIC LUMOFLOWERS

**DC 18 Intelligence (Nature) check to identify**

These flowers are spread across the walls in vibrant shades of yellow, orange, and green. The petals of these plants are nearly two feet in length and curl out into the path slightly. Whenever a creature moves directly in front of the plant, the petals all shift in an instant and point at that creature, shining a blinding spotlight directly on them. If that creature holds perfectly still for five seconds, the plant will determine they are not a threat and return to its resting state until a new creature approaches. If the creature *does* move, it must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to avoid a beam of piercing prismatic light that the plant unleashes, dealing 3d6 radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

## THE SUBMERGED PYRAMID

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### DESCRIPTION

*This room is seventy-five feet on each side, forming a perfect cube. Jutting out of the floor in the center of this cube is a small stone pyramid with a fifty foot wide base, but beyond this beautifully carved structure there are not any other doors or passageways leading out of the area.*

The players will have to conquer the puzzle presented by this pyramid to retrieve the setting of the Ring of the Hydromancer.

### SOLVING THE PYRAMID

See **The Submerged Pyramid** in the Puzzles section for details on this puzzle.

When solved, a secret passage is opened at the center of the pyramid. Within this room is a silver ring setting that rests atop a beautifully carved marble pedestal. The ring setting sparks with energy every few seconds and it is clear that this is meant to hold something quite powerful. Hanging on the wall of the room is also a **Cloak of Everflowing Water (NDMT2)**.

## THE WAY BACK

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Once the ring setting has been retrieved, the party will need to backtrack to the main entryway to continue to the other wings. The water of the tube that brought the party down to this wing is now flowing the opposite direction and allows the players to be guided safely back up to the main chamber.

# THE NORTHERN PATH

On the other side of the double doors is a small hallway with the following quote etched into the stone along the wall and glowing faintly:

*"We need water to survive. We need aspirations to live."*

There is a set of double doors on the opposite end of this hallway.

## AQUATIC DESCENT

### DESCRIPTION

*As you step through the doorway, you feel an anti-magic barrier sweep over you. Your magic items lose their shimmer and if you are a spellcaster you feel your abilities fade away in a manner that is deeply discomforting. There is a fifteen foot wide platform before you that ends in a five foot wide block of suspended water that runs all along the edge of this ledge. As the last of you steps through this doorway, the doors slam shut behind you, forming a perfect seal as there are no handles on this side.*

### GOING DOWN

The room is fifty feet wide and peering over the edge of the cliff reveals nothing but darkness. If the players use a torch or some other natural form of light, they can reveal that this drop-off continues for 200 feet before it reaches a pool of water that is 20 feet deep. 10 feet below the strip of water that hugs the edge of the cliff is a 15-foot wide sphere of water that is suspended in place. Players can drop through the bottom of the pool of water and into this sphere. They will plunge into its center before coming to a rest. From this location they can see that there are even more strands of suspended water that extend all the way to the bottom of this pit. The next globe of water is roughly 5 feet to the right and down another 15 feet. **They players must succeed on a DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength(Athletics) check or plummet below (unless they have taken precautions).**

The water at the bottom of the room makes falling deal far less damage than would normally be inflicted for falling from great heights.

Consult the chart on the following page to for details on the rest of the challenges that the players face as well as how much damage a player takes for failing when failing an obstacle.

## THE DESCENT

| Distance / Fall Damage | Difficulty   | Description   |
|------------------------|--|---|
| 160 feet (8d6)         | DC 5 Acrobatics / Athletics                              | Players must jump from one globe of water to another 10 feet below and 5 feet to the side. The players will then need to swim through a tube of water for 30 feet before they reach the next drop.  |
| 125 feet (6d6)         | DC 7 Perception / Investigation                          | This is a 20 foot drop into a narrow tube of water. It is hard to gauge where exactly they need to land and the water is wavering slightly, so they must get the timing right and aim correctly.  |
| 100 feet (5d6)         | DC 10 Dexterity Saving Throw / Intelligence Saving Throw | After dropping down into the tube of water below, they fall into a portion where waves seem to be rolling through. This creates enough force to throw the creature to the next globe of water, but it takes excellent timing and/or quick reflexes to make the jump.  |
| 70 feet (3d6)          | DC 12 Athletics check                                    | After being launched into the large orb below, the player must immediately make another jump to a cube of water 30 feet below and 15 feet to the side. This is strictly a feat of athleticism.  |
| 40 feet (2d6)          | DC 15 (Varies)   | Sitting in this cube of water, the players can see the swell of water from below. It periodically surges up and forms a massive plume that if landed upon means a harmless fall, but on a miss it is a great deal of pain. Let your players justify how they plan on making this jump and allow them to help each other as necessary. |

Once the players have all completed the descent, they can swim over to a small platform at the south side of the room. When the players stand on this platform, they find that the anti-magic zone subsides and their spellcasting abilities are restored. There is also a door here that leads to the next portion of the dungeon - The Hall of Crashing Waves.

## THE HALL OF CRASHING WAVES

### DESCRIPTION

*When the door is opened, it reveals a path that is fifteen feet wide and continues for twenty-five feet before it is obstructed by a ten-foot wide wall that is connected to the left side of the passageway (leaving a 5-foot wide gap on the right side)*

*Peering down this hall, you see another wall obstructing the path (this time connected to the right side) twenty-five feet ahead of the first wall. This cuts off all view you have on the length of this path and leaves what lies beyond a mystery. The floor is slick with water and a wave rolls down the hall, slowly losing energy until it is a mere sheet by the time it reaches the doorway in which you stand.*

This alternating path of walls continue for the full 125-foot length of the hall for a total of 4 walls. Every 12 seconds, a massive waves rolls through and crashes over the pathway, originating from the opposite end of the hall. Once this water has passed through, it almost immediately disappears as it drains away into small gaps on either side of the path. The only portions that remain safe from the brute force of these waves are those sections directly behind the alternating walls, so the players will have to move from wall to wall or face the wrath of the waters.

**When a creature is hit by one of these waves, it must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 3d10 bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone as it is smashed against the stone wall. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage, is pushed 10 feet down the hall, and is not knocked prone.**

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Hall of Crashing Waves**.

### PRESS FORWARD

When the first creature makes its way behind the second wall of the path, a group of water elementals are left standing in the middle of the hall after the next wave rolls through.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number of elementals and types of elementals depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 6

- 1x Water Elemental (**MM Pg. 125**)
- 2x Small Water Elemental (**NEB1**)

#### • APL 7

- 1x Water Elemental
- 4x Small Water Elemental

#### • APL 8

- 2x Water Elemental
- 2x Small Water Elemental

These elementals will do their best to push players into the waves and sweep them away. The large elementals gain an extra ability - Tidal Surge. This requires each player within 5 feet of the elemental to make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage and is pushed up to 10 feet in a straight line. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and is not pushed.

At the end of the hall, there is a doorway leading to the final room in this wing of the temple. To the right of this door are two alcoves that the water is erupting out of when it sweeps down the path. Just above these alcoves are switches that can be flipped down to stop the surges. Keep this in mind during the combat, because if a player moves far enough up the path they will see these switches and be able to stop one of the threats the party faces.

## DEN OF THE SEA DRAGON

### DESCRIPTION

You enter a room that is far more cavernous than the others you've seen. So far the temple's walls have been smoothed and polished to perfection, but the walls in this room are jagged and laced with flaws. It is cylindrical in shape with a domed roof that comes to a peak over forty feet up. Ten feet on either side of the door are grand stone obelisks that are fifteen feet tall and end with three sharp prongs. In the center of this eighty-foot wide room is a massive pool of still water. A dozen smaller pools of water are scattered through the area but pale in comparison to the central lake. The room is perfectly still and silent beyond the occasional drip of water from the ceiling.

This central pool of water is 70 feet deep and 40 feet wide. The smaller pools of water connect to this main source via a series of smaller tubes. The water is uncomfortably cold, but crystal clear. The lack of light and clarity of the water make it nearly impossible to determine its true depth without jumping in.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **Den of the Sea Dragon**.

### A THREAT BELOW

Lurking down in the waters below is a grand stone statue of a sea dragon wrapped around a tiny shimmering sapphire. This sapphire is protected by a 1-foot wide dome of shimmering glass. This glass is magically enchanted and even a dispel magic spell does not end its protection. The dragon's body is 40 feet long, spiraled and twisted like a serpent as it protects the tiny gemstone at its center. Resting in the dragon's mouth is a shimmering blue orb 4 inches in diameter. The dragon's tail is coiled up around a similar blue orb. Each of these look as if rain is falling within them.

The dome covering the sapphire is impenetrable and the only way to drop the barrier is to take the two orbs from the dragon and place them in the slots at the top of each of the two obelisks. As soon as the first of the orbs has been removed, the door to this room slams shut and locks the players within. The stone of the dragon statue begins to chip and splinter and small shards of blue light bleed out into the water, but it remains motionless.

When the second orb is removed from its slot, the rest of the stone explodes outwards and fills the water with dust, blinding any creatures in the water for 1 round. Even through the dust, it is obvious that there is movement as a current has kicked up in the water as the dragon stirs.

**Roll for initiative.**

For the sake of ease, this dragon uses the stat block of a Young White Dragon (**MM Pg. 101**) with slightly modified abilities. The dragon is amphibious and can breathe air and water. In addition, the dragon can take legendary actions (the number is determined by the party's APL and listed below), choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Detect.** The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
- **Claw.** The dragon makes a claw attack.
- **Recoup.** Roll a d6. On a result of 5-6, the dragon's Cold Breath attack is recharged.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the dragon can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Target creature in the water is ejected from the pool in a massive sphere of water. It crashes to the ground outside of the water and takes 1d10 bludgeoning damage. The creature must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone as well.
- The water becomes freezing cold as the dragon shakes its shimmering scales. Movement through the water for all other creatures is considered difficult terrain until the next lair action.
- Up to two creatures within 120 feet of the dragon are pushed or pulled up to 30 feet by powerful torrents of water.

The dragons attacks and abilities are also modified based on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 6** - Reduce the dragon's multiattack to only include a bite attack and a single claw attack. The dragon has 1 legendary action.
- **APL 7** - Increase the hit points of the dragon by 38 (4d10 + 16). The dragon has 1 legendary action.
- **APL 8** - Increase the hit points of the dragon by 57 (6d10 + 24). The dragon has 2 legendary actions.

Once both of the orbs have been placed into the obelisks, the shield covering the sapphire will drop and the dragon turns back to stone. In addition, the door unlocks itself again and the players are free to leave.

If the party defeats the dragon rather than deactivating it by placing the orbs into the obelisks, all of the shields drop and the door opens. The players can then take the two orbs along with them as loot. They are each a **Weather Orb – Rain (NDMT2)**.

## THE WAY BACK

When the party returns to the room containing the anti-magic zone, they will find that the zone is still active, but instead of large spheres of water suspended in the air, there is now a single tube of water gently curving up the outer edge of the room. The players can hop into this tube and be gently carried back to the cliff up top over two minutes. It is a rather calm and leisurely ride and gives the players a moment to feel some relief after a difficult battle.

## THE EASTERN PATH

On the other side of the double doors is a small hallway with the following quote etched into the stone along the wall and glowing faintly:

*"Our dreams are as unstoppable and inevitable as the tides themselves."*

There are little streams of water flowing along the edge of this room and it is almost impossible to hear as the roaring of flowing water crashes through the area. Unlike the other hallways, there is no additional door on the far side, it simply opens to a cove filled with water.

## WATERFALL ASCENSION

### DESCRIPTION

*Through the threshold, you can see a twenty foot wide, eighty foot tall waterfall on the far side of the room. The water is crashing down, sending droplets of water all across area, but despite the constant flow, the level of the water in the room remains unchanging. At the top of the waterfall is a large tunnel that twists deep into the stone.*

This is simply a challenge for the players to use what resources they have available to ascend the waterfall and reach the tunnels from which the water is flowing. There is no magic dampening, so through the use of spell slots your players may be able to achieve this with ease at the cost of some of their daily resources. Otherwise, have your players make skill checks that are appropriate for their methods of ascension. The rocks near the waterfall are scalable, but they are also slippery, though falling doesn't hurt as much as they will fall into water.

## CAVE RAFTING

When the party reaches the top of the waterfall, they are met with a 5 foot wide pathway that continues down a tunnel for a great distance. After 150 feet, the party will notice something quite strange... the water begins flowing in the opposite direction - away from the waterfall. The party can investigate this further, but it is a phenomenon that can only be explained through magic.

Another 100 yards of walking and the silhouette of a boathouse appears in the distance, standing on stilts just above the level of the water. The boathouse starts to gain detail as they approach and it looks rather well held together despite the passage of time and the roaring waters that have been crashing over it. The path ends at the boathouse with a wooden bridge leading from the stone walkway to the building. The only way to continue onward from this point is by getting in the water.

Within the building are various watercraft. There are a few canoes mounted on a wall that each hold 2 people, a slightly larger boat tied up outside that can hold 3 people comfortably, and a large raft capable of holding up to 8 medium sized creatures. The party will have to decide how they wish to proceed – all in one single vehicle or spread across multiple. There are plenty of paddles for everyone within each of the vehicles as well as flotation devices to prevent them from going under if they happen to flip or fall out of their vehicle.

Also hanging on the walls in here are dozens of fishing rods, one of which remains pristine while the others are mostly rotted away. This is a magical item - a **Fisherman's Quarterstaff (NDMT2)**. (*Since this is a low level dungeon, I recommend nerfing this to a +1 quarterstaff instead.*)

## GREAT WHITE WATER RAFTING

Once the players begin their journey, they will quickly realize that these paddles are rather futile except for last minute maneuvers, as the current picks up quite swiftly after departing the boathouse. The water begins to drop down at extreme angles and pick up speed, but the curvature of the cave and the water causes it to be fairly smooth... at least until the dark spots appear in the water.

Shadows spring up behind the boats and begin charging forward, closing the gap in no time despite the fact that the boats are moving so quickly through the water. As the shadows reach a single boat length's distance away, grey fins protrude from the water.

### Roll for initiative.

The party is under attack by sharks. The number of sharks and types of sharks depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 6** - 3x Hunter Shark (**MM Pg. 330**)
- **APL 7** - 4x Hunter Shark
- **APL 8** - 2x Giant Shark (**MM Pg. 328**)

These sharks will use their great strength to attempt to flip the vehicles. When the sharks do this, each creature in the boat will need to succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked into the water as the boat rocks violently. If every creature in the same vehicle fails this save, the entire vehicle is flipped, otherwise it remains upright through the attack.

In addition to the sharks attempting to flip the boats, the cave is not particularly kind to the players either. On the second and fourth rounds of combat, the boats come to sharp turns in the path and if at least 1 player does not dedicate their action to controlling the boat (or 2 if the players are in the raft), then the vehicle will flip as it slams into the stone at great speed.

Once the battle is over, there is another 30 seconds of rapid traveling through the tunnels before the water finally empties out to a quiet beach.

## A SHELL OF A TIME

### DESCRIPTION

Before you is a beach that contains fifty feet of sand before it meets a solid stone wall that curls up and caps the room. Sitting on this beach is a massive spiral shell at least thirty feet across. The shell is primarily an off-white color but has portions that shine a brighter pearlescent. There are also blue runes etched into the side of the shell that shimmer on occasion and cause it to light up the cave in a dazzling display.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Beachfront**.

**A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that these are protective glyphs, ready to trigger when a certain event occurs.** Approaching the shell, the players can see a mostly translucent barrier that covers the entrance. Moving closer still, a set of words glimmer across this barrier in Celestial. They say, "Those who died defeating this creature will be the very same who defend it from intruders." This is a bit of a warning to prepare the players for what comes next, for as soon as anyone touches this barrier, the dead stir.

#### Roll for initiative.

These entities rip their way from out of the sands or crawl from the shallows of the water to engage the players. They focus primarily on the person who touched the barrier first, but will attack anyone who threatens the shell that they guard.

The types of creatures and number of creatures depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 6

- 1x Banshee (**MM Pg. 23**)
- 6x Zombie (**MM Pg. 316**)

#### • APL 7

- 1x Banshee
- 1x Zombie Warrior (**NEB1**)
- 4x Zombie

#### • APL 8

- 1x Banshee
- 2x Zombie Warrior
- 4x Zombie

Once all of these enemies are defeated, the barrier that prevents entry to the shell fades away. The party can walk within and as they round the first loop they see that the interior of the shell has been hollowed out completely. Sitting on a pedestal in the center of the room is a silver ring band. Sitting on a table behind this are four beautiful sapphire flowers worth 250g each, as well as an **Aquan Quiver (NDMT2)**.

## THE WAY BACK

After grabbing the ring band, the flow of the water reverses despite the fact that it is going uphill. The party will need to take the boats back up the path and to the waterfall once again. When they arrive at the waterfall they simply need to jump and they will be fine.

## UNLEASH THE ELEMENTS

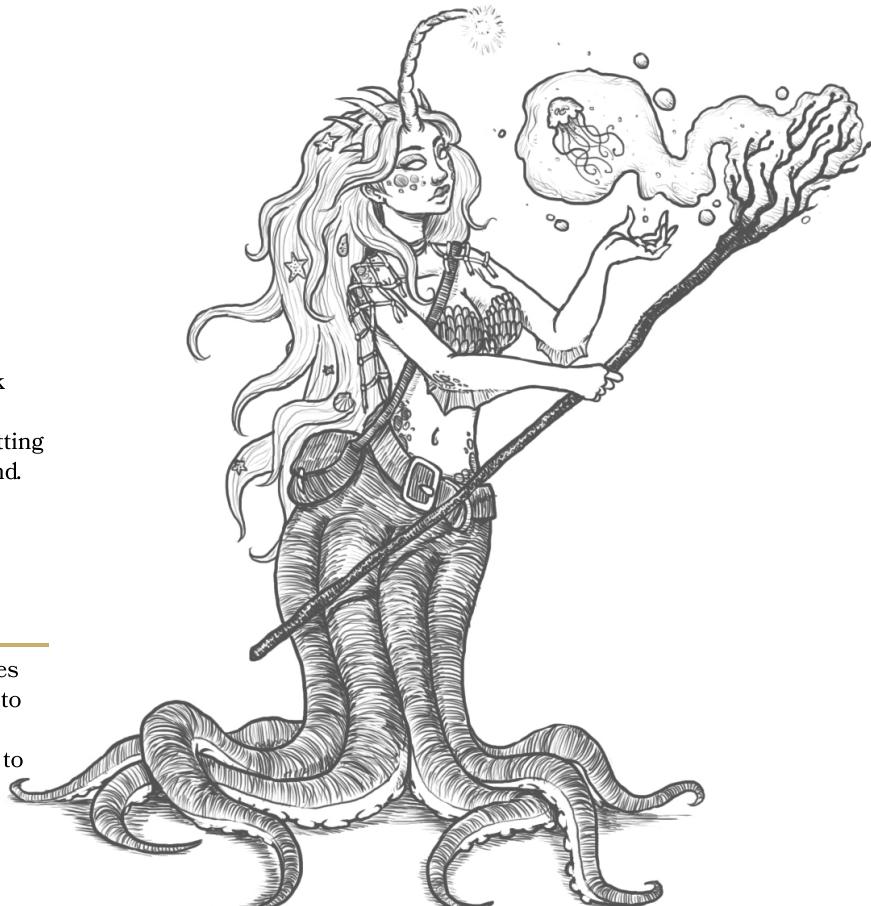
Once all three pieces are gathered, they can be assembled to form the **Ring of the Hydromancer (NDMT2)**.

When the ring is assembled, the runes that line the pool in the main entryway all begin to glow vibrantly. They shine bright enough to envelop the entire room with light that wavers from the refraction of the water. After 15 seconds of this shining, growing brighter by the second, the stone at the bottom of the pool slides away and reveals a 5 foot wide sphere of spiraling blue light resting in the depths. This is the Essence of Pure Water.

Shortly after, the water begins to churn wildly as if it were the sea during a powerful storm. Water falls in torrents across the entire area, overflows the pool, and spills onto the floor hundreds of gallons at a time. A 15-foot wide waterspout forms at the center of the pool, just above the Pure Water, and extends to the ceiling as it spirals, throwing water all across the room in massive arcs. The water spout swells, growing one foot a second until it consumes nearly the entire pool of water.

Then, as suddenly as it started, the waters calm. The rain ends, the water spout stops, and the room goes silent. Hovering just above the water level is a strange merfolk whose bottom half looks like that of an octopus rather than that of a fish. She wields a large staff that ends in coral and has hair covered in small sea creatures and shells.

She looks to the party and beckons them to her.



## LYSIDIA, THE HYDROMANCER

The creature introduces herself as Lysidia, the Hydromancer. She is the guardian of this temple, created using the Pure Water; and she is now tasked with protecting it from those who would seek to use it with ill intent. She is bound to the one who holds the artifact that was protected by the temple, in this case – The Ring of the Hydromancer, but will not execute deeds she deems malevolent.

While she may not know much of this world, she is quite clever and perceptive. She asks the party what they would have her do in the case of additional adventurers finding their way to this place – kill them or simply capture them. She also informs the wielder of the ring that they can communicate with her at any time by simply submerging themselves completely in water and focusing on the ring. This will open a telepathic channel and allow them to share a thoughts for as long as the wielder remains submerged.

## THE ESSENCE

As mentioned in the beginning, it is up to you to build a hook around the Essence of Pure Water stored in this temple. It can be a gateway to the Plane of Water, a source of power for an ancient artifact needed to stop a villain, or perhaps the water is needed for a powerful druidic ritual. The choice is entirely up to you. Decide if this place is at risk of intruders who would claim it for themselves and whether or not Lysidia will be able to thwart these invaders. Good luck!

## EXPERIENCE

The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the entire temple. Feel free to adjust these values.

- **APL 6** - 8,000 XP per player
- **APL 7** - 10,000 XP per player
- **APL 8** - 12,500 XP per player

## LOOT

If your players cleared the temple completely they should have received all of the following items:

- Cloak of Everflowing Water
- 2x Weather Orb - Rain
- Fisherman's Quarterstaff (+1)
- Aquan Quiver
- Ring of the Hydromancer
- 4x Sapphire Flower (250g each)

These items can all be found in the Magic Items section of this Toolkit. Feel free to adjust the loot as it suitable to your world, as some may not be as magical as others.

# THE TEMPLE OF PURE LIGHTNING

## A DUNGEON FOR ADVENTURERS LEVELS 7–9

### SUGGESTED USAGE

The Temple of Pure Lightning is unique compared to the other temples because it can be located anywhere in your world. I personally prefer it to be beneath a major city that your players have visited many times. Have its location be a secret that is kept by the powerful elite and they are only willing to give it up in exchange for a favor.

Adventurers may seek this temple out for a number of reasons. The lightning that stirs within can be used to power constructs or to raise a city's technology above all others if its people can learn to harness and utilize it. Within the temple are powerful weapons that could be used to end wars before they begin. These can be a good tool to segway into higher tier campaign arcs. There are also plenty of ancient magic items down in the temple so the allure is there for anyone seeking power for difficult fights that may lie ahead.

### DUNGEON OVERVIEW

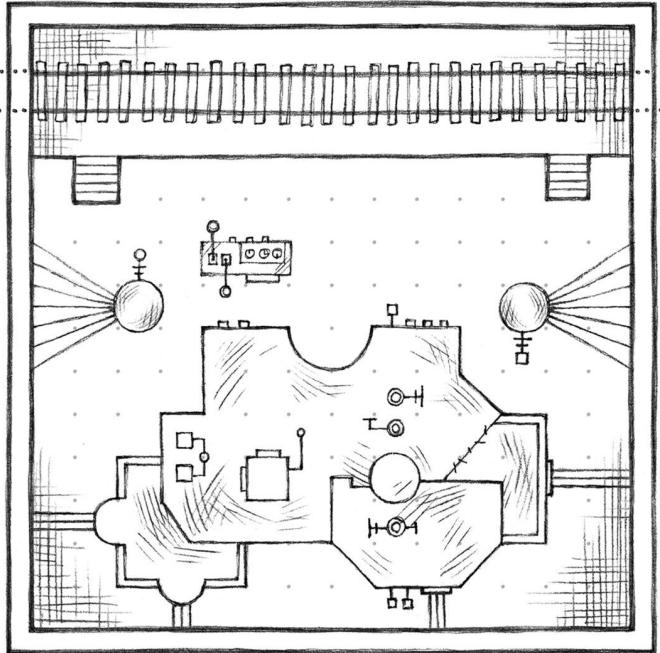
This temple is the largest of the four as it contains a minecart system that sprawls multiple miles beneath the surface, some paths leading to rich veins of ore and others to a secret testing area. Deep within the temple is a sphere of lightning, a pure essence that holds great power. You can choose to have this essence of pure lightning be significant to your world and your story, or remove it entirely and replace it with a magical artifact or an ancient tome. The choice is yours! The runes that protect this essence can only be disabled by one wearing the Crown of the Storm Herald, the pieces of which are scattered across the temple.

While the other temples have contained three distinct wings, each with their own challenges, this temple is a sprawling underground world that the players must conquer in sequence before reaching the minecart system and navigating their way through aetherspawn infested tunnels to reach their ultimate destination. The temple contains eternal storm-clouds, electrocuted floors, massive ancient weapons of war, and rooms filled with arcing bolts of lightning. All of these challenges your players will need to overcome if they hope to reach the Essence of Pure Lightning.

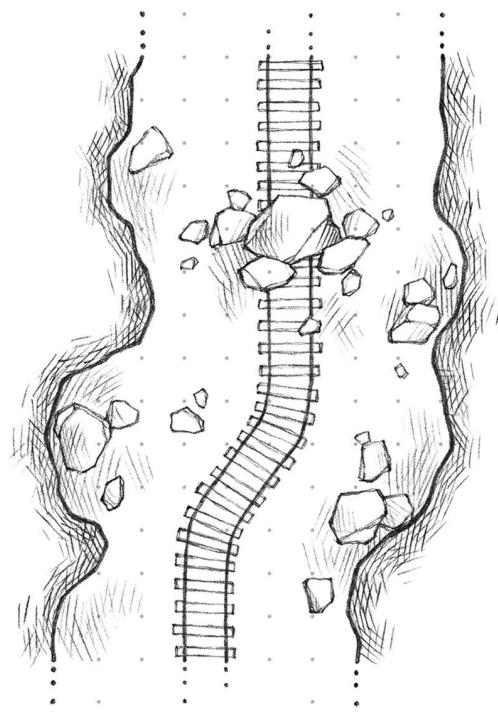
This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

This module contains custom monsters which are included in the Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in Nerzugal's Game Master Toolkit, which can be purchased for free on DriveThruRPG. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found in the Bestiary at the end of this Toolkit.

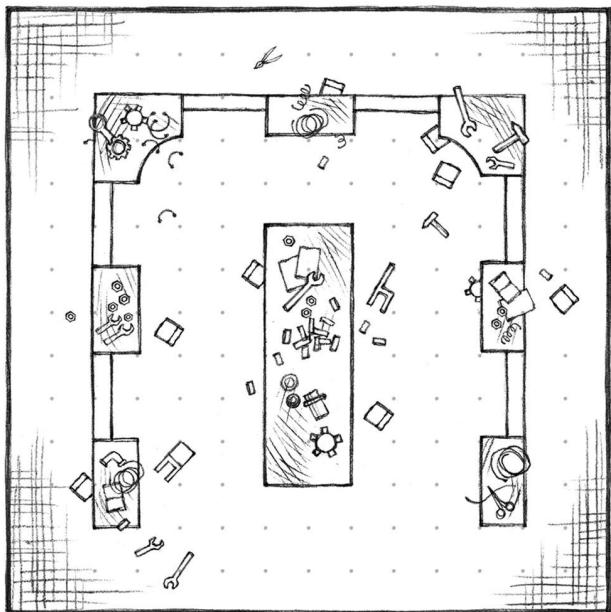
# THE TEMPLE OF PURE LIGHTNING



THE GENERATOR ROOM



THE MINESHAFT



THE WORKSHOP



THE PERPETUAL  
STORM ROOM

## BIGGER IS BETTER

The most distinctive feature of the temple of lightning is its size, especially in comparison to the other temples. This temple was a workshop churning out devices capable of leveling castles and these weapons had to reach the surface somehow, so the main doors are gargantuan in size and controlled by literal tons of gears and machinery. A set of huge rails lead up to the door and end at the tunnel the players must take to get down to the temple. Fortunately, the main doors remain open, though they are incredibly difficult to find without knowing their location.

### DESCRIPTION

*You step through the massive double doors into the main room of the temple. The ceiling here is forty feet high and the path splits in two, though the one of the right is completely blocked by a small mountain of collapsed rubble. The stone over here seems deeply unstable and it is unclear how far down this tunnel the collapsed stone extends. The path to the left remains open, hulking railroad ties running down the center of a thirty foot tall carved tunnel. Electric lights are fixed to the wall and keep the temple brightly illuminated. The open path continues straight for a bit before dipping down and out of view.*

## THE FIRST FLOOR

After following the tracks for a hundred yards down its sloped path, the rails come to an end at a set colossal closed metal doors. A huge area that opens up to the right of this, however. There are a number of ramps leading down to the track and stairs leading up to a room dominated by a hulking mechanical device. The track continues deeper into the stone, but the passageway has been shut off for now since the power is off. In order to proceed, the party will need to get things up and running again.

## THE POWER GENERATOR

### DESCRIPTION

\*Just off the railway is an ancient structure of unfathomable complexity and power. It is covered in glowing orbs as small as an inch in diameter or as large as a foot across. Metal wires span like spider webs from node to node, some affixed to the device and some mounted to the wall or hanging off of poles jutting out of the stone. Interconnected gears and shafts run all along the central device, some as large as five feet in diameter. The main portion of the device is over thirty feet wide on each side, but the full expanse of the wires and nodes is much larger. At the top of the device is a spiraling metal tower with rings around the outside. Hundreds of these metal wires are attached to this and run directly into the stone of the wall.

Inscribed upon the front of the device is the following text:  
The spark that shall create a revolution.\*

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Generator Room.**

### POWER ON

This is the device that provides power to the entire facility. To get it running again and gain access to the rest of the temple, the party will need to scale the structure using a mix of athletics and acrobatics. Fortunately, there is a diagram near the base of the device that visualizes the startup sequence.

### THE DIAGRAM

- **Switch 1** - A large switch near the base of the machine with two figures pulling down on it.
- **Switch 2** - An access panel is tucked away uncomfortably behind some pipes. There is also a set of snapping metal plates that are labeled with a hand and a cross over it as a warning to not stick limbs into the device.
- **Valve 1** - Features a pipe running along the side of the device twenty feet off the ground. There is a small valve on the outside of this pipe that must be turned.
- **Valve 2** - 40 feet off the ground, within a tube hanging from the ceiling, is a final valve that must be turned. A set of scaffolding is drawn next to the diagram as a way up.

Scribbled beneath these instructions the following text is angrily scribbled: “Who the hell thought this process was a good idea?”

### THE PROCESS

- **Switch 1** - There is a switch on the ground level attached to a metal box, but the switch has become jammed over the years. It requires success on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to move. Give advantage or lower the DC if your players find additional leverage or use creative solutions such as a grease spell.
- **Switch 2** - The second switch is hidden behind a set of sliding metal plates. Based on the images on the diagram, there is a panel that gives direct access to the switch, but it is locked and the key to this panel is nowhere to be seen. Your players can pick the lock on the panel with a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to access the switch without risk. Otherwise, someone must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to quickly flip the switch or take 3d6 bludgeoning damage as the plates smash together on their arm.
- **Valve 1** - There is a valve on a pipe about 20 feet off the ground. A player must scale the machinery with a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to reach the valve. A result of 5 or less results in a fall and 2d6 bludgeoning damage. When the valve is turned, it gives off a light shock and the creature turning the valve must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall and take 2d6 bludgeoning damage. This lever is quite stubborn and requires a strength score of at least 10 to flip, so a spell such as *mage hand* won't get the job done.
- **Valve 2** - This valve is at the end of a large tube that hangs from the ceiling. It is 40 feet above the ground. There was some scaffolding that was used to reach it before... but it has since collapsed, so they will have to find a creative method up to the pipe. They can use a rope and pull themselves up or climb along the device itself. Simply have that player make the necessary check and take fall damage on failures. The switch is invisible until the creature gets up high, so using spells to flip this switch is difficult as well.

## LET THERE BE LIGHT

When the last of the valves is turned, there is one more large switch next to the instruction panel that needs to be flipped. It is about three feet across and takes multiple creatures to budge, but when it is done, the temple comes to life.

Lightning sparks and arcs across the room, pulsing through the rings around the pole at the top of the device. Additional lights turns on, some of which oscillate through the area. The set of doors that were closed in front of the tracks open up with a deafening grinding sound.

## AWAKENING THE SLUMBERING

Unfortunately, the noise is loud enough to wake creatures that have been slumbering in the machine, feeding off of its residual electricity even while it is in its dormant state. In a flash of wind and lightning, air elementals begin to appear from out of the device and attack the party.

### Roll for initiative.

The number and types of elementals depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 7**

- 1x Air Elemental (**MM Pg. 124**)
- 2x Small Air Elemental (**NEB1**)

- **APL 8**

- 1x Air Elemental
- 4x Small Air Elemental

- **APL 9**

- 1x Air Elemental
- 6x Small Air Elemental

Once the elementals has been dispatched, the party notices something out of place. A small, unsuspecting box has become lit up as four separate lights shine on it, each a different hue. There is a little lock on the front of the box that can be easily broken. Within is the base of the Crown of the Storm Herald and a set of **Spark Cubes (NDMT2)**. The crown has a small recess at both the front and back where the other two components fit into place, but those will be found further in the temple. This crown is required to access the Essence of Pure Lightning at the end of the temple, so assembling the pieces is critical.

When the party heads back to the railway, they will find that a piece of stone has slid away and reveals a walking path for humanoids that avoids the tracks and takes them further into the temple. If the party tries to take the tracks, they will find that there was a massive collapse at some point and the passage has been completely blocked off.

## THE CHARGED TILES

After nearly five minutes of walking down this hallway, the party finally arrives at another door. Opening it up reveals a rather large room that seems to be a lounge of sorts for workers. The only problem is that the protective plating that once spanning the center of the room has been shattered and worn away, exposing some deadly electrically charged tiles beneath.

The party will need to solve **The Charged Tiles** puzzle to get through this area and to the door on the far side. Please consult the **Puzzles** section of this toolkit for information on The Charged Tiles puzzle. (If your players are not fans of puzzles, feel free to leave this out!)

Once the puzzle is complete, the party can go through the door on the far side of the room that spirals down and takes them down to the next floor of the temple.

## THE SECOND FLOOR

### CONSTRUCT ASSEMBLY

#### DESCRIPTION

\*This room is massive - over two hundred feet in length and a hundred feet wide, though most of this area is unnavagatable due to the massive amount of shelving, workbenches, and half-assembled constructs that are scattered throughout the area. There are dozens of twelve foot high metal shelves, but these do not come close to touching the forty foot high ceiling. Each row of shelves has a rolling ladder to allow the retrieval of parts higher up. Intricate and precisely made parts are stocked away in nicely organized and labeled boxes all throughout the area.

Most of the workbenches are arranged in a U-shape at the center of the room with arms, legs, and heads of unfinished constructs strewn about on top of them along with all of the other parts that were left behind when the temple was abandoned. There are over a hundred constructs in the area, ranging from small birds up to hulking entities that match an ogre in size. Numerous carts are positioned around the area, most still loaded up with spare parts.

On the far side of the room are a set of double doors that are currently open. Off to the left of the room is a powered lift that would take completed constructs up to the train station above. Along the right wall is a sign that is lightly glowing with the text: "Like the lightning, our lives are but a flash that can leave an impact never to be forgotten."\*

**Be sure to emphasize the large carts scattered through the area, because these are significant to solving a later puzzle.**

A map for the combat in this area can be found above labeled - **The Workshop**.

#### LOOMING CONSTRUCTS

As the party makes their way across the room, they are forced to navigate between shelves and workbenches. There isn't a single area more than ten feet wide that isn't obstructed by some piece of equipment or a construct. When they reach the center of the room, one of the bird-like mechanical creatures in the room begins to stir and sparks to life. Its eyes go red for a moment as it turns to look at the party and immediately a bolt of lightning burst from its body and zaps over a dozen other constructs, chaining through them until it has traversed the entire room. Some of the constructs hit by this bolt of lightning begin to stir.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number and types of creatures depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 7**
  - 1x Radiant Stalker (**NEB1**)
  - 2x Storm Raven (**NEB1**)
- **APL 8**
  - 1x Radiant Stalker
  - 3x Storm Raven
- **APL 9**
  - 2x Radiant Stalker
  - 2x Storm Raven

All creatures listed above are constructs, even if that is not in their base stat block. These creatures gain the following traits:

- **Damage Immunities** poison, psychic
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

In addition, the radiant stalkers shoot bursts of lightning and deal lightning damage rather than radiant damage.

### **ADDITIONAL AREAS AND SUPPLIES**

Once combat is over, the players have a chance to more thoroughly search the area which is divided into smaller sections. These sections include the following:

- Armory
- Repair
- Assembly
- Spare Supplies
- Charging Station

In the Armory, the players find a **Shock (NDMT2)** shortsword and **Boots of the Electromancer (NDMT2)**.

In the area labeled Charging Station, the players find two ten-foot tall coiling obelisks with lightning constantly arcing between them. There is a ten foot wide metal platform between the two and lightning latches onto the floor before dancing along and finding the other obelisk. This lightning is constant, and anyone who moves in between the obelisks take 3d6 lightning damage.

The other areas are mostly just spare parts for constructs, spare strips of metal, bolts, screws, etc... Feel free to have a few mithril or adamantine bars in some of the supplies if the party performs a thorough search, or even consider adding some rarer metal that could be used to craft a specialty magical item. If you choose to not use the Essence of Pure Lightning, this could contain a rare artifact that the party came here to find.

## **THE ZAP CANNON**

When the players are finished in the Construct Assembly area, they can move through the doors of the far side of the room.

### **DESCRIPTION**

The next room even larger than the workshop and is dominated by a colossal cannon. The barrel of this weapon is over 20 feet long and it points at a nearby wall, though the weapon is on a rotatable base and attached to a large railway that spans the area. Next to the cannon is a small crane that is currently holding a crate. On the side of the room opposite the cannon are a number of target ranges with horrifying scorch marks on the thick metal plates. At the end of the 300 foot room is another set of large double doors with a large lever off to the side.

On the base of this weapon is the text: "Zap Cannon Prototype - Use Caution!". On the right side of the device are a few levers that adjust the cannon's direction and a button covered by a pane of glass with the label "Fire" written beneath it, but these do not work at the moment. Just next to this button is another glass case that is sealed. It holds a small diamond shaped crystal that pulses every few seconds. This is the second part of the crown, but the zap cannon only fires if the crystal is still in place, so the players cannot remove it until they have fired the cannon or they will be forced to put it back.

At the back of the cannon is a large cubic object that is clearly detachable. This is a battery that has lost its charge. It is of a different color and a different metal than the rest of the cannon and there are four large clamps holding it in place against the back of the cannon. When a player gets close, a small bit of lightning jumps from the metal box and gives them a painless zap. When the players disengage the clamps, the battery falls to the ground with an echoing bang as it weighs over three hundred pounds.

Next to the cannon is the crane. A creature with an Intelligence score of 13 or higher can figure out how to operate the machine with 10 minutes of study and practice. The players can use this to lift the battery off the floor and place it on one of the carts from the other room.

If the players flip the switch at the far end of the room, they are met with the sound of loud grinding and then a massive crash as a piece of metal snaps and collapses on the other side. The door is sealed shut and must be blown open with the cannon for the players to proceed.

### **RECHARGING THE BATTERY**

The players need to fire the zap cannon, but to do so they first need to recharge its battery! The players will need to remove the battery from the back of the cannon and then use the crane to pick it up and place it on one of the many carts from the previous room. Afterwards, the players must roll the battery back to the charging station and place it in between the obelisks for ten minutes to allow it to regain enough power to fire the cannon. They have to be careful rolling it back, as the battery gives off constant sparks. Have the players take an occasional 1d6 lightning damage if they move the cart without a rope, a chain, or some other way to provide distance.

When the battery is back at the cannon, they will need to use the crane again to pick it up and move it into place as the other players lock the clamps. Once again, if the players are not taking some precaution against electricity, everyone who attaches a clamp takes 1d6 lightning damage. Once the clamps are reengaged, the cannon groans to life and lights all along the weapon turn on.

### MAKE A PATH!

With the battery back in place, the players can use the levers on the side of the cannon to aim it across the room and at the jammed door. When the button is pressed, the room goes dead silent as every creature's hair stands on end. The air just seems to disappear for a moment and the temperature of the room rises by a full ten degrees as the end of the barrel begins to glow. The light continues to build and shine for three seconds before a beam of energy bursts from the barrel and streaks across the room in a flash. Any creature looking at the cannon when the shot goes off must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for ten minutes.

Where once there was a door at the far side of the room, there is now simply a tangle of metal and rubble. Now that the path forward has been cleared, the party can retrieve the glowing crystal from the side of the cannon and place it in the Crown of the Storm Herald. Afterwards, they can scale the rubble and move to the next portion of the temple.

## MINECART MADNESS

### THE STATION

#### DESCRIPTION

*As you crest the pile of rubble, you see an area dominated by tracks weaving across the floor and disappearing into tunnels at the edge of a large station. Hundreds of carts populate this area, some still filled with iron ore. Many of these are linked together in large chains with a strange looking cart at the front that holds a cube similar to the one that was attached to the zap cannon. Large signs hang over the tunnels leading out of the station, they read: "Iron Mines - Areas A-F", "Mithral Mines - Areas G&H", and "Experimental Magics Testing Area (Authorized Personnel Only)". There are a few smaller buildings in the area. One of them has "Lightning Fast Feasts!" written on the front, another reads "Shock and Awe Tavern", and the final simply reads "Banking and Payments." This area is lit up with beautiful lights of all colors, attempting to draw customers to each of the establishments*

Resting on the tracks with some torn cloth is a necklace that glimmers in these scattered lights. It has a bit of blood splattered on it, but it is clearly magical. This is an **Amulet of the Storm Caller (NDMT2)**.

#### REMAINING SUPPLIES

The building labeled *Banking and Payment* was emptied in a hurry, but there is an iron vault door within that seems to have withstood the test of time. If the players break their way through this door via magic or brute force, they are rewarded for on the other side are six topaz flowers worth 250 gold each and 6,775 gold split in platinum, gold, silver, and copper.

### INTO THE MINES

The party needs to head to the Experimental Magics Testing Area to get to the next key event. They can do so easily by hopping in one of the chains of minecarts. The cart at the front has a few levers that when switched cause the entire set to move down the track at a steady pace.

The party can explore the iron mines, but they are merely tracks that split down various paths and head to iron veins in various state of harvest. Heading down the path to the mithral mines can be a bit more lucrative, but it seems most of this precious metal has already been mined and harvested, though there are still some veins of raw ore the party could find a way to monetize! Eventually, they will need to make their way to the Magics Testing Area to obtain the final piece of the Crown and the Essence.

### AETHERSPAWN ASSAULT

This particular set of track is much longer than the others and contains no branching paths. After about three minutes of travel, the tracks up ahead becomes blocked by boulders and forces the carts to stop their advance or risk smashing again the loose stone. The obstruction will only take about ten minutes to clear by hand, but when the players approach the rubble they are attacked by a set of Aetherspawn that have been lurking down in the temple.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Mineshaft**.

These creatures are intelligent and are desperate to gain access to the Essence of Pure Lightning. They wish to feed on its power and use it to create more of their kind. The party can promise to let the aetherspawn feed on these energies when they have unlocked the passage, but this may have repercussions down the road. Otherwise, the aetherspawn simply attack, as they are protective of the other elemental energies that reside in this temple.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number and types of aetherspawn depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 7

- 1x Aetherspawn Rift Walker (lightning) (**NEB2**)
- 1x Aetherspawn Spellblade (lightning) (**NEB2**)
- 2x Aetherspawn Guardian (lightning) (**NEB2**)

#### • APL 8

- 1x Aetherspawn Rift Walker (lightning)
- 2x Aetherspawn Spellblade (lightning)
- 2x Aetherspawn Guardian (lightning)

#### • APL 9

- 1x Aetherspawn Paragon (lightning) (**NEB2**)
- 2x Aetherspawn Spellblade (lightning)
- 2x Aetherspawn Guardian (lightning)

Once the creatures are defeated, the party can either continue on foot or clear the path and continue via the cart. After another few hundred yards of travel, the party reaches a smaller station with a door that leads to the next area. The door is locked with a magical seal that can only be broken by someone who approaches while wearing the Amulet of the Storm Caller found in the minecart station. Once this is done, the door becomes unlocked for one minute and everyone can pass without issue.

## EXPERIMENTAL MAGICS

### TESTING AREA

#### EVERLASTING LIGHTNING

Once the party passes through the doorway, they are presented with another lengthy walk down a narrow hallway. After about a minute of travel, there encounter a room on the right side of the hall. It is filled with bookshelves that are all bare. There are a few pieces of blank parchment lying on the floor along with some quills and ink that were left behind, but all of the documents that were once stored here have been taken. Feel free to have a single book left behind in the corner somewhere if you want to add an extra hook to the dungeon for somewhere else in your world. You could also have a few spell scrolls in here if you give your spellcasters some extra resources. **There is also a key hanging on a hook in this room that the players will need to access the next area.**

A bit further down the hall is a locked thick wooden door. The players will need to use the key from the side area to unlock it and proceed. Once they swing the door open, it is clear why the door was locked.

#### DESCRIPTION

*Beyond the door is a dome shaped room 120 feet in diameter. In the center of the room, hanging from the ceiling is a 30 foot long coiled rod with a metal sphere at the end. From this sphere, lightning arcs at sporadic intervals to fifteen foot tall metal rods that are scattered throughout the room. These rods seem to be absorbing the energy and sending it into the floor, but about half of these rods are broken and when lightning strikes them it explodes in an arcing burst. On the opposite side of the room is another wooden door.*

#### TRaversing THE ROOM

With how the rods are scattered and how many are broken, it is impossible to travel across the room without being exposed to at least two bolts of lightning (unless the players use magical travel). When a creature is struck by one of these bolts of lightning, it takes 4d12 lightning damage. However, if the party locks hands as they travel, they can move as one and distribute the shock across all of them, lessening the impact on any individual. If they use this method, each creature takes only 1d4 lightning damage when they move across each of the exposed areas.

**There are other means the players can use to traverse this room of course. Be sure to reward them for receiving little or no damage if they are creative in their solution!**

#### THE THIRD COMPONENT

When the party reaches the door on the far side of the room, they must again use the key to unlock it and proceed to another long hallway. Immediately to the right, just past the door, is a stairwell that spirals up and back towards the room they just crossed. After climbing over a hundred stairs, the path finally opens up to a laboratory area. Scattered through the room are various half-finished devices with wires dangling from them. Some intricate, but also unfinished, constructs are present as well.

The true item of note is at the center of the room. Sitting on a pedestal is a tiny glowing blue cube. Every one to two seconds it flashes brightly and runes along the pedestal pulse with energy that leads into the floor. It is unsafe to simply take the cube with the amount of power it produces, so the players must transfer it to its slot on the crown as swiftly as possible. Every turn a creature holds the cube, it takes 1d12 lightning damage. When the cube is inserted into the crown, it changes from periodic flashes of energy to a constant glow and runes along the crown go alight with energy. In addition, when the cube is removed from the pedestal, the lightning stops sparking in the room below so the players can make a safe return trip.

With this cube and the crystal from the zap cannon, the **Crown of the Storm Herald (NDMT2)** is complete, but the party must still find the final door to access the Essence of Pure Lightning. Once they have the cube, the players can go back downstairs and continue down the hallway. It extends for a hundred feet before yet another locked door is waiting for them.

## PERPETUAL STORM CLOUDS

#### DESCRIPTION

*As you open the door, you are presented with a room the same size as the one you just passed through, but rather than raw lightning flashing through the area, it is instead filled with dozens of dense, black storm clouds that slowly drift around. There is thunder ringing and lightning flashing in the clouds and rain drenches the floor. Directly in front of you is a 15-foot wide dome that appears to be made of glass, barely visible as rain cascades down its edges.*

Players can pass through this dome with ease, its shape warping slightly as if they were stepping into a large bubble. In the center of the dome is a small floating orb. When this orb is pushed, the dome goes with it and protects the people within from the perils of the room - most of them anyway. If a creature tries to move through a storm cloud without the protective bubble, it takes 1d12 lightning damage for every 5 feet it travels.

A map to this area can be found above labeled - **The Perpetual Storm Room.**

## A SHOCKING ATTACK

As the players are working their way across the room, movement flashes in one of the storm clouds - a massive serpentine shadow that sparks with energy. Moments later, a similar burst of movement happens in front of them, a long slender bodied creature streaking through the area with swift movements. The clouds stir around the party as they wait. Have the players make a Wisdom (Perception) check against the Dexterity (Stealth) roll of a Behir (**MM Pg. 25**). On a success, they notice the behir that is now clinging to the ceiling thirty feet over their heads, its mouth open and ready to unleash its lightning breath. If no one succeeds, the behir gets a surprise round of combat.

### Roll for initiative.

Your players will always fight a behir in this combat, but its stats are and abilities are modified depending on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 7

- Reduce the Behir's hit points to 126 (12d12 + 48).
- Reduce the damage of its Lightning Breath to 38 (7d10) and reduce its save DC to 14.
- Reduce the damage of its constrict to 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

#### • APL 8

- Reduce the Behir's hit points to 147 (14d12 + 56).
- Reduce the damage of its Lightning Breath to 44 (8d10) and reduce its save DC to 14.

#### • APL 9

- No changes

The party cannot spread out much unless they expose themselves to the storm, and the behir uses that to its advantage. If your players are injured badly coming into this fight, consider giving them resistance to the Behir's lightning breath attack thanks to the defensive properties of the bubble, as it can be quite the deadly attack. The creature hits hard, but action economy should make sure your players deal with the Behir quickly. If you have a larger party (5+), consider giving the behir a Legendary Action Bite attack as well.

With the behir slain, the party has some freedom to explore the room. At its center is an orb glowing on a pedestal that is alight with dozens of runes. This is a **Weather Orb - Lightning Storm (NDMT2)** and when your players take this orb, the clouds in the room dissipate over the next minute.

## THE ESSENCE OF PURE LIGHTNING

On the far side of the room is yet another of these wooden doors that requires the key to open. When the players swing it open, they are presented with a sphere of sparking energy trapped within a large dome similar to the one they used to traverse the previous room. The dome pulses with protective runes that can only be removed by the Crown of the Storm Herald, which should be fully assembled by now.

When a player wearing the crown places a hand on the dome, the runes all shine brightly for a few seconds followed by a powerful blast of blue lightning that streaks down from the ceiling and strikes the orb with incredible force. Everyone in the room is temporarily blinded and deafened from this blast, but it fades over the next thirty seconds or so. Once the party can see again, they find that the orb is now free of the protective dome. The Essence of Pure Lightning, a floating ball of pure energy, sits sparkling in the center of the room.

## TELNAR, THE STORM BRINGER

After the dome has been unprotected for about a minute, the air starts to crackle with energy. Little sparks start to appear throughout the room and snaps of power ring throughout the space. These snaps grow louder and more frequent until it becomes a deafening crackle. The sparks grow more intense and vibrant in color as the volume increases and eventually start to form a rift behind the orb.

Just as it seems the room will no longer be able to tolerate the noise and energy pulsing through it, a creature steps through the rift of sparks and the room goes suddenly still. He stands at nearly twenty feet tall, holding a shield in one hand and a sparking scimitar in the other that is the size of an average human adult. He regards the party with curiosity before spotting the player wearing the Crown of the Storm Herald, at which point he gives a deep bow. He introduces himself as Telnar, the Storm Bringer, and offers his aid.

Telnar is a creature of immense strength and will bend to the party's wishes as long as they can be interpreted in a way that will help keep the essence safe. He will not destroy the essence, but he can seal the Temple and defend it from anyone else who enters or he could even take it with him to another plane for safekeeping. He can be used to ask questions about ancient magics or even as a guide that can take the party to other planes.

## THE ESSENCE

The essence is surrounded by an aura of energy as the interior sparks with uncontrollable energy. Even growing near to the orb causes all of the hair on a creature's body to stand on edge and small painless strands of lightning to dart from their bodies to the essence. A creature that attempts to touch the sphere of energy directly must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 32 (5d12) lightning damage and become paralyzed for one minute. On a successful save, the creature takes half that much damage and is blasted back 10 feet instead.

Your players should be well aware of the dangers of this orb as they approach. Players risk death if they touch this sphere of power unprepared, but don't hold back if they choose to be reckless with their actions.

As mentioned in the beginning, it is up to you to build a hook around the Essence of Lightning stored in this temple. It can be a gateway to other planes, a source of power for an ancient weapon that was constructed here, or perhaps as some sort of object for mass teleportation via lightning. The choice is entirely up to you. Decide if this place is at risk of intruders who would claim it for themselves and whether or not Telnar will be able to thwart these invaders. Good luck!

## EXPERIENCE

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The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the entire temple. Feel free to adjust these values.

**APL 7 - 9,000 XP per player** **APL 8 - 11,500 XP per player**  
**APL 9 - 14,000 XP per player**

## LOOT

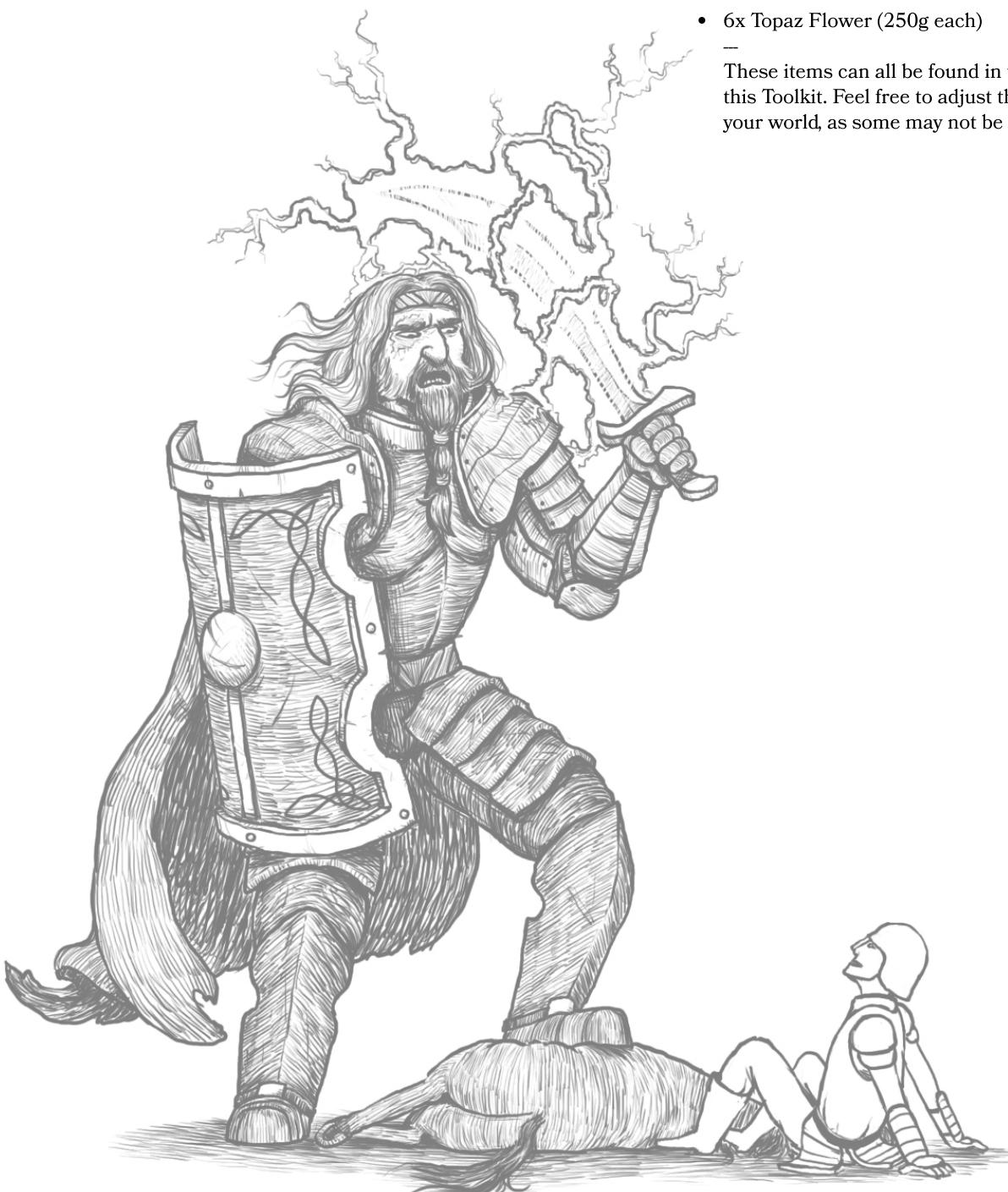
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*If your players cleared the temple completely they should have received all of the following items:*

Spark Cubes Shock Boots of the Electromancer Amulet of the Storm Caller 1x Weather Orb - Lightning Storm Crown of the Storm Herald 6,775 gold (Scattered across all currency types)

- 6x Topaz Flower (250g each)

These items can all be found in the Magic Items section of this Toolkit. Feel free to adjust the loot as it suitable to your world, as some may not be as magical as others.



# THE TOMB OF TARRAKETH

## A DUNGEON FOR LEVELS 7-11

### SUGGESTED USAGE

The Tomb of Tarraketh has been hidden away for centuries, sitting in the middle of an orcish burial ground deep in the wilds. The archway leading to the tomb is menacing and signs written in blood scattered throughout the burial grounds promise a painful death to any who would disturb the dead. Legends of this tomb have existed for generations, warning of the havoc that could be caused if the right group of orcs were to find it. Local lords would want it destroyed to keep their lands safe, the church would want this powerful evil exterminated once and for all, and treasure hunters would seek the magical items that certainly still rest within its walls.

### DUNGEON OVERVIEW

This is the Tomb of Tarraketh Sorrowsong, though he later became known as Tarraketh, Lord of Sorrows. He was a powerful orc warlord who pledged his allegiance to a demon lord to turn the tides of an ancient war amongst tribes. With his newfound power, he crushed all enemies in his path. Afterwards he continued to grow his influence and power by obeying the wishes of this demon. *Use this as an opportunity to plant seeds for a higher level arc for your characters. This demon lord could be influencing the world still and have a new set of followers that are operating in secret. Perhaps after the players have destroyed the resting place of its loyal followers, the demon grows upset with the party and creates obstacles for them down the road... or offer them a deal for its own amusement.*

When Tarraketh's strength began to fade in his age, his followers decided they would devise a way to restore his youth. It took many years, but they created a beautifully crafted structure complete with sacrificial chambers, traps, and even the instruments required to extract one's soul from their body. Tarraketh's soul was removed and his body placed in a rune enchanted sarcophagus. Hundreds were sacrificed and their blood used to slowly restore vitality to the warlord's withering body. When the restoration was nearing completion, a group of heroes arrived and slew the remaining orcs within. They were so injured from battle that they perished as well, leaving the tomb's location lost for centuries - Tarraketh on the brink of a return to power.

Many of Tarraketh's followers took their own lives when their lord fell, willing to be resurrected via their lord's strength when he returns to power and wanting to keep their bodies maintained at their peak strength. Other followers have been preserved through magics, ensuring that only those worthy of seeing Tarraketh's body ever manage to reach it as they burst from coffins to protect their lord.

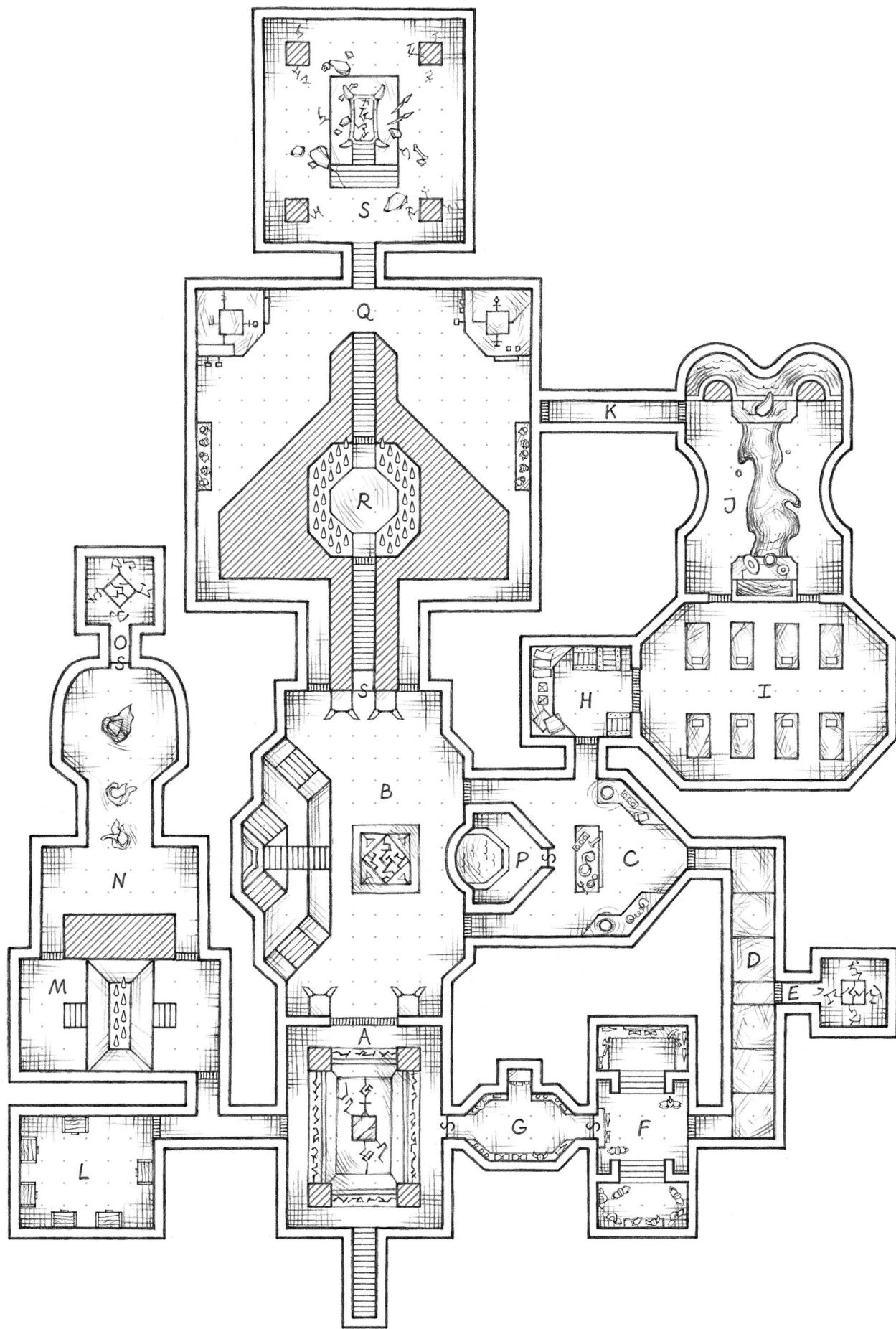
This is a trap heavy dungeon intended to push players to their limits. They will be offered promises of power in exchange for sacrifice. They will be subjected to magics that will warp their minds and bend them to both hatred and depression. Demon-blood orcs will attempt to end them and the undead will rise from their chambers to defend their long-dead lord. This dungeon is intended to be a high-lethality, so be warned before sending your unprepared players to their doom!

Additionally, this is a lengthy dungeon expected to take *at least* eight hours to complete. (It took my play test group roughly 13 hours). It is a difficult dungeon with numerous combat encounters weaved in with traps throughout the dungeon and pushes past the recommended daily encounter limit in an effort to strain your party's resources and make them feel drained and helpless by the time they reach the final fight. This danger is intentional, so don't be surprised if your players meet their demise within the walls of the Tomb of Tarraketh.

**This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.**

This module contains custom monsters which are included in the Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in Nerzugal's Game Master Toolkit, which can be purchased for free on DriveThruRPG. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found in the Bestiary at the end of this Toolkit.

# THE TOMB OF TARRAKETH



## [NODE A]

### A GRAND ENTRANCE

Beyond the external doors to the Tomb is a wide stairwell leading thirty feet down before coming to a set of double doors. Inscribed on this fine wooden door in a simple phrase written in orcish:

*Only the faithful shall return from this place.*

#### DESCRIPTION

*Pushing these doors open reveals nothing but darkness. No torches magically spring to life, nothing leaps out to attack you, and no sound beyond the slight squeak of the door can be heard. This room is quite large with a ceiling that extends up twenty feet. Four massive stone pillars are evenly spaced through the room with a beautiful black, blood red, and navy blue carpet laid out between them. At the center of this decorative rug and the room itself, is a six foot tall block of marble with an inscription upon it in Orcish:*

*A lifetime of conquest and slaughters, our lord, he is perfect  
Tarraketh, the Lord of Sorrows, and we - his loyal subjects*

*Visitors beware, for we have made the ultimate sacrifice  
Now our power is boundless, so heed this advice*

*Turn back now and spare yourselves a horrible death  
For none but the faithful may see the Tomb of Tarraketh*

*Along the walls are detailed works of art displaying a towering figure shrouded in black and blue robes and a legion of orcs behind it. On another wall are the fiery remains of an orcish village and a silhouette of this figure in the background, dominating the landscape with its shadow.*

*Another wall features humans and elves being sliced down – the colors are vivid and violent in nature. The art is almost abstract in nature, giving just enough details to capture the raw emotions of these scenes and leaving the rest to your imagination to fill in the blanks.*

There is a door to the west and a door on the north side of the room, but only the one leading north can be opened at the moment which leads to **The Blood Altar [B]**. There are magical runes protecting the door to the left that prevents it from being opened, though a dispel magic spell can remove this binding spell from this door and allow premature entry. This door leads to **The Gallery [L]**. No fear, this simply throws off the flow of the dungeon slightly. **Ordinarily, this door opens after the Orb of Sorrows has been placed on its pedestal.**

## [NODE B]

### THE BLOOD ALTAR

#### DESCRIPTION

*This room has a beautiful carpet at its center and a multi-level stairwell to the left that leads up to an altar draped in lovely red velvet. On the edges of the room are four large stone tombs that are sealed shut with dozens of chains each. These containers are seven feet tall, three feet wide, and decorated with orcish and abyssal inscriptions. Two doors are on the far side of the room and two more are on the right.*

A creature that can read Abyssal or Orcish can discern that these are tombs that belonged to loyal followers of Tarraketh:

- Kor'gal Bonecrusher
- Leshar Spinegnarl
- Mor'gar Dreadblade
- Zornath Bloodscream

There are actually three doors on the north side of the room, but only the two on the left and right are visible to the players. The door on the right opens when the Orb of Sorrows is put on its pedestal and leads to the right half of **The Soul Extractor [Q]**. The door on the left opens when the Orb of Hatred is placed in its proper spot at well and leads to the left half of **The Soul Extractor [Q]**.

The door in the center remains hidden from sight until the Orb of Sorrow and the Orb of Hatred have both been placed on their respective pedestals. Once this is done, the stone slides away and reveals an ethereal barrier between the other two doors. The players can see down the passageway and the stairwell beyond, but moving through the barrier is impossible. This pathway leads to **The Spiked Crossing [R]**.

In order for the characters to pass through this center threshold, they must have their souls extracted via the Soul Vessel Creation device. (**See The Soul Extractor for more details**).

There are two additional doors on the east side of the room. These both lead to **The Laboratory [C]**, but the way forward is locked until the *Blood Offering* is complete.

### THE BLOOD ALTAR

The altar has a large curved dagger and a hatchet sitting upon it and a bowl-shaped recess at its center. Thin lines run down the stairwell from the altar, leading to the edges of the room and beyond into the other portions of the tomb. Also sitting on the altar are four black candles. When the players light one of these candles, the chains on the containers on the edges of the room all snap loudly and the stone lids slide away. Black liquid pours out and coats the floor, revealing an orc standing in each of these stone boxes that is ready to kill.

### THE HIGH GUARD OF TARRAKETH

The four former high guard of Tarraketh look the same as they did hundreds of years ago and being suspended has not detracted from their ferocity. Each of them is at least six and a half feet tall and are covered in scars from multiple battles. Along their arms are also multiple scars where they cut their own bodies to give their blood as a tribute to the Lord of Sorrows.

Zornath is a spellcaster and wears flowing black robes with a royal purple trim. His head is shaved bald and he has war paint that covers most of his face and extends up and over his head and trails all the way down to the center of his back. His eyes are black and fierce and his body is coated in dozens of scars from self-inflicted wounds used in his dark spellcasting.

Leshar is adorned in fine scale mail and wields a longbow made of wood that has been stained black and is much thicker than a traditional bow. At her sides are two weapons with curved blades to allow them to reach around shielded enemies. She is female, but holds strength that surpasses all but the most brutally powerful of male orcs and her tactical abilities are exceptional.

Kor'gal wears black chain mail with accents of dark blue in the form of spikes that have been hammered into the armor. He wields a deadly maul with a horn that once belonged to a rival warlord embedded on either side of the weapon, though this is mostly for intimidation rather than any sort of additional combat effectiveness. He bulges with muscles that stress the armor, but the veins that are visible in his arms are black in color. He is the tallest of the group, towering at seven feet tall.

Mor'gar has lighter armor and wields a painted round shield and a serrated longsword. While he is strong, he relies on speed to dodge and deflect most attacks. His armor is painted, but lacks the exotic adornments of the others, but he does have multiple piercings and rings on his ears, nose, and even on his tusks.

The types of creatures that represent the various members of the high guard depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL. Despite the ordinary race of the creatures listed below, for the purpose of this fight they will all of course be full-blooded orcs.

- **APL 7**

- Zornath - Demonblood Orc Bloodcaster (**40 hit points**) (**NEB1**)
- Leshar - Demonblood Orc Hunter (**NEB1**)
- Kor'Gal - Demonblood Orc Berserker (**NEB1**)
- Mor'Gar - Demonblood Orc Warrior (**50 hit points**) (**NEB1**)

- **APL 8-9**

- Zornath - Demonblood Orc Bloodcaster
- Leshar - Demonblood Orc Hunter
- Kor'Gal - Demonblood Orc Berserker
- Mor'Gar - Demonblood Orc Warrior

- **APL 10**

- Zornath - Demonblood Orc Bloodcaster
- Leshar - Deadly Hunter (**NEB1**)
- Kor'Gal - Demonblood Orc Berserker
- Mor'Gar - Demonblood Orc Warrior

- **APL 11**

- Zornath - Demonblood Orc Bloodcaster
- Leshar - Deadly Hunter
- Kor'Gal - Demonblood Orc Berserker
- Mor'Gar - Hobgoblin Warlord (**MM Pg. 187**)

If the players don't attempt to light the candles and instead attempt to perform a blood sacrifice using their own blood, the altar does not approve of the blood of a non-believer. The blood evaporates the moment it touches the bowl and a sharp pain tears through the body of the person who made the offering. That creature takes necrotic damage equal to their level as the blood in their veins seems to boil. Once this happens, the candles go ablaze on their own and the containers around the room break open to reveal the high guard as combat begins.

## BLOOD OFFERING – CREATING URGENCY

Once combat has ended, the party will need to make a tribute at the altar using the blood of one of these high guards, for they are loyal followers of Tarraketh even into their death. Once the sacrifice has been made, the thin lines that run down the altar and out of the room begin to glow lightly. The doors leading out of this room to the east and south are opened... but the main entryway doors to the tomb slam shut and are sealed with magical runes.

The wall behind the altar lights up with a new set of text that was previously invisible. In orcish it reads:

*The trial has begun. Prove yourselves true believers or be sacrificed to the Lord of Sorrows.* Beneath this text is a hourglass of a deep navy blue and slowly beads of light drip down into the lower portion. The players have eight hours to reach Tarraketh's tomb or the entire dungeon is flooded with a deadly poison that will kill everyone in a matter of minutes.

## [NODE C]

### THE LABORATORY

#### DESCRIPTION

*In the center of this room is a large table with numerous alchemical items sitting upon it. There are half a dozen potions, various non-perishable ingredients, empty vials and stoppers, and a few small boxes. That being said, the primary item of focus is an ornate bowl that sits at the center of this table. Magical runes are carved into the sides of it and they pulse every few seconds – first navy blue, then blood red. The bowl is filled with a strange black liquid.*

*Sitting on the shelves that line the edges of the room are hundreds of candles. The only thing beyond candles resting on these surfaces are two orbs that are glowing slightly. These orbs are eight inches in diameter and are filled with swirling colored smoke. One is blue and the other red.*

*There is a door on the far side of the room and an additional one to the left but they are both currently closed.*

These are the orbs of Sorrow and of Hatred respectfully and are essential to unlocking Tarraketh's burial chamber. See below for more details on the orbs.

On the north side of the room is an unlocked door that leads to the **Temple Supply Room [I]** and the door on the east leads to the **Hall of Falling Tiles [D]** but this door can only be opened when the contents of the ceremonial bowl at the center of the room have been consumed.

## DRINK-UP

If someone lifts the bowl on the central table, they will see that it was resting on a stone tablet inscribed with a message in orcish:

*If you wish to see the Lord of Sorrows, you must show dedication. You must give in to instinct.*

A single character must drink all of the liquid in the bowl. It is a thick black substance that is surprisingly sweet to the taste, almost as if it were a liquid form of black liquorice. If someone sits the bowl back down on the tablet without finishing, the bowl automatically refills as the runes along the outside pulse brightly.

There are no noticeable effects from drinking the liquid until an entire bowl has been consumed by a single creature. Once this is done, that creature will need to succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1d4 minutes. Either way, they will become dizzy and overwhelmed as their peripheral vision disappears and their sight becomes hyper-focused. That creature gains the following properties for the next 24 hours:

- Its eyes turn entirely black and it has darkvision out to 120 feet.
- It can read, speak, and write Orcish and Abyssal
- Whenever damaged in combat, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or go berserk. While berserk, a creature must use its action to attack the nearest creature, expending all of its movement to reach a target if necessary. A berserk creature repeats this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success and becoming immune to this rage for the rest of combat.

**In addition, the door on the east side of the room slides open automatically when the contents of the bowl are emptied.**

## THE ORB OF SORROW

The navy blue orb is the Orb of Sorrow. Whoever is carrying this orb feels depression take hold of them. Their will to continue onward all but disappears. Colors become muted, faces of friends appear obscured, and even music sounds bland and monotonous. They become paranoid of their own companions and their intentions. They also become unnaturally protective of the orb. They will refuse to give it up unless forced to do so, but once it is out of their hands, the effects of the orb fade immediately.

## THE ORB OF HATRED

The blood red orb is the Orb of Hatred. Whoever is carrying this orb is overcome with anger. Their irises become lined with crimson and the entire world turns to shades of red. They are short tempered and quick to lash out. Their mind seems trapped into thinking about the flaws and betrayals of their fellow party members and nothing else. They see anyone who tries to take the orb from them as an enemy and will strike out at them to defend their precious treasure, but once it is out of their hands, the effects of the orb fade immediately.

## ADDITIONAL CONCOCTIONS

Some of these potions are powerful and can help the party while others will cause horrible pain and negative effects. These include four ordinary bottles of poison, two potions of pain, and two potions of fury. The poison can be applied to a blade or used to taint food or drink. The potions of pain cause the consumer to take 3d6 necrotic damage or if thrown at a target it must succeed on DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 3d6 necrotic damage. The potions of fury cause the consumer to go into a terrible rage for the next minute. While raging, a creature must use its action to attack the nearest creature, expending all of its movement to reach a target if necessary. If this potion is thrown at a target, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or fall under this same enraged effect.

Feel free to throw in additional potions, such as a potions of giant's strength that are rebranded as potions of orcish might.

### SECRET PASSAGE

A creature with a passive Investigation of 15 or a creature that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds the markings of a secret passage on the west side of this room. There is no discernable handle or key, but the stone has two perfectly straight cracks running down this area. It is sealed by magical means, but the way to open it remains unclear to the players.

*This door opens when both the Orb of Sorrows and Orb of Hatred have been placed upon their pedestals and leads to The Pool of Power [P].*

## [NODE D] HALL OF FALLING TILES

### DESCRIPTION

*This long passageway is constructed of ten foot wide square pieces of stone, all except for one narrow strip at the midpoint. Connected to this strip is a thick metal door. On the far side of this hallway, the path curves around and continues deeper into the dungeon. Besides these features, the hallway is clear of any decoration.*

The metal door leads to **The Chamber of Sorrow [E]** and the far hallway leads to **The Abyssal Armory [F]**.

### A TRAP IS SET

When the players reach the midpoint of these tiles, just in front of the metal door, the entrances to the hallway slam shut and the ceiling opens up. Hundreds of skeletal remains rain down on the party. These smash to the ground, then immediately rise, fully assembled and ready for combat. They are scattered across these tiles, at least three on each side of the center location. **Note that one of them has an arm made of flesh rather than bone. This is significant.**

Roll for initiative.

The number of skeletons and type of skeletons depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL. Give the Minotaur Skeletons in this combat the appearance of a hulking orc skeleton (size Medium) with a massive axe and instead of a gore attack it simply attacks with its greataxe. This is to help increase your players' ability to maneuver. Leave the naga as size Large. They only appear for higher levels and your party should be able to more easily handle the secondary challenges of this combat.

- **APL 7**
  - 2x Minotaur Skeleton (**MM Pg. 273**)
  - 8x Skeleton (**MM Pg. 272**)
- **APL 8**
  - 3x Minotaur Skeleton
  - 5x Skeleton
- **APL 9**
  - 1x Bone Naga (**MM Pg. 233**)
  - 2x Minotaur Skeleton
  - 5x Skeleton
- **APL 10**
  - 2x Bone Naga
  - 1x Minotaur Skeleton
  - 5x Skeleton
- **APL 11**
  - 2x Bone Naga
  - 2x Minotaur Skeleton
  - 4x Skeleton

Additionally, the mechanisms holding up these tiles activate along with the skeletons. Whenever a living creature moves on one of these tiles, it begins to sink. The tiles drop at a rate of 5 feet per round as long as a creature is standing on it. If a tile sinks fifteen feet, it will drop into shallow acid and any creature on that tile will take 2d4 acid damage. If a creature stays on that tile for an additional round, the platform is completely submerged. Whenever a creature starts its turn in the acid, it takes 2d10 acid damage. **The skeletons are immune to this damage.**

The nature of this trap poses an additional problem, for if the platform drops down low enough it may be impossible to jump up to one of the others. A creature fully submerged is nearly twenty feet below the nearest platform. There are fortunately hollowed stone pillars that hold up the other platforms, so these pillars can be used by a creature that has become trapped to make their way back to safety.

## THE HIDDEN KEY

One of the attacking skeletons has a distinctive feature - one of its arms is made of flesh, or what appears to be flesh. In order to open the door to the **Chamber of Sorrow [E]**, this arm will have to be dropped into the acid below. The acid devours the false flesh swiftly and leaves behind a key that is used to open the door. The trap in this hallway stays active until the door is unlocked, so they will need to stay on the move and constantly switch platforms or risk being submerged.

## [NODE E]

### THE CHAMBER OF SORROW

#### DESCRIPTION

*This room is quite small at fifteen feet across and the only item visible is a pedestal at the center. This pedestal is four feet tall and takes the form of a small tower with a talon-like set of spikes at the top. Magical runes run down the side of the tower, onto the floor, and over to the walls of the room, spiraling in every direction with a hint of madness. The runes are currently dull and without energy.*

#### THE ORB OF SORROW

Whenever the Orb of Sorrow is placed in the pedestal, the runes running all across the room begin to glow, but at the same time the world seems to go dark. The temperature in the room drops to freezing and all joy is purged from the minds of those within the room. Horrifying memories surge forth and sink their hooks in, holding that dreadful thought in place and forcing the creature to relive it over and over, each passing moment feeling like an eternity.

While the orb is in place, each creature that enters the room or starts its turn in the room must make a DC (10 + (APL/2)) Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature is paralyzed with grief as the real world fades away and it is left with nothing but painful memories trapped at the forefront of its mind. The creature also takes 2d6 psychic damage. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours. The effect ends when they are taken out of the room containing the orb, so other players will be forced to expose themselves to the orb to drag paralyzed allies to safety.

#### UNLOCKING THE PATH FORWARD

Whenever the Orb of Sorrow has been placed in the appropriate location, the door leading to right half of **The Soul Extractor [Q]** is opened.

## [NODE F]

### ABYSSAL ARMORY

#### DESCRIPTION

*This room is filled with dozens of sets of armor and hundreds of weapons, most of which have been made useless in combat due to the passage of time. The armor is decorated with spikes, chains, and runes. The weapons are serrated and vicious. These armaments are all finely crafted, but done so in such a way to give them an appearance that conveys chaos and savagery with their jagged, exaggerated shapes. Despite sheer volume of items, the room is still quite spacious thank to some wonderful organization and the use of armor and weapon racks.*

## MAGICAL EQUIPMENT

While most of the equipment in this room has been partially rusted away as the years have gone by, there are a few pieces that still appear to be in perfect condition as they are magical in nature. This room is a grab bag of any sort of armor or weapon you might need, so think about what your players want for their characters and give them 1-2 items to find scattered across the room. The downside is that all of these items have a certain unsavory aesthetic. Armor that is painted black with jagged spikes hammered into it doesn't exactly scream heroes of the land, so they will have to choose if they want to wear this new equipment despite the negative stigma it may carry.

## SECRET PASSAGE

There is a secret door on the west side of this room. If the party has one of the weapons from the high guard orcs they killed at the **Blood Altar [B]**, both the weapon and the door will begin to glow faintly. The only way to open the door is to tap one of these weapons against the stone where the door is located. **A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check can also reveal this door's location and the small runes embedded in the wall next to it. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) lets the players know that some sort of key is required, but the exact details are left obscured.** This hidden door leads to the **Armory of the High Guard [G]**.

## [NODE G] - [SECRET]

### ARMORY OF THE HIGH GUARD

#### DESCRIPTION

*This is a small and simple room that contains armor and weapons of higher quality than the equipment in the other room. That being said, most of them are still so worn down from age that they would be easily damaged in combat and serve no practical use. They are also much more decorated than the other items – inscriptions are etched into the equipment, they contain portions of detailed artwork, and have more finely crafted spikes and chains attached to them. Off to the right side of the room from the door is a solid stone cabinet. It looks similar to the containers the high guard burst from in the room containing the blood altar, but it is three times as wide.*

## POWERFUL BUT CURSED

This cabinet contains powerful equipment, but is locked behind an intricate key beyond the range of an ordinary lockpick. One of the items in the room is a strange cube coated in letters and squares colored black and white. **See the Cubic Code in the Puzzles section of this Toolkit for information on how to solve this puzzle and obtain the key to this cache.**

Once your players open the cache, give them some powerful magical items of your choosing. I would recommend a partially charged **Abyssal Greataxe (NDMT2)**, but the choice is up to you. If you are feeling particularly generous you can also give them some **Plate Mail of Tarraketh (NDMT2)**. These items are high level and powerful, but also come with irremovable curses that make them far less appealing and will make them far more difficult to sell.

## [NODE H]

### TEMPLE SUPPLY ROOM

#### DESCRIPTION

*This is a fairly simply room containing everything you might expect to find in a place that prepares bodies for burial. It holds spare pieces of marble, chisels, hammers, fine silks, and an assortment of powders, fluids, and potions designed to prevent decay. All of these items are well organized and labeled, scattered across shelves and cabinets that fill this space. On the east side of the room is a large set of wooden double doors that are unlocked.*

These doors lead to the **Mass Resting Chamber [I]**.

#### AN EXTRA CHALLENGE

If you want to throw a bit of extra difficulty at your players, consider having one of these bolts of silk be considered a rug of smothering that will leap out and attack your players if they try to take it with them. This isn't meant to be threatening to the high level players of this dungeon, but might give them an additional reminder to be careful even in the most seemingly mundane parts of this tomb.

## [NODE I]

### MASS RESTING CHAMBER

#### DESCRIPTION

*This chamber contains a dozen decorated stone coffins elevated on slabs of marble. All of these coffins are closed and there is no movement in the room, but the top of these caskets are on hinges and seem quite easy to open. On the north side of the room are two doors spaced fifteen feet apart. On the nearest coffin you can see that the words "Loyal Follower of Tarraketh" are inscribed on the marble base.*

The two doors both lead to the **Blood Fountain [J]**.

## **DEATH FROM ABOVE**

Whenever a player touches one of the doors leading out of this room, a rune flashes for a moment and lights scatter across the floor, walls, and ceiling. There is a sound of grinding stone as the ceiling begins to slowly lower and the doors to the room become sealed. It takes about 45 seconds for the ceiling to be completely compressed and anyone who has not found safety takes 16d10 bludgeoning damage.

The way for the players survive this trap is not to escape the room, but to use observation and react. When the ceiling lowers, it does so in a staggered pattern because it will not crush the coffins that are scattered throughout the rooms. The players will need to open these coffins and reveal the dead within. They can then either throw out the bodies and climb inside or simply take their place next to the remains.

When the ceiling is fully lowered, it smashes flush against the floor and against the tops of the coffins, so your players will be trapped in complete darkness in this cramped space. The stone remains in place for thirty seconds, but an eternity seems to pass in that time. The lingering odor of the corpses is wretched and the air is stale from years of being trapped and still. Finally, the ceiling rises once again and frees the party from their individual prisons.

## **NOT DONE YET**

Once the trap returns to its original location, the room shimmers once again with magical energy. Any remaining creatures in the tombs come to life and begin to attack.

### **Roll for initiative.**

The number of zombies and types depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 7**
  - 4x Zombie Warrior (**NEB1**)
  - 2x Zombie (**MM Pg. 316**)
- **APL 8**
  - 1x Wight (**MM Pg. 300**)
  - 3x Zombie Warrior
  - 2x Zombie
- **APL 9**
  - 2x Wight
  - 2x Zombie Warrior
  - 2x Zombie
- **APL 10**
  - 2x Wight
  - 3x Zombie Warrior
  - 2x Zombie
- **APL 11**
  - 2x Wight
  - 2x Zombie Warrior
  - 4x Ghoul (**MM Pg. 148**)

Once the zombies are defeated, the magic on the room fades and the doors out of this room can be opened once again. Some of the followers were buried with their wealth and if the players take time to search the coffins they will find (APL x 200) gold worth of total wealth in the form of silver, gold, and platinum.

## **[NODE J]**

## **THE BLOOD FOUNTAIN**

### **DESCRIPTION**

*At the front and back sides of this room are two pools of blood. Such a vast quantity can only be the result of hundreds if not thousands of living sacrifices. The smell of iron is thick in the air and the sound of the blood gently flowing is calming despite its grim nature. On the northern end of the room are two floor to ceiling pillars that are three feet wide and covered in artwork that is colorized by this blood creeping up and through ridges carved into the stone. The stonework in this room is all stained dark from exposure to the blood, especially a makeshift pathway that leads through the center of the room that is maroon in color, made dark from thousands of bloody footprints.*

*There is an altar in front of each of the pools of blood, but the one on the far side has far more decoration, including a black key clenched in a mithral dragon claw that is fixed firmly to the altar. On top of the closer altar are a few various sized wooden bowls. They are painted with intricate decorations that must have taken several hours each to craft with such perfection. The only other doorway in this room is to the left of the altar on the far side of the room.*

This door leads to the **Hall of Rot [K]**.

## **CROSSING THE THRESHOLD**

Whenever a player attempts to walk through the room and over to the orb on the far side, small slits open in the wall and poisoned darts spray out in a vicious burst. Each creature in the middle 20 feet of the room must make a DC (10 + (APL/2)) Dexterity saving throw, taking 1d6 piercing damage plus an additional (1d4 x (APL-4)) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save. This trap repeats for each 5 feet a creature travels through the center of the room.

The way the characters can avoid this damage is to coat themselves in blood before making the crossing. The thick blood stains going through the center of the room is their clue to discovering how to solve this trap. They can use the ornate bowls to pour the blood over themselves, covering at least half of their body to satisfy the conditions to cross. A creature covered in blood that passes through the room is left to cross completely unharmed.

## **THE BLACK KEY**

This key is what is required to enter **Tarraketh's Chamber [S]**. When the players have crossed the room, they can try to take the key but find the dragon claw is holding on tightly and won't let go. Now that they are close, they notice that there is a small pouch attached to the claw with orcish writing upon it: *"The dragon demands tribute"*. The players must put at least 50 gold into the pouch (which disappears the moment it is dropped into the bag) for it to loosen its grip on the key. Otherwise, a DC 20 Strength check can pry it open manually.

# [NODE K]

## HALL OF ROT

### DESCRIPTION

This 35 foot hallway pours out a horrid stench the moment the door to it is opened. The air through this hall is distorted, as if there were invisible clouds shifting around, but there is no discoloration. On the far side is another iron door, exactly the same as the one that was opened to enter the hall.

### STAGNANT ROT

This hallway is just one giant red herring trap. There is no purpose to it except to lead your characters astray and take some extra damage - but it is just one of those kinds of dungeons!

This hallway is filled with putrid, stagnant air that is dangerous if inhaled. If a creature attempts to walk down this hall, they will immediately need to succeed on a DC (10 + (APL/2)) Constitution saving throw or take 4d4 poison damage. A creature will need to repeat this saving throw for every 10 feet it moves through this area for a total of 4 saving throws to reach the far side. A creature that holds its breath or covers its mouth has advantage on the saving throw. Creatures can avoid this all together by causing a strong enough gust of wind to disperse the air or by other creative means.

### THE FAKE DOOR

The door at the end of this hall is nothing but a trap. It is locked, but none of the keys in this dungeon fit into the slot. It is quite easy to pick the lock, however. It required success on a DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, but during that time, the creature picking the lock will need to make 3 additional Constitution saving throws against the poison.

When the door is unlocked, it slams open with brutal force. The creature that unlocked the door must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d8 bludgeoning damage as they are smashing into the wall. If they succeed and jump out of the way, they see that beyond the door is simply a wall covered in poison dart traps that fire down the hall. There is no avoiding these darts except through the use of some sort of shield since there is no room to dodge. The creature closest to the door takes 1d6 piercing damage plus an additional (1d4 x (APL-4)) poison damage. These darts continue to fire every six seconds until five volleys have been fired or until the door has been closed again.

**This room has a chance to be incredibly lethal, especially if someone is knocked unconscious by the trap as they will continue to be riddled with darts. If your party is bruised and battered or if you are just feeling generous, feel free to remove this part of the dungeon.**

# [NODE L]

## THE GALLERY

### DESCRIPTION

Along the edges of this room after dozens of paintings dedicated to Tarraketh, his rise to power, and the assembly of his army. They tell a story in chronological order, starting to the left of the entryway and curving around the entirety of the room. One painting shows Tarraketh kneeled in the center of a large circle of runes and the top half of a demon lord cast in silhouette in the background. They show his domination over all of the prominent orcish tribes in the region, or at least the tribes that were dominant hundreds of years ago. There are also a few decorated chests in the room, made of fine wood with brass or copper trimming.

### THE DEMON LORD

If a creature walks up to the large portrait of Tarraketh when he was first making contact with the demon lord, that creature's mind will begin to twist as they stare into the dark silhouette of this evil incarnate. They will see the creature turn its head and a set of glowing eyes stare at them. A dark hand will piece from the portrait and reach out to grab them. They find themselves paralyzed as they try to struggle or run from its grasp. As the hand makes its way around their throat, have that player make a DC (10 + (APL/2)) Intelligence saving throw, taking (d6 x (APL - 3)) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once this damage is inflicted, that creature immediately returns to sanity and realizes that it was just in their mind, but if others approach a similar attack will occur.

### TRAPPED BELOW

If a player has a passive Investigation of 15 or higher or if a player rolls a 15 or higher on an (Intelligence) Investigation check, they notice one of the chests in this rooms has been moved quite frequently. There are distinctive marks and scuffs on the floor nearby that show it has been slid back and forth in the same space repeatedly. If a creature succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, they will hear the sound of scraping and chittering from beneath the chest. It sounds as if something is trying to escape.

Moving the chest will free swarms of temple scarabs that skitter into the room and attack the party.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number of scarabs depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL. This is meant to be a fairly easy fight, but put some fear in the players as these creatures try to burrow into their skulls.

- APL 7-8 - 3x Swarm of Temple Scarab (**NEB2**)
- APL 9+ - 4x Swarm of Temple Scarab

## **OTHER TREASURES**

The contents of these other chests are primarily fine silks, most of which have survived the test of time. Others contain scrolls that document Tarraketh's rise to glory, but those have mostly decayed away even with the protection of the chest. In one of these are three scrolls that seem to be in perfect condition. These are spell scrolls that contain the following spells:

- Blight
- Dominate Person
- Create Undead

## **[NODE M]**

### **THE SACRIFICIAL PIT**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*You step into a room that smells of blood and decay. Directly across from you is a doorway that seems to have some sort of magical barrier over it, causing the area beyond to be twisted and distorted. To the left, you can see a stairwell that seems to lead down into the floor itself. Near this stairwell is a lever on the wall.*

At the center of this room is a large spike pit with drains at its corners. There are still the skeletal remains of over a dozen humanoids, none of which appear to belong to orcs. Two halflings are clearly present as well as the slender frame of an elf and half a dozen humans.

#### **SENTIENT SACRIFICE**

Pulling the level causes two large metal plates to slide out and cover the pit. If the players do this, there will be a flat walkway for them to cross to the other side should they wish to do so. **Unfortunately, when they reach the center of the pit, the lever flips back violently and any creature above the pit must succeed on a DC (10 + (APL/2)) Dexterity saving throw or plummet on to the spikes below and take 3d6 piercing damage.**

If the players choose not to pull the lever, they can get closer to the pit and peer down to see what is inside. There is a small stairwell leading down a bit closer to the spikes on either side, but this is merely a trap. **As soon as someone is on the stairwell, it will fold down and form a slick surface. The creature standing on the stairs must succeed on a DC (8 + (APL/2)) Dexterity saving throw or slide down on to the spikes below and take 3d6 piercing damage.**

## **[NODE N]**

### **THE HALL OF SILENCE**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

*As you step through the barrier, you experience a strange sensation that causes you to feel off balance. It takes you a moment before you realize the cause of this discomfort - you cannot hear anything. The entire world has fallen completely silent. If you try to speak, you can feel your mouth and tongue attempting to make the words, but there is nothing.*

*The hallway leading to the room extends forward for fifteen feet before it opens up to a wider area. About halfway into the room are two white marble statues standing ten feet apart. They are roughly six feet tall and turned to stare at each other, one looking away from the doorway so only its back is visible. The other statue is facing towards the doorway and has a blank face – no eyes, no nose, but a mouth that is far too wide filled with razor sharp teeth twisted into a grin. In one of its clawed hands is a heart that has been painted red. The claws pierce into the heart and the crimson coloring bleeds ever so slightly onto the marble of the statue. The other hand is raised up and pointing a long, slender finger at the opposite statue. The rest of its body is covered in robes that are crafted with such skill they appear as if they were once blowing in the breeze and had been instantly petrified.*

*The closer of the statues, the one facing away from the doorway, is made of marble that is just a shade darker than the other. Without going into the room, the only thing that can be seen of this figure is that it also wears a set of realistically carved robes and that it is holding out an outstretched hand as well, but the fingers of this creature are shorter and thicker, though still ending in savage claws. (The full vision of the statue reveals a face with massive eyes that are completely black and no eyelids to protect them. The mouth on this creature has been viciously sewn shut and strands of thread pierce through the marble to keep it sealed).*

*Beyond these statues is a large sculpture of Tarraketh himself, towering at nearly seven feet in height and looking even taller as the depiction is propped up on a marble base. The craftsmanship of the statue is too delicate and smooth to be crafted by an orc, but the intricate details make it seem as if this carving could spring to life at any moment. The marble on this statue is dark, almost black, and gives a sinister look even compared to the others which are frightening in their own right. Tarraketh's face is completely obscured by shadows and from a distance it is unclear if the face simply cast in darkness or if it was not carved at all.*

#### **QUIET TIME**

There is a transparent magical barrier covering the doorways that lead into this room. Stepping through this barrier places a creature under the effects of a magical silence that cannot be broken unless the Aspect of Sorrow is destroyed. On the far north side of the room is a secret door that only opens once the Aspect of Hatred has been defeated in combat. This door leads to **The Chamber of Hatred [O]**.

These two closer statues represent the aspects of Sorrow and Hatred – the aspects that give Tarraketh his power. The closer statue is Sorrow and the further of the two is Hatred.

When the players move within five feet of the statue of Tarraketh, its eyes snap to that creature. The statues of the aspects at the center of the room simultaneously rumble to life and shamble forward to fight, their beautifully crafted robes now appearing to be made of ordinary cloth as they are made animate. **These statues all also snap to life if anyone attempts to damage or destroy them.**

#### Roll for initiative.

The statue of Tarraketh does not participate in the combat, it merely watches the battle and will clap on occasion when a particularly deadly strike is landed. **Keep in mind that as combat begins, some players may be taken by surprise! There is no sounds, so if a player's back is turned, they will have no idea the statues have rumbled to life unless another players alerts them visually or by a touch.**

#### No TALKING

Keep in mind the room is under a silence spell, so characters will not be able to communicate. As soon as the statue comes to life, the barriers the players stepped through to enter the room become impenetrable until the statues are destroyed.

Defeating the Aspect of Sorrow causes the silencing effect on the room to end immediately and gives spellcasters a chance to fight as well. Be sure to detail the fact that this statue's mouth is sewn shut when they see it to give the hint that it is the one causing the aura.

These Aspects are heavily modified depending on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL. These creatures are found under the Aspects of Emotion section of the Bestiary in this Toolkit.

- **APL 7**
  - 1x Aspect of Hatred (105 hit points)
  - 1x Aspect of Sorrow (80 hit points)
- **APL 8**
  - 1x Greater Aspect of Hatred (105 hit points) **(NEB2)**
  - 1x Greater Aspect of Sorrow (80 hit points) **(NEB2)**
- **APL 9**
  - 1x Greater Aspect of Hatred
  - 1x Greater Aspect of Sorrow
- **APL 10-11**
  - 1x Greater Aspect of Hatred (AC 19)
  - 1x Greater Aspect of Sorrow (AC 19)

Once the Aspect of Hatred has been defeated, the wall on the north side of the room slides away and reveals a passage into **The Chamber of Hatred [O]**.

## [NODE O]

### THE CHAMBER OF HATRED

#### DESCRIPTION

*Similar to the Chamber of Sorrow, this room is quite small and only contains a pedestal at the center. This one is a bit taller and is made up of a series of weapons that have been merged together and form a jagged slot that holds an orb at the top. Magical runes are crafted along these weapons and spill onto the floor and flow in straight lines directly to the edges of the room where they disappear.*

#### THE ORB OF HATRED

Whenever the Orb of Hatred is placed on the pedestal, the runes running down the weapons and across the room begin to glow. The temperature in the room quickly rises to sweltering heat and the heart rates of everyone in the room spikes. Violent urges flash into their minds - thoughts of killing their allies and taking their wealth and equipment for themselves. Past disagreements are revisited through a lens of pure rage and this is enough to cause some to snap.

While the orb is in place, each creature that enters the room or starts its turn in the room must make a DC (10 + (APL/2)) Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, that creature is consumed with rage and must use its action to attack the nearest living thing. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw becomes immune to this effect for 24 hours. A creature that is out of the room can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

#### UNLOCKING THE PATH FORWARD

Whenever the Orb of Hatred has been placed in the appropriate location, the door leading to left half of **The Soul Extractor [Q]** is opened.

## [NODE P] - [SECRET]

### POOL OF POWER

This door is only visible and can only be opened when both the Orb of Sorrow and Orb of Hatred have been placed on their respective pedestals. Once the orbs are in place, this door will glow faintly.

#### DESCRIPTION

*Pushing open the stone, you step into a rather small room with a ten foot wide pool of dark liquid in the center. It is not blood and not oil - an ichor or sorts it seems. Despite the repulsive appearance, it gives off a pleasant aroma. Mounted on the wall behind this pool is a large stone tablet with extensive orcish writings inscribed upon it.*

## OBTAINING POWER

The tablet details in great length how those who willingly give their lives to the pool, letting his power fill their lungs and flow through their entire body, and are then returned to life will be granted immense power.

In order to gain the power of this pool, a creature must allow themselves to drown within the ichor. Afterwards, their companions will need to bring them back to life through natural or magical means. Once they do so, that creature will indeed be imbued with additional power.

The creature gains the following traits:

- You receive a +2 bonus to your most defining attribute (DM's choice) and a +2 bonus to Constitution. This may cause those values to exceed 20.
- You have disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws.
- Once per day as an action, you can unleash the Fury of Tarraketh at a creature within 60 feet - You unleash a powerful blast of dark blue energy at the target. Make an attack roll against that creature with a +10 bonus to hit. That creature takes necrotic damage equal to 4 times your character level and you gain temporary hit points equal to half the damage dealt.

There is an additional trait that is hidden to that creature – the demon lord that bestowed Tarraketh with power knows their location at all times and can speak to this creature telepathically at all times. Have this entity be a reoccurring voice, but only speaking up at opportunities that would drive that character down a path towards evil. The demon may also offer that creature a deal for power in exchange for causing some chaos.

These traits can be removed with Greater Restoration, but doing so removes both the positive and negative effects. The demon continues to know the location of the creature regardless and will continue communications.

## [NODE Q]

### THE SOUL EXTRACTOR

#### THE RIGHT SIDE - SOUL VESSEL CREATION

##### DESCRIPTION

You walk through a strange winding hallway before the path opens up into a room containing a strange device. Hanging above this machine is a plaque that reads "Soul Vessel Creation" in orcish. There are dozens of tubes leading into each of the device and runes inscribed all around it. Crystal orbs of every color spiral across the front and sides of the device, flexible hoses curve and twist from one side to the other or sometimes into the wall, and the occasional spark of magic can be spotted jumping from one glass chamber to the other.

There is a prominent interface on the front of the device that contains a small metal door, a large lever, and a smaller round hole that leads into the device and is glowing vibrantly. Above the lever is a label that reads "Extract". It is quite spectacular to behold.

On the wall next to the device are three shelves lined with simple stuffed cloth dolls. They have arms, legs, a torso, and a head with two black button eyes, but no distinguishing features. Over three dozen of these dolls sit on the shelf, staring lifelessly out into the room.

Beyond these few things, the room is fairly empty except for a few spare parts for the device.

## EXTRACTION

The doorway that leads from **The Blood Altar [B]** to **The Spiked Crossing [R]** that opened when the Orb of Hatred and Orb of Sorrow were put in place can only be passed through by a creature that no longer contains a soul. The Soul Extraction devices are how the followers of Tarraketh managed to accomplish that requirement.

To extract their souls, the players must each choose a doll and place it onto a little plate beyond the small metal door on the front of the device. They must then place their entire arm into the smaller slot near the lever. All that is left afterwards is to pull the lever. When they do so, their soul is torn from their body and placed into the blank doll.

This takes about thirty seconds but feels like much longer:

*Dozens of needles slam into your arm, piercing the flesh from every direction and embedding within the bone. Agony takes hold but your body is paralyzed and you are unable to scream or express emotion with anything but your eyes. As the soul is pulled from your body, you begin to lose your breath. You try to inhale but nothing seems to happen and the sensation of suffocation sweeps over; but after fifteen seconds or so of struggle, you realize that you no longer need to breathe. Your skin turns pale. Hunger leaves you, thirst leaves you, and time itself seems to be suspended somehow. When the process is finished, the door on the front of the device opens and reveals a Soul Doll that looks identical to you.*

While a soul is extracted, it exists in this doll and can only be restored with the device on the left side of the room (**Which may not be available to your players yet!**). While without a soul, a creature has the following traits:

- It is considered undead
- It does not need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe
- It has resistance to necrotic damage
- It cannot be healed

If the doll containing their soul is destroyed, the creature becomes an savage zombie whose mind can only be restored via a Wish spell. If the doll is moved to another plane, the creature falls unconscious until the doll is returned to the same plane.

After their soul has been extracted, characters are free to move through the ethereal barrier that leads toward **Tarraketh's Chamber [S]**, but their Soul Doll cannot go with them. While the character's body passes through without resistance, their Doll is stuck and will need to be stored on the other side of the barrier.

## THE LEFT SIDE - SOUL RESTORATION

The left side of this area is almost a perfect mirror of the right side. The devices are indistinguishable except the label above the lever now reads "Restore" and the plaque on the wall reads "Soul Doll Infusion". There are three shelves mounted on the wall of this side as well. It contains only a few dolls - all of which are orcs.

Placing a doll in the Soul Restoration device, putting a hand in the slot, and pulling the lever will restore the soul of that creature. If someone attempts to perform this process with a Soul Doll that is not their own, the soul is rejected by the body and the doll is destroyed, causing the person to which it did belong to become a mindless zombie. The process of restoration takes thirty seconds and feels as if they are waking up from the most relaxing nap of their entire life.

## [NODE R]

### THE SPIKED CROSSING

#### DESCRIPTION

*Passing through the barrier, you descend a thirty foot stairwell. As you come to the bottom of this stairwell, you see a fifteen foot wide stone platform suspended over a massive pit of spikes that are twenty feet below. A few skeletons lie amongst the spikes. On the far side of the room is a sinister black door that is perfectly aligned with the wall. The ceiling here is twenty feet over the top of this platform and is painted with a scene from a bloody battle between orcish tribes. The walls of the room are perfectly smooth without even a hint of imperfection to be seen.*

#### CROSSING THE PIT

Whenever a creature steps onto the platform, it begins to tilt. It is held in place by a massive ball joint at its center that allows for free rotational movement. The players will need to figure out how to carefully organize themselves to account for the tilt of this platform to cross to the other side.

If they try to run across, they will of course find the far door is locked and the platform will tilt completely in that direction and cause them to slide into the spikes. They can have someone leap out towards the center (as the platform is not too wide) and then slowly the party members can try to balance their weight distribution and create a solid platform. Have your players make checks appropriate to their attempts – typically Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), but straight Intelligence checks are also valid.

#### DEATH FROM ABOVE

Whenever a player first touches the door, the ceiling will open up and drop a large boulder on the right side of the platform. This hits with enough force that any creatures on the platform will be launched high into the air and dropped onto the spikes below (unless your players have taken the necessary precautions). Landing on these spikes deals 2d8 piercing damage plus 3d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall. The characters will have to figure out a way to climb out of the pit without hurting themselves further.

Whenever the door is unlocked (via the Black Key from **The Blood Fountain [J]**), a second boulder falls from the ceiling and strikes the left side of the platform, but after this there are no further traps and the players can cross safely to the other side.

## [NODE S]

### TARRAKETH'S CHAMBER

#### DESCRIPTION

*At the center of this chamber, constructed on a beautiful marble base at the top of a stairwell, is Tarraketh's final resting place. The coffin, which would better be described as a sarcophagus, is crafted from gold and silver and displays a perfect depiction of the orcish warlord that you assume still resides within. Four pillars are spaced across the room that reach from floor all the way up to the top of the thirty foot ceiling. Runes are carved all along these pillars and shimmer periodically with the same blue and red light of the Orbs of Sorrow and Hatred. There a huge amount of rubble scattered about the room, as well as some corpses for additional decor.*

#### THE GUARDIAN OF TARRAKETH

Whenever the first creature reaches the base of the stairs leading up to the sarcophagus, the pillars around the room all begin to spark with vibrant light that fills the chamber. Random pieces of stone, marble, silver, and gold scattered around the room begin to glow and shake. Moments later, these pieces are all ripped together and crash in a blinding flash of red and blue. When the party's eyes adjust they see a hulking guardian near the sarcophagus.

##### Roll for initiative.

The battle uses the Tomb Guardian, but its stats and abilities may be heavily modified depending on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 7**
  - Tomb Guardian (**NEB2**) with Lair Actions
- **APL 8**
  - Tomb Guardian with Lair Actions and 3 Legendary Actions
- **APL 9**
  - Tomb Guardian with Lair Actions, 3 Legendary Actions, and 150 hit points
- **APL 10**
  - Tomb Guardian with Lair Actions, 3 Legendary Actions, 150 hit points, and AC 17
- **APL 11**
  - Tomb Guardian with Lair Actions, 3 Legendary Actions, 185 hit points, and AC 17, and immunity to damage from bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine.

**The guardian has some additional properties that are found on the next page!**

## **AND STAY DOWN**

In order to permanently disable the guardian, the players will need to deactivate its magical healing. To do so, they need to destroy the pillars scattered throughout the room that are clearly providing it with power. Be sure to note that every time the guardian heals, the pillars shine with light to show them the connection between the two.

There are four of these pillars in total. The health and AC of these pillars depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 7** - AC 17, 20 hit points each
- **APL 8** - AC 17, 25 hit points each
- **APL 9** - AC 17, 30 hit points each
- **APL 10** - AC 18, 30 hit points each
- **APL 11** - AC 18, 35 hit points each

## **DESTROYING TARRAKETH**

Once the Guardian of Tarraketh has been defeated, the party can destroy his physical body once and for all. Opening the lid of the sarcophagus reveals the orc warlord in all of his terror and glory. The body doesn't appear to have decayed at all.

They can use whatever methods they wish to destroy the body.

### **ONE LAST SCARE**

Your players will likely be weak and on edge when they open the sarcophagus. Feel free to give them a fake roll for initiative or call for a Dexterity saving throw for no reason to cause a quick moment of terror and then relief.

### **WITHOUT A BODY, BUT STILL A SOUL**

If you want to extend the storyline of the Tomb of Tarraketh, consider bringing the warlord back through some other means. His soul was extracted to put him into suspension until it could be returned to his body, but if the players destroy it and he manages to find a way to return by other means he will certainly want to exact revenge against the adventurers that stole his redemption from him!

## **Rewards**

Tarraketh is buried alongside some of his wealth and some of his favorite magical items. Give an amount of gold that will be significant to your players' current level and try to find some interesting magic items that are useful and interesting to your party composition.

## **EXPERIENCE**

The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the entire dungeon. Feel free to adjust these values however you see fit.

- **APL 7** - 13,500 XP per player
- **APL 8** - 16,000 XP per player
- **APL 9** - 18,500 XP per player
- **APL 10** - 24,000 XP per player
- **APL 11** - 27,000 XP per player

## **LOOT**

With such a wide spread of levels for this dungeon, and almost all of the rewards coming from the final cache of loot with Tarraketh, the loot that comes in this dungeon is almost entirely up to the Dungeon Master so I won't make any specific suggestions.

# ONE-SHOTS

One-shots are adventures that contain an overarching story or quest and tie themselves up at the end of a session. These are typically expected to last 3-4 hours (though some may take longer as noted in the adventures below) and are a great tool for newer Dungeon Masters who may be hesitant to jump into the deep end without assistance. They are also a valuable aid for an experienced DM that might be running low on prep time! Reading through the pages below should provide you with everything you need to run an exciting story for your players.

Experience the Metallic Dwarven Kingdoms and either aid or betray a set of star-crossed lovers in The Copperbolt Conundrum, invade the mind of a local lord and thwart the dream manipulator that has taken hold of his mind in Descent into Dreams, enter a haunted house with nothing but a magical candle to keep your players safe in The Nerastrim Manor, help a town prepare for a wild west style outlaw siege in Showdown in Skalintown, and finally help the poor pixie Quill of Pleppil restore his broken wings in The Well of Wishes.

## OVERVIEWS

### THE NERASTRIM MANOR (LEVELS 1-3)

The Nerastrim Manor on the hill once belonged to a wealthy family with great influence in the region; that is until Nathaniel Nerastrim's wife, Helen, decided she was through with the oppression of her rich husband, made a deal with a demon, and took a butcher's cleaver to everyone in the house. In the years since the massacre, the house has remained untouched. The spirit of Helen is still trapped within the house and repels the attempts of any who would cast her out. In this horror-themed adventure, your players have but a single candle to safeguard them against Helen's persisting wrath... will it burn long enough for the party to explore the manor and finally send the malevolent spirit of Helen on her way?

### THE WELL OF WISHES (LEVELS 1-3)

In the city of Pleppil, there is one pixie that is unlike any other. His name is Quill and he is the only pixie that cannot fly, having lost his wings to a wizard's spell a few years earlier. Now he rides around on his trusty porcupine, Spike, but dreams of being able to fly with his companions again. You see, in the pixie society, shinies are valued above all else and they are much more difficult to find when walking around on the ground. Fortunately, Quill knows of a place that should be able to heal his mangled wings! It is called the Well of Wishes and he even knows where it is located! No one else in Pleppil believes it exists, but Quill has a feeling in his heart that says the rumors are true. Now all he needs to do is find a set of adventurers willing to escort he and Spike on this perilous journey into the heart of the forest.

### DESCENT INTO DREAMS (LEVELS 1-5)

Lord Kestyl has been systematically accusing members of his council of treason and having them executed with little or no evidence to support these claims. Diplomats from other empires have faced similar fates as well. Something is wrong with Lord Kestyl and a local shaman by the name of Borjah thinks he knows what it is and how to fix it. He needs a group of strong willed adventurers with deep imaginations to consume a potion that will bind them to the unconscious mind of Kestyl. From within his dreams, they must face the dream manipulator that has taken hold of his mind. Unfortunately for the heroes, the rules don't apply in dreams the same way they do in the real world and brute strength is often not enough. Face your nightmares in this adventure and save the city from this corrupting entity.

### THE COPPERBOLT CONUNDRUM (LEVELS 4-6)

The party starts their adventure in the Dwarven Kingdom of Narol'Duun where the dwarven populations are split into distinct tribes based on the ores that they mine and smelt. These dwarves have worked with these minerals for so long that they have taken on distinct physical characteristics based on these minerals, but it has also caused strong discrimination and tribalism to occur. Breeding between the dwarven tribes is punishable by exile to the surface world. In this heavy role-playing emphasized adventure, your players will have the choice to aid a pair of star-crossed lovers from the Cobalt and Copper kingdoms or to sell them out to the king. Will love find a way or does greed excel above all else?

### SHOWDOWN IN SKALINTOWN (LEVELS 4-7)

Four days is all that the Skalintown has to get ready. Four days until The Calamity shows up with a small army of bandits and takes everything that the hard-working miners of this town struggled to earn. In this wild west style battle, the party must prepare the town for the assault, using whatever skills they have to aid the townsfolk for the battle to come. Do you barricade the walls of the city? Do you build arbalests and mount them on the church and tavern? Do you give a crash course in combat to the adults of the town? You can't do it all and very decision will change the way the final fight unfolds. Band together and use strategy to overcome the seemingly impossible odds in this epic showdown!

# THE NERASTRIM MANOR

## A ONE-SHOT HORROR ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 1-3

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The party comes across a small town by the name of Serylim. There are only a few dozen people who still live here and they all live in terror of the haunting spirit that still occupies the Nerastrim Manor that overlooks the town. Three years ago, the perfect housewife that was Helen Nerastrim could no longer stand a life of subservience to her husband; could no longer be a slave to outlandish social standards. She slowly descended into madness before finally making a deal with a fiend who promised to free her from this life... in exchange for a *small* favor.

It was a trap.

The fiend magnified her hatred tenfold. Helen murdered her husband, her son, her daughter, and the family's two servants with a cleaver before taking her own life with the same weapon. Since then, her spirit has been bound to the house and the hatred that festers within its walls has attracted a multitude of evil entities. A month ago, half a dozen brave souls attempted to cleanse the property with the help of a priest by the name of Father Oswyn. They never returned. Before they departed, Oswyn informed the town that the only way to force her spirit to move on from this world is to completely destroy her physical body within the manor.

Now the townsfolk are desperate for someone to help them - to cleanse the manor once and for all and hopefully retrieve the bodies of those who died in that nightmarish place. The reward to the party will be any items that remain in the manor. This includes the family's wealth, rare paintings, and perhaps even a few magic items.

Before Father Oswyn and his group left, he created a set of candles that would keep Helen's spirit at bay while they searched for her body. He called them Repulsion Candles and they were crafted with strands of Helen's hair, producing a light source that repels her ethereal form. Father Oswyn took three with the group but left one behind in case they were not successful, and now this is all the party will have for protection against her unbounded rage. Unfortunately, the candle only burns for a single hour, so the party will need to move quickly or risk the wrath of this capricious phantom.

This adventure is horror-themed, with a great deal of suspense as the candle that keeps Helen's spirit at bay burns lower and lower. The party will slowly unfold the tragedy of her slide into madness. She will torment your players the best she can by setting off traps around the house, leaving horrific decor for them to find, and taunting them as they progress. All manner of fiend now share the home as their own personal paradise, taking residence in the various rooms of the manor which they will defend via trickery, terror, and savagery. The story here is tragic and quite sad, and your players will be left conflicted as they finally set Helen's spirit free.

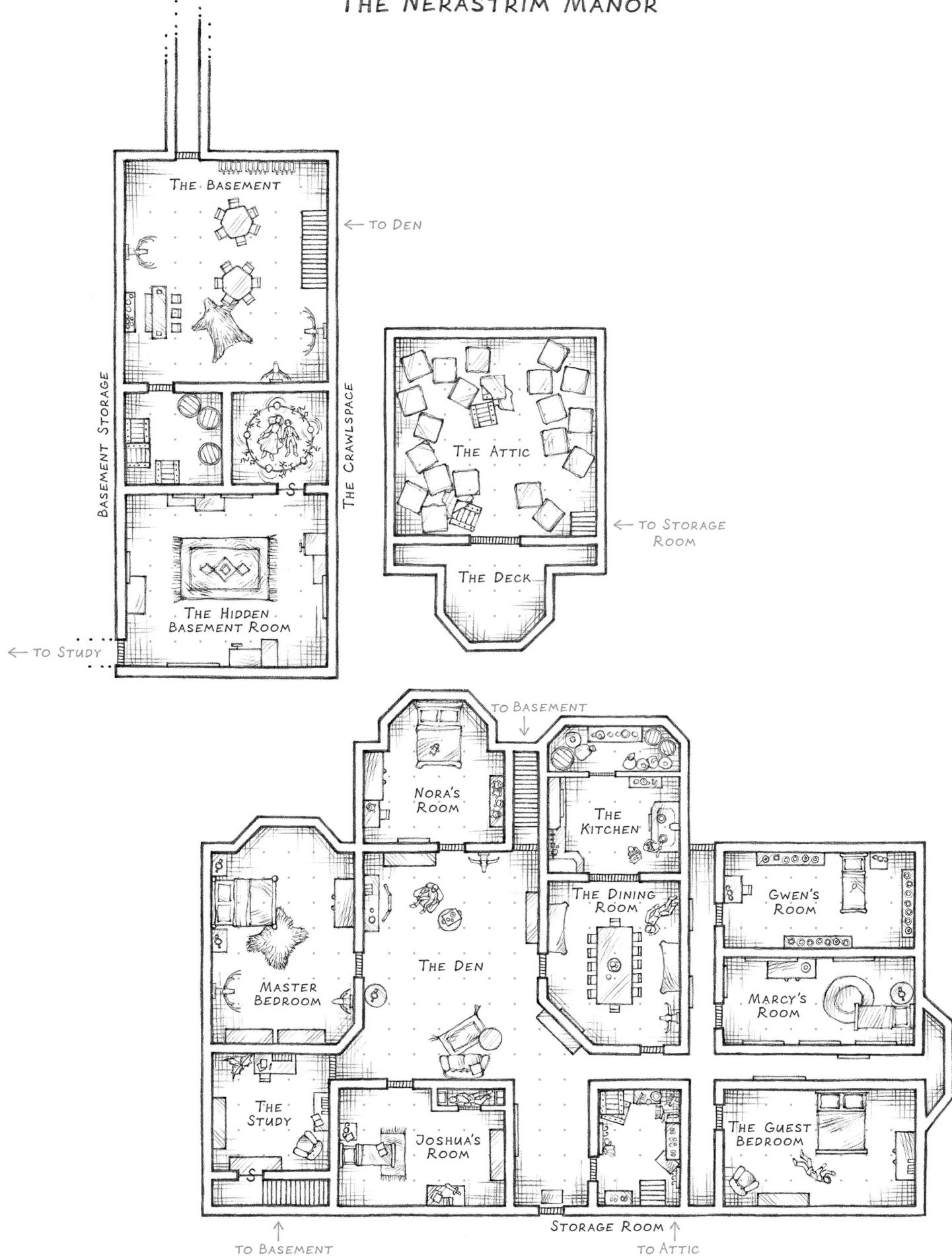
I have this in the one-shots section, but depending on your party's choices it is very likely that this will take two sessions to complete and possibly even three if they wish to explore the entire Nerastrim Manor. If players make optimal decisions and can get through combat quickly, it can be completed in one night, but be warned that this is an exception and not the norm.

This one-shot is also more akin to a dungeon than the others. There is a required setup of the candles and a deeper storyline to the Manor, so I put it in this section, but the Manor could easily be used as a straight up dungeon in any world with a bit of tweaking.

This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

This module contains custom monsters which are included in Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in the first Game Master Toolkit. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found at the end of this Toolkit.

# THE NERASTRIM MANOR



# THE TOWN OF SERYLIM

The town of Serylom has been in a state of doom and gloom for the past year. For a while, simply leaving the Nerastrim Manor alone seemed to be enough, but over the past year there has been notable effects on the town itself. The animals refuse to eat, sometimes starving themselves to death. The crops don't seem to grow nearly as plentiful as they did before and entire crops are blighted. Swarms of mosquitoes and locusts have visited the town, eating even more of their dwindling food supply and making the townsfolk miserable. They suffer from horrible nightmares when they manage to overcome their insomnia and find sleep. These people are malnourished, covered in bites, and their skin is pale and cracked. They look as if they could fall over dead at any moment.

Many people have already left town, and now less than half of the townsfolk remain - the ones too poor to be able to pick up their life and go or too stubborn to leave their family's legacy behind. These people still cling to hope of a group of heroes coming through and freeing them from this curse that seems to be infesting their once quiet, peaceful town. For many, hope is the only thing that gets them out of bed in the morning... but hope is dwindling.

As the party makes their way down the road through the center of town, they notice the smell of rotting meat in the air, the thick overgrowth of weeds, and the loud buzzing of insects. As they move past the local tavern, The Copper Mug, a man opens the door and looks to the party as if they were the greatest thing he has ever seen. "Heroes!" he says in a loud whisper, revealing a set of yellow, decaying teeth as he speaks the words. "Please, come inside! Drinks on the house!" he shouts and beckons them into the tavern.

## A PLEA FOR HELP

The man introduces himself as Torvaln Thompson, owner of The Copper Mug. He was once a hulking man with a thick black beard, but now he has shriveled to a scrawny husk of his former self. He tells them to have a seat and opens up a bottle of wine, one of the last unspoiled bottles in the entire town, and pours them each a glass.

He explains to them the situation - Helen Nerastrim and her murderous rampage, the town slowly decaying, Father Oswyn's attempt to cleanse the Manor, and that their current desperation. Make sure to emphasize this man's sorrow with personal anecdotes about friends and family leaving, losing his livestock, his supply of alcohol going sour, of the children that have disappeared. Make sure your players empathize with this poor man and want to help him by the time he is done telling his tale.

When Torvaln's story is done, he goes behind the bar and moves away some of the floorboards, pulling out a black candle. He walks it over to the party and explains that this was the Repulsion Candle that Father Oswyn left behind when he went to destroy Helen's body. He slides it over to the party and tells them that the manor contains wealth and magical items that are theirs for the keeping should they succeed in cleansing the town of this malevolent spirit. "Please, please help us... or there will be nothing left to be saved by the time someone else capable comes along."

## REPULSION CANDLE

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This candle burns for one hour, during which time, the creature whose essence was used to craft this item cannot pass through the light it produces. The candle produces bright light in a 5 foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

## INTO THE MANOR

The Nerastrim Manor sits at the top of a large hill that overlooks the town. As usual in the town as of late, the sky is dark and overcast. A light breeze rolls through and causes dead leaves to dance across the party's path as they make their way up to the iron gates that surround the structure. Fortunately, these wrought-iron gates hang broken off of their hinges.

Despite being unattended for three years, the manor itself appears to be in excellent condition. The beautiful gardens that used to line the property were not so lucky. They are now black with rot and produce a foul stench. The flowers have long since wilted and the hedges are nothing but thick tangles of dead wood. The windows of the manor have all been boarded up by the townsfolk to prevent anyone from entering and it seems the only way into the structure is the front door which has a sign hanging on the front that reads: **Danger - Turn Back!**

## FIRST ENCOUNTER

As you are describing the grounds, have the party make a group DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they notice movement at one of the windows on the second floor of the manor. Just a few moments later, the thick wooden door that leads into the house swings open ever so slightly on its own. They hear a whisper rush past their ears as the wood creaks loudly. It is a woman's voice, low and haggard, but clearly a woman's voice. With each line, the voice grows angrier and angrier until the final line when she is all but snarling the words:

*Ladies don't speak that way, Helen*

*You need to learn your place, Helen*

*Don't you dare speak back to me, Helen*

***What are you doing with that cleaver, Helen?***

The moment she finished speaking, the door swings wide open, smashing loudly against the side of the house.

## A CLASSIC JUMP SCARE

Clap your hands just as you finish Helen's chant to give your players a nice jump as the door slams.

## THE ENTRYWAY

Peeking in through the front door, the party sees that the interior of the house is coated in dust. From outside, nothing seems to be suspicious... at least at first. As the first player starts to approach the doorway, a translucent head pokes out from around the corner. It is Helen's spirit - a middle-aged woman with hair up in a messy bun and wearing a tattered evening gown. She would be quite beautiful if not for the huge, terrifying grin spread across her face.

### HELLO, HELEN

*"I'm afraid we aren't ready for guests right now. As you can see the house is a mess! If you don't feel like waiting, you can always throw yourself on top of one of the fence spikes out front and save us both some time."* She gives a small wave of her hand to shoo them away before she disappears back around the corner.

### SMILING DEVIL

Anytime you speak as Helen, maintain the largest smile you can manage and keep your eyes wide open and fixed on the person to which you are speaking. Helen has gone mad and it is up to you to show off her playful, murderous demeanor.

### AN UNKILLABLE THREAT

At this point your players should probably be lighting the candle, but if they try to enter the house without doing so, Helen goes on the offense. She will fly through one of the nearby walls, screeching loudly as she swings an ethereal cleaver at whichever creature entered the house. *"I... told... you... no... guests!"* she screams, managing one word between each swipe of the blade.

Make an attack roll with a +5 bonus to hit against the creature that entered the home. On a hit, they take 7 (1d8 + 3) psychic damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of Helen for 1 minute.

Until Helen's body is destroyed, she cannot be killed. Ordinary attacks phase right through her and magical attacks seem to daze her at best. The party's only option for survival is the candle, and if the candle burns out, they will need to retreat.

### LIGHTING THE FLAME

When the players enter the house with the candle lit, her voice echoes through the entire house, *"Oh, another of these candles. Didn't go so well for the last bunch. They are still busy rotting away in my beautiful home!"* As her words finish, all sources of light the players are holding are snuffed out except for the Repulsion Candle. Any attempt to create a new light source fails as some unnatural force seems to prevent light from being cast. Even spells such as the Light cantrip have no effect here.

Throughout the adventure, the players will need to stick together in the candle light. If any of them leave its protection, Helen will appear in an instant and begin laying into them with her cleaver. Constantly remind your players of the time remaining on their candle (1 hour total!) and try to build tension as the candle burns lower. When you players propose an idea, be sure to tell them how much time it will take so they can consider.

Moving into the entryway, there is a door to the right that leads to the [Main Floor Storage Room]. The path forward opens up to [The Den] with a large fireplace and many bookshelves along the wall. (*Refer to the map at the beginning of the module frequently as your players move around.*) The smell of rot and death is present in the air, but it is accompanied by potpourri and other sweet scents that are a pitiful attempt to mask the odor. Somehow this only makes it worse.

### DANGEROUS DECORATIONS

A white string runs across the hallway, one foot above the ground. If the creature at the front of the party has a passive Perception of 11 or higher, they notice this string. The string leads over to a small hook near the floor, then runs up the side of the wall up to a chandelier that hangs ten feet up.

If the players do not notice this string, they will hit the tripwire and cause the chandelier to come crashing down on top of the creature that triggered it. Have that creature and any other creatures within 5 feet make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2d4 piercing damage on a failed save. Glass scatters across the hall as the chandelier explodes and Helen calls out, *"Look what you've done! You've made such a mess!"*

### ALTERNATE ROUTES

#### THE BACKDOOR

If the players don't want to face the devilish spirit directly, they can take a look around the grounds first. They find a back entrance to the manor that has been liberally boarded up. If they choose to pry these boards free and proceed into the manor via this doorway, they find themselves in the hall containing Marcy and Gwen's rooms.

#### THE WORKSHED

There is also a workshed in the backyard. It is quite well crafted and kept shut via an old lock that has started to rust a bit. Players can make a DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to pick the lock or simply strike it with a blunt weapon to shatter it. Within the shed are a number of tools that are used for groundskeeping – shovels, hedge clippers, rakes, etc... as well as a large workbench off in the back of the spacious shed.

In the center of the room is a thick black rug that has turned deep brown from years of dirt and dust collecting atop it. If the players pull back this rug, they can see the subtle outlines of a trap door in the wooden floor, but there does not appear to be any latch or handle to open it. These outlines are too thin for fingers to fit, but if they leverage a thin blade such as a dagger they will find the door is clearly locked from the other side.

**A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check in the workshed reveals that the mounted vice grip on the workbench has a strange mechanism attached to it that runs into the floor.** If they spin the device to the left to loosen the vice, there is a subtle click and the trap door pops up half an inch, just enough for someone to grab hold and pull it open to reveal the path below.

There is a ladder that descends ten feet into a five foot wide tunnel that leads towards the house. It is pitch black within the tunnel and a number of spiders have taken up residence here. Numerous roots protrude through the sides of the tunnel, the result of many years of neglect on the pathway and of the plants above. The tunnel continues for eighty feet before reaching a fine stone wall with a handle on it. This door is not locked and opens up to [The Basement], exiting just next to the fully stocked bar.

If the players take this route, Helen will still attack them the moment they enter the home if they do not have the candle burning. She will not be able to get to them in the tunnel for it is not part of the manor itself, a fact that the players can use to their advantage if they'd like. She will immediately attack the first person through the threshold of the door should they step through without protection, though.

## MAIN FLOOR STORAGE ROOM

### DESCRIPTION

*Walking into this room, there is the scent of leather in the air, and it becomes obvious looking around that this is due to the dozens of pairs of shoes scattered about. This room is filled with overcoats, hats, shoes, and other clothing items that one might need on their way out the door depending on the weather and the destination. There is also a shelf that is covered in various supplies needed to keep a home tidy. The final item of note is a ladder going up the wall that leads up to [The Attic]*

The clothing and shoes are moderately valuable, worth a total of over one hundred gold for the lot, but it is of course difficult to transport. Once the players have cleansed the structure of Helen, they can come back and gather these goods and sell them in a larger town if they wish.

## THE DEN

### DESCRIPTION

*This comfortable living space is coated in dust after years of neglect. A large fireplace on the far side of the room comes to life as you step through the threshold of the entryway. There is seating for a dozen people, but the main attraction is a large comfortable armchair that sits directly in front of the fireplace. On a small table next to the chair is a still open bottle of wine and an empty glass. On the carpet around the chair are deep red stains. There are also four bookshelves in the room as well as an assortment of still sealed bottles of alcohol*

## NATHANIEL NERASTRIM

Though it is obscured from the hallway entrance, the skeletal remains of Helen's husband, Nathaniel, still sits in his favorite chair in front of the fire. He is dressed in fine garments, though they hang a bit loose without flesh on the body. Whenever a creature gets close enough to the body, a blue shimmer sweeps over it and Nathaniel's skeleton lashes out. As he does so, Helen's voice whispers through the room, *"He had no trouble laying hands on his own wife, so I'm sure he will have no issue ripping the flesh from your body."*

### Roll for initiative.

The type of enemy you use to represent Nathaniel in his skeletal form depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1** - 1x Ghoul (**MM Pg. 148**)
- **APL 2** - 1x Ghast (No Stench trait) (**MM Pg. 148**)
- **APL 3** - 1x Wight (**MM Pg. 300**)

In addition, Nathaniel gains the following traits:

- Vulnerability to bludgeoning damage.
- **Spiritual Regeneration.** This creature regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. Throwing this creature into fire, dealing 15 to it in a single turn, or some other equally devastating environmental effect ends this regeneration permanently. This creature only dies if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

## A PERSISTENT FOE

Be sure to give subtle clues to your characters about the fact they will need to do more to Nathaniel's skeleton than just continue basic attacks to kill him. Mention how he seems to have a supernatural persistence, that the blue shimmer keeps sweeping through him and giving him the drive to keep fighting, or perhaps have Helen scream out at him to keep himself together. The large fireplace should be the obvious target for the players to throw the enemy to prevent regeneration, but simply dealing brutal amounts of damage is just as effective.

Once Nathaniel is dead, they can search his body and find a golden key in his pocket. This opens a lockbox in the [Master Bedroom] that contains a reward for the players should they find it. He also has a beautiful silver wedding ring that is worth 75 gold that they can take. Sitting on the ground near the chair is a book that he was reading. The bookmark seems to be some sort of code - these are the clues for the **Colored Marbles Puzzle** found in the **Puzzles** section.

## THE DINING ROOM

### DESCRIPTION

This elegant dining room can seat sixteen guests comfortably. Plates, silverware (made of actual silver), and cloth napkins are all prepared neatly on the table as if someone were about to sit down for dinner. A large cupboard on the left side of the room is empty, but is clearly used to store all of these lovely dishes. A rancid smell quickly strikes your nostrils, the smell of rotting flesh. Scanning the room it is obvious what is to blame. Off in the far corner of the room is the still decaying corpse of one of the townsfolk who came here with Father Oswyn. He has a dozen knives and half a dozen forks sticking out of his body. On the ground next to him is a brass candle holder with the wax melted down all the way to the base.

### AN EXPLOSIVE ENTRY

As the party rounds the table and moves through the room, one of them notices movement over by the cupboard. It is the movement of a large black rat, which is quite difficult to see in just the light of the candle. It stares at the party for a moment with pure black eyes before leaping at the player holding the candle. Just as it is about to reach them, the rat explodes in a shower of blood. **The player holding the candle will need to succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or the candle is extinguished.** It can still be relit just fine, but Helen will immediately rush into the room to attack. In this encounter, rather than using the cleaver, she will levitate silverware and launch it at players for 5 (2d4) piercing damage per attack with a +5 bonus to her attack rolls.

Once the first rat has exploded, the sounds of more can be heard running beneath the table and along the beams near the top of the room. They blend in almost perfectly with the shadows and the sounds of their scurrying echoes throughout the room, making it incredibly difficult to pinpoint their location. A total of 5 more rats will attempt to extinguish the flame in an equally grotesque fashion.

### GUARD THE CANDLE!

The party can defend the candle from these rats in a number of ways. If they try to spot the rats, have them make Wisdom (Perception) checks against the rat's Dexterity (Stealth), rolling with disadvantage if they do not have darkvision. If they spot the rat, they can use their action to make an attack against it. Players could also try to protect the flame from the blood with a piece of fabric or even just their hand. If that is the case, have them make the Dexterity saving throws against the rat's explosion with advantage. There are other creative solutions the party could use, simply have them make the appropriate checks for the scenario and be sure to reward creativity!

## THE KITCHEN

The door to the kitchen is locked, but the door is made of old splintered wood. A DC 10 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check can pick the lock or they can use the bronze key found in the Servant's Quarters if they have been to that portion of the manor. Otherwise, they will need to smash down the door with a DC 10 raw Strength check.

Listening against the door, the players can hear the sound of something cooking on a range and someone humming a nursery rhyme. The sound of cutlery being used and the occasional footsteps can also be heard, but never any conversation.

### DESCRIPTION

*Standing in the kitchen are skeletal versions of the former servants of the Nerastrim family. There is a fire burning in the range and the smell of cooked meat fills the air. It actually smells quite nice, but glancing over and you see that it is slices of large rats being seared at the moment. The door to a pantry hangs open and is filled with rotted perishable goods. The floor is a fine natural wood, but it has been almost entirely stained red with blood.*

### SOME HUMANITY REMAINS

*"Ok Marcy, Gwen, why don't you show our guests a good time!" whispers Helen's voice.*

#### Roll for initiative.

**Despite your party's APL, this encounter is simply two ordinary skeletons (MM Pg. 272).** No matter what your party rolls, have the first move go to the skeletons. Marcy turns and grabs a large knife off the counter. Gwen is already holding a cleaver... but they do not wish to fight. Marcy will turn and attack the nearest player, but Gwen simply stands there holding the cleaver, visibly shaking with resistance.

If Gwen manages to survive until a second round of combat, she drops the cleaver to the ground and begins to hum a lullaby once again. Her body continues to shake even more intensely. Helen's scream tears through the room, *"You work for me! You cut our guests into tiny pieces!"*, but she continues to resist. The skeleton of Gwen looks to the party and touches a hand to the pendant that hangs around her neck.

On the third round of combat, Helen shrieks out again. The walls of the manor shake and causes many glasses to fall from their resting places and shatter against the ground. **"KILL THEM!"** Whatever humanity Gwen was exhibiting disappears as she grabs the knife and attempts to go after the nearest party member.

### A MOTHER AND HER SON

When the party kills/disables Gwen, they can take a look at the amulet around her neck. It contains a sketch of her (with a bit more flesh) and a younger version of the man lying dead in the kitchen filled with cutlery. It reads Gwen and Edgar in a ribbon beneath and it is clear she was his mother. If the party returns the remains of both of these bodies to town, Edgar's wife – Beth - breaks down into tears and is eternally grateful. Give the party some bonus experience, inspiration, or wealth to reward them for their kindness.

## THE STUDY

### DESCRIPTION

On the far side of the room is large oak desk. It is finely crafted and seems to be holding up wonderfully through the years. There are six large bookshelves and they are completely packed with various writings. In between some of these books are carved animal statues, decorative candles, and intricate metalworks. There is a small table in the center of the room with a candelabra and a few empty glasses. One item in particular is more prominent than others - a large iron safe that rests embedded into the stone wall directly behind the desk.

**When the party enters the room, Helen's voice whispers through the air, but this time it is filled with sadness more than hate. "He loved his books more than he loved his wife."**

### SECRETS

In one of the drawers of the desk is a note that reads: "Helen has been acting strange as of late. She is less obedient than normal, less than a proper wife should be. She's spending abnormally long amounts of time in the basement, but refuses to tell me what she is doing down there. I worry for her sanity."

### PLOT HOOKS

The Nerastrim family was powerful and influential in this area and had connections with many powerful entities. If you are using this as part of an existing campaign and not simply a one-shot, consider adding an additional secret note in one of these drawers that holds a secret about someone. Perhaps he has information for blackmailing a local lord or perhaps he was working with a group of bandits that the party has already encountered. The details are up to you!

### CRACKING THE SAFE

In one of the drawers of the oak desk is a collection of colored marbles. The safe itself has a 3x3 grid on the front that is made to hold these marbles. The players must use the clues they found on Nathaniel Nerastrim's body in [The Den] in order to open this lock. See the **Colored Marbles Puzzle** in the Puzzles section on the Toolkit for more details on this.

## NOVELTY PROTECTORS

When the safe is opened, a glyph on the inside triggers and sends light shimmering throughout the room. This causes a few books along the shelves to begin to glow. They float out of their positions on the shelf and the sound of paper tearing fills the room. Moments later, these books all open simultaneously and small paper figures leap out and take a fighting stance.

### Roll for initiative.

The type of paper warriors your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL. All of these creatures are found in (NEB2).

#### • APL 1

- 2x Paper Knight
- 1x Paper Archer

#### • APL 2

- 2x Paper Knight
- 2x Paper Archer
- 1x Paper Mage

#### • APL 3

- 2x Paper Knight
- 2x Paper Archer
- 2x Paper Mage

Once the paper foes are dealt with, the party can look within the safe where they find 500 gold in coins and jewelry. They also find a note that reads "*The Perfect Wife* by Ronan Stewart" (See the Basement Passage section below for details on this note.)

### BASEMENT PASSAGE

The bookshelves in this room seem unsuspecting from a distance, but a DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a book that has a bit more wear and tear around the edges than the others. It is clear this book is moved with more regular frequency. The name of this book is *The Perfect Wife*. If this book is removed from its spot on the shelf, the bookcase swings open and reveals a stairwell that leads to the [Hidden Basement Passage].

## GWEN'S ROOM

### DESCRIPTION

*This room is bright and happy. The style clashes with the rest of the house with its bright yellow curtains, its painted white walls, and collection of assorted tea cups. These tea cups cover an entire table in the room and it seems that they were the occupant's most prized possessions. There is a small twin-sized bed, also with yellow sheets, and covered with a dozen throw pillows. Sitting on this bed is a small silver mirror.*

### PEER BEYOND

This mirror has been in this place of horrors for far too long. The manor contains such extreme hate and violence that creatures from other realms are attracted and have made their way onto the property. Helen, no longer in a sane mind, does not seem to mind these additional guests or even seem to notice them. One of these visitors has possessed Gwen's mirror.

If a player picks up the mirror and looks in it, they see a set of smiling razor sharp teeth and glowing red eyes over their shoulder in the reflection. If they turn to look for the creature, there is nothing there and when they look back into the mirror the image has disappeared. If they sweep the room to look to see where it has gone, they will see this same set of terrifying, demonic eyes looking out from just behind another member of the party. (*Keep in mind their only source of light is a single candle, so all of this is shrouded in nearly perfect darkness and these glowing eyes and shimmering teeth make a stark and jarring contrast.*)

As long as the mirror remains intact, the creature within the mirror cannot actually hurt players. They may feel something tickling near their ear as it runs a black claw along their throat or their vision might go dark for a moment as it waves an invisible hand in front of their face that still somehow obstructs the light of the candle. This creature will follow them for the rest of the time they are in the manor.

### BREAKING THE MIRROR

If the players decide they are not fond of their new demon friend, they can smash the mirror in an attempt to rid themselves of this presence, but it does not work as intended. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal that breaking the mirror would likely release whatever is lurking within the mirror; information that may influence their decision. A holy symbol used by a paladin or a cleric may be able to drive it off temporarily, as it does not wish to deal with holy magic (this entity is still quite weak in the grand scheme of things).

If they smash the mirror, a black smoke rises up from the mirror and the eyes and teeth of creature take form.

#### Roll for initiative.

This creature is a Shadow (MM Pg. 269), but will gain additional abilities and statistics depending on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

### APL 1

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The shadow can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The shadow regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Throw Cup.** One of the tea cups in the rooms launches at a target within 15 feet. Make an attack roll with a +4 bonus to hit. On hit, the target takes 1d4 slashing damage as the cup explode in a shower of glass.

### APL 2

- The Shadow gains 20 additional hit points.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The shadow can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The shadow regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Tea Cup Barrage.** The shadow launches a barrage of tea cups at a creature within 15 feet. That creature must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d4 slashing damage as the cups explode in a shower of glass.

**Strength Drain (Costs 2 Actions).** The shadow uses its Strength Drain attack.

### APL 3

- The Shadow gains 40 additional hit points, the attack bonus for its Strength Drain becomes +5, and its AC increases to 14.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The shadow can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The shadow regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Tea Cup Barrage.** The shadow launches a barrage of tea cups at a creature within 15 feet. That creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d4 slashing damage as the cups explode in a shower of glass.

**Strength Drain (Costs 2 Actions).** The shadow uses its Strength Drain attack.

### MARCY'S BEDROOM

#### DESCRIPTION

*This room is muted in color with whites, grays, and faded pink dominating the furniture and paint. Even the walls, which are covered in paintings, all seem to be from the same artist who has a conservative style with no vibrant colors to be seen. There is a twin sized bed and a rocking chair in the corner. Sitting on the dresser is an urn, the only thing that is decorated with any sort of color in the entire room. On the wall, directly behind the urn is a piece of framed canvas with the words 'Without you, the world has lost its color' written upon it.*

## A WOMAN IN MOURNING

Marcy was an older woman whose husband died a few years ago and she was never the same afterwards. After his death, she moved into the Nerastrim Manor permanently, as the thought of being in her home without Louis (her husband) was unbearable. She began to paint in her spare time, making displays of the world as she saw it after his death. On the stand next to the bed is a diary that describes this to the players, but be sure to remind them that flipping through a diary takes time.

**If the players take the time to read the diary, also note the following.** "I saw Josh coming down from the attic yesterday. He had a guilty look on his face and I made him confess to me what he had done. Turns out the Nerastrim family sword wasn't stolen after all, Josh has been using it to pretend he is a great hero. The poor boy is too afraid of what his father will do if he ever finds out where it really went (for good reason!) and so he keeps it hidden beneath the box of maps in the attic. *His secret is safe with me!*"

## FADING LIGHT

Unfortunately, this place of sorrow attracted its own demons since Helen took over. As the characters stay in the room, the artwork begins to change. The already muted colors begin to fade even further. Shadowy figures begin to appear in the backgrounds - faceless and unmoving. As even more time goes on, the paintings become totally black and white. This happens if the players spend at least five minutes in the room. Once this happens, the players will need to succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or they become cursed until they take a short or long rest outside of the manor.

While cursed, a creature is color blind and has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws. They are also filled with a deep sadness, as if there is a void in their heart that can never be filled.

### INSPIRED BY SORROW

While the feeling of sadness has no mechanical impact, it is a good opportunity for your players to show off their role-playing skills. If they make a decision that goes against their normal ideologies or perhaps gets into a deep conflict with another player, be sure to give them inspiration as a reward for going above and beyond and embracing the spirit of the curse.

## GUEST BEDROOM

### DESCRIPTION

This room is elegantly decorated and has anything a guest might want when staying at a place of such luxury. There is a king-sized bed with royal purple blankets and large, fluffy pillows filled to the brim with feathers. Next to each side of the bed is a stand with a pitcher and glasses for water, an assortment of books, and a candle. There is a large window in the room that would ordinarily fill the space with natural light, but the boards on the outside of the manor prevent that. It would all be quite lovely if not for the dead body lying on the floor near the bed.

## A VALIANT EFFORT

This body belongs to one of the young men who entered the home with Father Oswyn. His body is covered in deep, vicious cuts and the carpet around him stained red with dried blood. Lying on the floor next to his body is half of a candle that the players can reclaim. It has a strange slime on it that makes it sticky to the touch, likely the cause of it being snuffed out. The candle can be burned for another thirty minutes.

On the walls near the window and on the glass itself are deep cuts. The man is still holding a hatchet clenched tightly in his hand long after death. He tried to cut his way out of the manor, but clearly his efforts were in vain.

Beyond the body on the ground and the candle, there is nothing else of note in this room.

## THE MASTER BEDROOM

The door to the Master Bedroom is locked. Father Oswyn found the key to it on his first journey to the manor, but died before he had a chance to go inside. The key is still on his body in **[Joshua's Bedroom]**. The door is made of strong wood reinforced with iron for both decoration and security. The lock is well made and requires success on a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to pick. Alternatively, it takes 5 minutes of work to cut a hole large enough to reach the lock on the other side (and that is assuming they have the right tools to do so). It is up to the party if they want to take the time to cut their way in or to go and find the key.

### DESCRIPTION

*The jewel of the manor is the master bedroom of Nathaniel and Helen Nerastrim. Their bed cost as much as some smaller homes with an astounding frame hand carved from wood that can only be obtained overseas. Each piece of furniture was custom made by a master craftsman and it shows in the quality of the work. Colors that are not commonly used in fabrics cover the entire room - royal purple, an electric blue, and a beautiful red the color of a blooming rose. Off to the right is a massive window that would pour light over the couple first thing in the morning, but the shutters currently prevent this. A fifteen square foot rug is at the center of the room and on its own would cost 75 gold. This is the sort of room any commoner would hope to one day even be able to visit.*

As the party moves into the room Helen begins to chant once again, the words filled with seething hatred:

*Certain things are expected of a wife, Helen  
A man's needs come first in this household, Helen  
Don't scream or the children will hear you, Helen  
Cover up those bruises or people will talk, Helen*

## NATHANIEL'S LOCKBOX

If the players search the room, have them make a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success they spot a hidden panel beneath the bed. Sliding the wood aside reveals a steel lockbox. On Nathaniel's body is a key that can open this lockbox, otherwise it requires a DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to open. Inside of this box is an old family heirloom - a sapphire necklace that belonged to Nathaniel's grandmother. It is worth 300 gold.

### A PLACE TO CALL HOME

If you are using this in an existing campaign and not as a one-shot, you could consider adding a deed to a plot of land to the lockbox as well. Give your group a small farm or an abandoned shop that they could funnel money into and call their own. This could act as their new base of operations going forward.

## HELEN'S DIARY

In the top drawer of Helen's dresser is a small black diary. She was using it for multiple years and examining the texts her slow descent into madness is reflected in the writings. She can no longer handle being a "proper" lady and wants to break free from this life but sees no way out. On some of the last few pages the text becomes jagged and scribbled, barely legible. It is almost as if another person were writing it.

In these final pages, Helen mentions a book she found in town from a shady looking fellow. It was called "Demons and Devils - A Summoner's Guide." The diary details her efforts, first summoning an imp that nearly got loose before she managed to beat it to death with the book itself. Taking a life awoken something within her, and the demon's blood awoke something in the book. The book spoke to her and told her of a special crawl space off the [Hidden Basement Room].

Within this hidden space, she constructed a runic circle and made a deal with a demon to give herself the strength needed to put an end to all of the things holding her back. To finally find the courage to leave or kill her abusive, ungrateful husband. It was an easy deal to take, but she did not realize how deep her hatred ran...

### A CURSED GLYPH

On the final page of the diary is a strange runic glyph that appears to be written in blood. If a character touches this glyph, their vision turns black. Moments later they see Helen's body lying within a similar glyph in a small stone room, writhing in agony with blood pouring from the sides of her mouth. After a few seconds of watching her struggle and scream, she freezes and falls to the ground.

After 5 seconds of motionlessness, her eyes snap open once again, staring directly at the player having the vision. There are blood red and glowing slightly. A manic smile crosses her face as she seems to float from her feet, being lifted right off the floor without needing to use her hands to push herself up. This is where the vision ends. **The character that touched the glyph must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or take (1d4 \* APL) psychic damage from the incident.**

## JOSHUA'S BEDROOM (SON'S ROOM)

### DESCRIPTION

*On every single surface in this room is some sort of decoration related to adventuring and heroism. On the stand next to the bed is a finely carved wooden knight. Fake weaponry is scattered across the room - from sword to battle axe to flail. Paintings hang on the wall of dragons and of great, far-off cities. This is clearly the room of a young child who dreams of being an adventurer someday. There is a closet in the room that is ever so slightly opened, but it is impossible to tell what lies beyond without getting closer. Resting on the bed is a large book with a knight fighting a green dragon on the cover and large text that reads - 'Slaying Shyldaran'.*

### A LINGERING SPIRIT

When the party walks into the room, a voice calls out from the corner near the bed. *"Be careful, there's a monster in the closet."* It is a meek voice, and when the party looks over they see the ghost of Joshua huddled in the corner. *"It killed the other man. I tried to warn him."*

The party can now talk to Joshua to get information about what happened. He speaks without much emotion, even when talking about his own murder. *"My mom chased me with a big knife. I jumped off the balcony to get away and hurt my legs real bad. She came and cut me up until I died and then took me down to the basement."*

**Whenever Joshua stops talking to the party, he starts muttering over and over again, "Knock knock... knock... knock." The first two knocks are swift and then a long break between the third and fourth. Make sure that you emphasize this action as it is their clue to unlock the secret room in the basement! Keep coming back to the muttering between each line he speaks.**

Depending on what the party asks, they can get the following information from Josh:

- The location of the Blade of Nerastrim in the attic.
- The man dead in the closet is Father Oswyn (Josh describes a man in robes with a candle).
- The creature in the closet can go invisible, but it has glowing orange eyes and flies around!
- There is a secret part of the basement that he isn't supposed to know about.
- His sister left but he is still stuck here. Sometimes a bigger monster shows up and he feels dizzy afterwards.

Once Helen had let the hate consume her, she felt a need for power. She offered up her son as a tribute to the demon, and that is why he is still trapped in the manor as well. The creature has kept him here and feeds off his essence. This is why he is still so weak and without emotion or hope, but he can be freed if the party defeats the demon in the [The Crawl Space].

## MONSTER IN THE CLOSET

If the party tries to move to the closet to investigate, Joshua will warn them again. *"It has scary orange eyes... don't look at it!"*

If the party peers into the closet, they find Father Oswyn's surprisingly undecayed dead body. He is curled up in the corner with his hands up in a defensive posture and appears to be frozen in this position. The eyes have been plucked from his head and the expression on his face make it seem as if he were literally scared to death. On the ground next to him is a small bag and within is a single half-used Repulsion Candle, two healing potions, and a brass key which opens the [Master Bedroom].

If a character looks around the closet, they will see nothing but the body and supplies. The creature that lurks here is a Terror Spirit. It is invisible and waiting patiently near the top of the closet for someone to come into its domain. As soon as a creature touches Father Oswyn's body or any of his supplies, the spirit will attack, getting a surprise round of combat.

### Roll for initiative.

This terror spirit uses the stat block of an Imp (**MM Pg. 76**), but will gain additional abilities and statistics depending on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

### APL 1

**Terrible to Behold.** When a creature starts its turn within 15 feet of the terror spirit and is able to see the terror spirit's eyes, the terror spirit can magically force it to make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw, unless the terror spirit is incapacitated.

On a failed save, the creature is frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the terror spirit's Terrible to Behold for the next 24 hours.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the terror spirit until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the terror spirit in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

### APL 2

- The terror spirit gains 10 additional hit points.
- The terror spirit gains the *Terrible to Behold* ability from above, but its DC is increased to 12.

### APL 3

- The terror spirit gains 25 additional hit points.
- The terror spirit gains the *Terrible to Behold* ability from above, but its DC is increased to 13.
- The terror spirit gains Multiattack and can make two attacks each turn.

## RUN IN FEAR!

Keep in mind that the players still need to remain in the light of the candle to be safe from Helen's attacks. If they become frightened by the terror spirit, it is possible that fear will cause them to flee from the safety of the candle and into the "welcoming" arms of Helen.

## NORA'S ROOM (DAUGHTER'S ROOM)

### DESCRIPTION

*This room has a strong sky blue theme with the curtains, bed, and walls all being this color. The far wall has been painted with a mural of the outdoors complete with a beautiful field of multi-colored flowers and adorable wildlife. There are shelves mounted all along the walls and resting upon these are beautifully crafted dolls. These are clearly expensive, hand-crafted from fine fabrics and rare wood. On the floor, at the foot of the bed, is a dead body. The man is wearing a white shirt, but it has turned mostly red from blood stains. The smell of the exposed corpse is awful.*

### ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS

There are at least thirty dolls on the various shelves and stands in the room, but one of these dolls is a bit different than the others. While the other dolls have smiles on their faces and bright inviting eyes, this particular doll has a curved, terrifying grin on her face with sinister eyes. Her white dress still has blood stains upon it and hiding behind her back is a large pair of sewing scissors. This is a Grinning Marionette (**NEB1**).

Fortunately this doll is on commands from its master (a Grim Puppeteer, also from (**NEB1**), which you can have pulling strings elsewhere in your world) to simply observe what creatures come through the house and only strike out if they interfere. So as long as the players never touch the doll, she will simply stare out at them with that chilling visage.

### THE BODY

This body has had an accelerated rate of decay due to the necrotic attacks of the marionette. **The smell is terrible and any creature that gets close enough to examine it will need to succeed on a DC 8 Constitution saving throw or vomit.** Next to the body are the remnants of a candle - nothing left that could be used by the party to buy themselves more time unfortunately.

## THE ATTIC

### DESCRIPTION

*Climbing up the ladder, the edges of the room are still cast in darkness as it is quite a large room. There are numerous boxes stacked up, most of which are covered in sheets and all of which are coated in dust. Along with these boxes are some old paintings, broken furniture, and other such sundries. Off to the left is set of beautiful double doors that leads to the balcony that extends out over the front door. A tiny bit of light manages to bleed into the room despite Helen's best attempts to keep the place cloaked in shadows.*

## THE BLADE OF NERASTRIM

For many generations a magical longsword was passed down through the family despite none of them being fighters of any sort. Joshua took this sword and was using it upstairs to pretend he was a brave adventurer, but when his father noticed it was missing he lied about having seen it and it was assumed stolen (*You can see more details about this incident in the diary found in Marcy's bedroom.*)

Joshua was afraid that his father would kill him if it was ever discovered, but he didn't want to bury it out somewhere it could be damaged or stumbled upon by the townsfolk, so he searched the house for a place to hide it and eventually found a loose panel at the back of the attic beneath a box of old maps. **The players can find this loose panel with a success on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check.** Otherwise, the players will need to read Marcy's diary to find it. **The Blade of Nerastrim is a +1 Longsword.**

## THE BALCONY

The large double doors that overlook the balcony are sealed shut magically, but a bit of light still manages to find its way through. If your players are ever in desperation mode to get out of the manor, a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check can pull them open even through the dark magic.

As the players are moving through the attic, they will notice that the bits of light bleeding through start to become obstructed as if someone were out on the balcony. Looking through one of the cracks in the doors they see Joshua (he will be recognizable from the family portraits all over the manor or from his bedroom if they have already been there). His eyes are wide and filled with fear and he appears to be whimpering, but no sound comes out.

Helen appears out on the balcony a moment later, fading into view but still translucent. She has a bloody cleaver in her hand and begins to sluggishly shamble towards her son. Joshua pleads, folding his hands together and begging, but when he sees there is no reasoning with her he decides to jump. **Moments after he leaps over the stone railing, about the time you would expect to hear him hit the ground, a beam crossing the room cracks and drops down on the party. Choose characters in a line that are not standing near the window if possible. Each of these characters will need to succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take (1d6 \* APL) bludgeoning damage.**

## THE BASEMENT

### DESCRIPTION

*There are two finely crafted poker tables in this room as well as two additional large wooden tables designed for dice games or general drinking. Off to the right is a full sized bar that is still stocked with every sort of liquor. Next to the bar is a wine rack that extends from floor to ceiling and is six feet wide. Over half of this is still stocked with wine, each bottle being worth anywhere from 1 gold to 25 gold. Scattered about the room are also half a dozen taxidermied animals, ranging from a badger all the way up to a bear.*

## STUFFED WITH RAGE

When the party moves down into this area, they are overwhelmed by the feeling they are being watched. It persists no matter where they go, just a feeling that makes the hair on the back of their neck stand up. **Have your players make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they notice that the bear's head has definitely moved from when they first entered the room.** If the party retreats immediately, they can get out of this place without any further trouble, otherwise the animals in the room all spring to life to attack the party, their eyes glowing light blue in the darkness.

### Roll for initiative.

The type of animals your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 1

- 1x Black Bear (**MM Pg. 318**)
- 1x Badger (**MM Pg. 318**)
- 1x Blood Hawk (**MM Pg. 319**)

#### • APL 2

- 1x Black Bear
- 1x Badger
- 1x Boar (**MM Pg. 319**)
- 1x Wolf (**MM Pg. 341**)

#### • APL 3

- 1x Brown Bear (**MM Pg. 319**)
- 1x Badger
- 1x Boar
- 1x Wolf

These creature have vulnerability to fire damage.

## HIDDEN TREASURES

**If the party takes the time to scour the room, have them each make an Intelligence (Investigation) check.** On a result of 10, they find a hidden compartment behind the bar that holds an incredibly old and valuable bottle of whiskey. This is worth 100 gold to the right buyer. On a result of 20 or higher, they find the whiskey as well as a secret compartment in one of the poker tables. Within this is a set of golden dice with diamond gemstones for the pips. These are easily worth 150 gold to the right buyer. Searching for these items takes a total of 5 minutes, so be mindful of the burning candle.

## HIDDEN BASEMENT ROOM

### DESCRIPTION

*Scattered across this room are various wooden cabinets, each with a combination lock keeping them shut. On the walls are a dozen paintings, some of these risqué and others of foreign leaders. These paintings would not do well in polite company. Sitting out in the open are a few books dedicated to topics that also don't belong in your ordinary library - Taking Advantage of the Poor, The Basics of Blackmail, Counterfeiting Currency, among others.*

## PANIC SETS IN

When the party reaches the bottom of the stairs to this secret room, Helen begins to panic. \*\*“Get out of my home!” she shrieks. Loose documents fly into the air, paintings falls off the wall, and the candle the players hold even gives a small flicker, casting them in darkness for just a moment. She continues to ramble on about how she is going to kill them, tear them slowly limb from limb as soon as that pesky candle finally burns out. Regardless, it is clear she is growing frightened.

## DAMNING DOCUMENTS

The locks to these cabinets can be easily broken with a blunt weapon as they are quite old. Some are already falling apart. The Nerastrim family thought that these being hidden away in a secret room was security enough. Within these cabinets are additional works of stolen art, documents of bribery of powerful figures, and other such items that could have easily taken down the family as well as others.

If the party takes time to examine all of these cabinets it will take ten minutes, but if they do so they will find an additional magic item. Have this be a usable magic item of your choice - perhaps a bag of holding, a decanter of endless water, or a driftglobe.

## TRESPASSERS BEWARE

If your players need an additional challenge, consider adding some traps to this room. This is the location of all of the Nerastrim family secrets so it is quite appropriate for there to perhaps be a pitfall trap under the rug in the center of the room or a poison dart that fires out of a cabinet if it is opened without disabling the lock. Perhaps taking a picture from the wall causes a blast of flame or poisonous gas to spray out into the room.

Choose traps and damage appropriate to your party's level.

## THE SECRET PASSAGE

On the far wall of this room is a single brick that is slightly darker than the rest of them. Players might be able to identify there is something off about this stone, but they will need to figure out that it is the knocking pattern that Joshua kept repeating that opens the passage - two swift knocks and then a long break between the next two. When these actions are performed, the stone begins to fold and slide away, making a three foot tall doorway appear in the wall. What lies beyond is what Helen refers to as [The Crawl Space].

## THE CRAWL SPACE

### DESCRIPTION

*As soon as the stone slides away and this room is revealed, a red light pours out into the basement. Looking inside you see a set of glowing runes on the floor eight feet in diameter. Lying at the center of these runes are both Helen's and Jacob's bodies. Both of them are deceased, but there doesn't appear to be any decay or rot, as if they had only just been killed - not left here years ago. The ceiling in this room is much shorter than the rest of the house at only four feet high, so some of you will have to duck if you wish to enter.*

### THE LURKING DEVIL

Shortly after the doorway has been opened, the crawl space begins to fill with black smoke and a voice cries out in Infernal, “Leave this place or be destroyed.” This is a guttural, horrifying language that is offensive to the ears regardless of the message. Even without knowing the language it is clear it belongs to a creature beyond this world and that it is angry. As soon as the party makes any sort of aggressive move, have them **Roll for initiative**.

The smoke fills the entire room, but as soon it is the creature's turn, the smoke vanishes and it strikes the creature nearest the bodies of Helen and Jacob. The beast will continuously try to put out the candle and allow Helen to fly in and attack the party.

If the demon does manage to extinguish the flame and Helen enters the room, allow the players to talk her down. This is of course all up to your players, but if they point to her dead son and try to reason with her have them make a Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a result of 10 or higher, Helen's ethereal form fades away. On a result of 20 or higher, she turns on the demon and fights alongside the party.

The type of enemy your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1** - 1x Quasit (**MM Pg. 63**)
- **APL 2** - 1x Ghast (**MM Pg. 148**)
- **APL 3** - 1x Bearded Devil (**MM Pg. 70**)

### DESTROYING THE BODIES

Once the creature that has been guarding over Helen is defeated, the party can work on destroying her body once and for all. The easiest way to do this is with fire. There are plenty of wooden cabinets that can be pushed into the room and used as fuel. They could also simply take weapons and destroy the bodies completely through pure brute force, though this is quite gruesome as Joshua is only ten years old. A final option is to desecrate the runes here. It will need to be done by cutting the stone itself, but when enough of them have been broken and destroyed, her spirit will be released.

Unless she has been talked down, Helen shrieks in protest all the while, shouting obscenities and threats at the party. When she realizes that there is no point and that she has lost, the anger turns to sadness as she speaks one last time. It is slow and methodical, filled with the sorrow of a broken woman.

*You killed your own family, Helen*

*You will never be happy, Helen*

*You are a monster, Helen*

*You deserve this, Helen*

Once this is done, the house falls silent. Many of the evil creatures that have taken refuge in this house still remain, so the party's job may not be done just yet, but they will no longer have to worry about Helen's vengeful spirit hunting them down. The magic preventing light from being cast is lifted so they can use torches once again as they search the rest of the house for bodies, treasures, and threats.

## **THE AFTERMATH**

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With the town free of the curse of Helen, things return to normal over the next few weeks. Even if the party did not fully clear out the mansion, without her influence most take their leave shortly after. With all of the rightful heirs to the family dead, the party is free to use the Nerastrim Manor as a base of operations for the rest of their adventures. Regardless, the town will be rejoiced with the party's accomplishments and celebrate them as heroes for generations to come (unless of course they died within the manor in which case they will be remembered as the arrogant adventurers that doomed their town for eternity.)

## **LOOT AND EXPERIENCE**

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So ordinarily this is where I will write in the gold and XP the party should receive for an adventure, but this one is so open ended and your party may clear very little or all of the manor. Since it is a low level adventure, I suggest you have your players level up no matter how much of the manor they cleared. As for gold, it depends on how much time they spend clearing the place and selling off all of the goods within its walls.

# THE WELL OF WISHES

## A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 1-3

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Step into the pixie village of Pleppil, a strange and enchanting place filled with a group of fey creatures whose society revolves around the accumulation of shiny objects. Every home in Pleppil is adorned with dozens, if not hundreds, of various objects that glimmer in the sunlight or glow by the light of the moon. The pixies frequently roam to nearby towns and roads to steal new shinies from unsuspecting townsfolk and travelers.

While most pixies make their homes high up in the trees, similar in size and design to birdhouses used by some of the wealthier city folks, one pixie by the name of Quillen is left on the forest floor. When Quillen (or Quill as his friends call him) was young, he was attacked by a wizard when trying to scavenge a copper coin. He survived, but his wings were mangled and he lost the ability to fly. The damage was so great that no pixie healing magic could repair his poor wings.

Quill is not one to give up hope on regaining his flight, however. On one of his recent travels with his trusty porcupine steed, Spike, he found a group of tall folk meandering through the forest. Always a curious pixie, Quill crept up close and did some eavesdropping. He heard them discussing a wonder called the Well of Wishes. This place is said to contain waters that can cure any ailment – hopefully even destroyed pixie wings! Now Quill seeks a group of adventurers who will join him on this exciting and potentially dangerous journey into the heart of the forest to find this Well of Wishes and finally regain his flight!

**This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.**

**This module contains custom monsters which are included in Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in the first Game Master Toolkit. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found at the end of this Toolkit.**

### QUILL, THE GROUNDED PIXIE

As your adventurers are making their way down the road that passes through a dense forest, a creature comes bursting from out of the trees up ahead. It is a porcupine and it comes charging at the party at full speed. But this is no ordinary porcupine. No, this porcupine has saddlebags strapped to its sides and a tiny pixie sitting upon its back holding a quill in each hand to direct the spiny mount.

The porcupine comes to a stop ten feet ahead of the party and the pixie leaps down into the center of the path. *"Hail, adventurers! I am Quill of the grand city of Pleppil! I am seeking adventurers in need of glory and excitement to accompany me on a grand quest!"* Quill tells the party of his accident from over five years ago, when his wings were almost completely incinerated. He then describes the rumors that have been recurring over the past few months, people heading into the forest in search of this Well of Wishes - a body of water said to cure any illness and mend any wound. A place of hope for creatures like Quill with injuries that don't heal through traditional means.

He has been chatting with a number of squirrels as of late and is fairly certain he knows where this Well is located, but the inner forest is far too dangerous for a pixie to travel alone, especially one that can't fly. So now he seeks adventurers that might be willing to help a pixie in need and perhaps discover a place of great value as well. Quill cannot offer the party much in the way of gold, as such items are sacred in his city, but he can offer them access to the Pixie Linked Astral Network Transportation System (or PLANTS for short). This system allows pixies – and friends of pixies – to travel to specific magically enchanted trees all over this part of the world.

## QUILL'S PERSONALITY

Quill, like all pixie's that are a part of Pleppil's populace, is obsessed with items that shine. Any item that the party carries that is small enough to be glued to the side of a pixie home with tree sap, Quill is quick to notice and question. He will attempt to make trades for these items, digging into the saddle bags of Spike (which function as small bags of holding), pulling out things such as pinecones, fossils, and smooth stones.

Quill is also one of the lowest status pixies in the entire kingdom as his house has very little in the way of shiny decoration. It is tough to gather shinies without being able to scout from about the trees, and what few items he does find are often stolen right off of the side of his house while he is away. This is punishable by death in pixie society, but the guards always conveniently have no idea who is behind the thefts. This leaves Quill quite upset with his own people. This is what gives him the drive to fix his wings. He will prove that if the playing field were even, he would be one of the wealthiest pixies, living the high life in the Pecan Pathway.

Quill struggles to stop asking questions. His pixie mind is always adrift and he will chain question into question into question, sometimes without even waiting for an answer. Then without warning, he will storm off after a random rock or mushroom that looks as if it might hold value in the pixie housing decoration economy.

Every night before bed he empties all of the items in Spike's saddle bags and uses a bit of ink on a large leaf to account for all of the items and their shine rating. He is meticulous in this endeavor and it takes him almost an hour every time, but he insists it must be done. Feel free to give Quill other fun quirks and characteristics to make your players want to aid him and visit again even long after this quest is complete. He is meant to be a silly, fun character that your players will grow to love by the end of the journey, so really let loose roleplaying him.

## INTO THE WOODS

When the party accepts Quill's offer, he jumps high in the air, ecstatic with the news that he has finally found someone willing to help. He leaps on the back of Spike and instructs the party to follow him into the woods. It is a multi-day journey to the well, or at least where the well is if the squirrels aren't lying to him, and they will need to gather supplies in Pleppil. Plus, he can show them the PLANTS tree they will have access to after helping him.

The party enters the forest and it quickly becomes dark as they are enveloped by the loving arms of mother nature and her dense canopies. All manner of small creatures scurry about this area, not paying much mind to the party as Quill leads the way forward on his trusty steed. Quill explains that thanks to the magics of the pixies, only someone who has been personally invited into a teleportation tree can make use of their network.

After two hours of journey, Quill pauses for a moment and signals for the party to be quiet. *"Do you hear that?"* He asks, looking left and right cautiously. It is now that the players notice the woods have gone silent. Up until this point, there has been the constant chirping of birds and bugs, but now it has all ceased except for the occasionally whistle of wind flowing through the leaves. Quill reaches into a saddle bag and pulls out a small bow crafted from one of Spike's quills and a piece of plant fiber. *"There are predators abound!"*

## THE AMBUSH

Moments later, low growls can be heard along with the sound of twigs snapping underfoot. The party has less than ten seconds to organize themselves into position before they are attacked.

### Roll for initiative.

The types and number of wolves your party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1** - 3x Wolf (**MM Pg. 341**)
- **APL 2** - 5x Wolf
- **APL 3** - 1x Dire Wolf (**MM Pg. 321**), 2x Wolf

The wolves hunt in pairs with any leftover wolves striking from the back to take down the weaker looking targets. If one of the players falls to these wolves, the wolf will start to drag the body away from the fight, forcing the players to react quickly if they want to save their companion. The forest is also incredibly dense with trees very closely packed together that obstructs line of sight heavily. Make sure to clutter your battlefield with trees every ten feet or so to give your players some additional challenge in this combat.

At the start of the fight, Spike panics and runs off into the forest with Quill still on his back as he tries to regain control of his terrified mount. Quill reappears shortly after the combat ends, apologizing profusely for this lack of contribution against these beasts. Once Spike has calmed, Quill leads the party forward once again. Fortunately the rest of the journey to Pleppil is without incident.

## PLEPPIL, THE PIXIE PARADISE

Pleppil is as strange as it is delightful. There are over five hundred pixies that live in the city which is built in the treetops surrounding a massive, ancient tree at its center. This tree has leaves that shimmer a subtle cyan color and when the wind blows, small glowing flakes fall to the forest floor where they continue to glow for a few minutes before fading.

The largest of the pixie homes are nearest to this tree, but none of them are attached to the ancient tree itself. Some of these homes are as large as a wood stove and their entire exterior is coated in coins, rocks, mushrooms, and pieces of fabric. The houses further from the center grow smaller and become less extravagant in their décor, though all of them have some amount of bright decoration displayed on the front side.

Dozens of pixies fly back and forth through the area, playing games and chasing after butterflies. Some of them leap from tree to tree on the backs of saddled squirrels. There is a fleet of half a dozen pixies performing military exercises on the backs of crows, each of which have their own saddlebags similar to those on either side of Spike.

As the party approaches, the fleet spirals overhead and begins circling them as an apparent leader speaks out. *"I am Fleep, leader of the Pleppil Avian Defense Squad. What brings you to our grand city?"* The crow hovers in place, seeming uninterested in the actions occurring around it. *"Answer truthfully or be destroyed,"* he threatens and pulls out a small item from his pouch that resembles a blueberry. He holds up this item in an attack posture and waits for an answer.

At this point, Quill interjects, *"They are with me!"* He shouts, leaping from the back of Spike as he does so. *"They are going to take me to the Well of Wishes that the tall folk keep talking about!"* Quill is quite excited.

The other pixies look to one another for a moment before bursting into laughter. *"Ok then, Quill, whatever you say. You all are free to enter, but be warned, if you try to steal from any of our beautiful homes, I will personally hunt you down and end you!"* Fleep gives one final stern look to the party before the crows take off in a V formation.

## QUILL'S CONFESSION

After the others leave, Quill looks around a bit nervously before whispering, *"So technically none of the other pixies believe the Well of Wishes is a real place. And you will only be able to use the teleportation network if it is real and we succeed in getting there... so yeah."* He seems terrified of the party's reaction and stares down at the forest floor while waiting for a response.

He will reassure the party that he is confident it is there and he goes on to say that whether it is there or not, he will give them a human friendly pixie bag. This is simply a Bag of Holding, but to Quill this is a place to store all of your shinies when you are out and about. Hopefully this will be incentive enough to drive your players to his aid regardless.

Once things have been settled, Quill shows the party around the city – from the luxurious Pecan Pathway all the way down to Shrub Street where Quill himself lives. He is the only pixie that does not live up in the trees, but it allows him to have quite a large home even for the low district. He is also unfortunately at the edge of where the guards patrol and being on the ground he has quite a few unwanted visitors, so his house is surrounded by a fence, giving him a little yard that he maintains with love.

He tells the party they are free to set up camp wherever they would like on the outskirts of the city, but to be careful not to create a fire anywhere near the city limits. After the great fire incident of three summers ago, they have a zero tolerance policy against flames.

## EXPLORATION

It is growing late when the party arrives, but there are still a few hours of sunlight they can use to travel around the pixie city and interact with the locals. Most of these creatures are excited to show off their lovely homes to the party and will ask them for stories on how they obtained their own shinies. Many of them will offer trades to the players, some of which may be to the great benefit of the party as the pixies have no true value of currency beyond its shine, though they do not fall for illusions as many of them can create illusions of their own!

## SAMPLE PIXIE NAMES

Glip, Blik, Leef, Fern, Twink, Kali, Pom, Thorn, Bree

The tree at the center of town is known as the Feyroot Tree. The tree is enchanted with ancient magics and allows its roots to pierce directly into the Feywild. The pixies use this in combination with their own fey magics to travel freely between the two planes via the anchor point of this tree. When a pixie approaches and performs a specific incantation, a large doorway opens up and allows passage to the interior of the tree. Within the tree are a dozen other doors that all lead to other similar trees scattered across the lands and one that leads to the matching Feyroot Tree in the Feywild. Only someone who has been taught the incantation by a fey creature can use the network. Additionally, a non-fey can only endure the effects of the teleportation once a week or their body will suffer irreparable damage.

Strung up between the trees are tightly woven fibers with small glowing orbs set into them that lights up the entire city after dark. These weave in a massive web with thousands upon thousands of these shimmering nodes. They are primarily the color of faerie fire – purples, blues, and greens – and occasionally spark in a large poof of glitter that drifts away on the breeze. These shine bright, but are not considered a valuable currency because their supply is so high.

Once the party is done exploring, they can settle down for rest beneath the dazzling light of Pleppil as the Bat Guard takes flight to protect the city and its citizens.

## THE DEEP FOREST

In the morning, Quill wakes the party and presents to them a platter of food on a massive leaf. It is an assortment of various berries, vegetables, and fungi, but it is all edible and actually quite delicious. Quill gestures to a few rather large sacks next to his home. *"I had to sell off some of my remaining decorations, but I got us everything we should need to get there!"* Within this bags are even more food as well as dozens of marble-sized clear spheres of water. These spheres have a membrane that keeps the water suspended in place. Quill demonstrates how they work by popping one into his mouth and immediately spitting out water.

Once the party has gathered their supplies it is time to go into the forest. It takes three days to arrive at the area Quill suspects is the home of the Well. During this time, feel free to roll for forest random encounters in the **Random Encounters** section of the Toolkit. The amount of encounters your party faces should vary depending on the playstyle of your group and the time constraints for the session, but as the Dungeon Master you should be able to make the best call for your group's individual needs.

## THE GOBLIN PATROL

On the third day of travel, the random encounters stop and we get back to the story. Around noon, the players hear some chanting and the sound of metal clanking off in the distance. They will have ample time to take cover as the squad of goblins heading their way are not concerned with being quiet.

If a player speaks Goblin, they can overhear the creatures complaining about how far it is to the Well and they hope that their leaders add another group to the rotation soon. These goblins are approaching at an angle, but heading towards the same destination as the players – The Well of Wishes.

The types and number of goblins depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1**
  - 4x Goblin (**MM Pg. 166**)
- **APL 2**
  - 1x Goblin Boss (**MM Pg. 166**)
  - 4x Goblin
- **APL 3**
  - 2x Goblin Boss
  - 6x Goblin

The goblins are following a distinct path through the forest with much of the overgrowth being cut away. The rest is trampled down from repeated travel down this same trail. The players certainly have the option to simply hang back and simply follow the trail to find where the goblins are going. This isn't a combat that the players are forced into, but if they get too close they may risk detection. Have the party make Dexterity (Stealth) checks if you feel they are not using appropriate stalking tactics. If the goblins *do* spot the players, they will immediately attack.

**This combat is quite difficult, but it is intended that the party will be the one performing the ambush if they are clever with their tactics. Players who head into this encounter unprepared may have their journey cut short!**

## GOBLIN INFORMATION

It is quite possible your players encounter these goblins and capture one to interrogate. They speak in broken common and may need some convincing to give up their secrets, but they will eventually talk. The goblins are taking water from the Well back to their village a few hours away and using it in an attempt to make superior goblin fighters. They train and train with brutal strikes, taking otherwise unnecessary risks, and then are healed by the waters of the Well so they can continue to train. **And remember, this is goblins speaking in broken common so the messaging may not be obvious and the players may have to ask multiple times for the same information.**

They are early in the process, but some of their warriors are far stronger than it was ever predicted possible for a mere goblin. The goblin will also tell them that the water only retains its healing properties for a few days. They lost a few goblins when learning this as they drank the healing waters only to die from their wounds anyway.

The goblins take rotations on guarding the Well with other goblins carrying shipments back and forth. The path through the forest is largely caused by the large barrels of water they transport back to their village. At any point, there are at least three goblins on duty at the Well, making sure no one else gains access to their new sacred fountain of healing.

## VARIABLE OUTCOMES

What happens next depends on whether or not your players killed these goblins or allowed them to reach their destination unaware of their followers. Go to the section that corresponds with your player's actions - **Undetected** or **Dead Goblins**.

## UNDETECTED

If the goblins manage to arrive at their destination without spotting the players and without the players attacking them, they start to talk to other goblins. After a few minutes of discussion, these guards pack up their things and head back towards the village, hauling a few carts filled with barrels behind them. The new goblins take up their positions on watch, scattered throughout the area and waiting to jump at the first sign of activity.

If this is the case, when the players do need to encounter or sneak past these goblin guards, they are the same as listed above in the Goblin Patrol section. As mentioned above, the enemies are quite difficult, but they are scattered around the area so they may require a few rounds of combat to reach the players. Additionally, your players should be the ones initiating combat unless they are detected prematurely.

Move to **The Well of Wishes** section.

## DEAD GOBLINS

By the time the party arrives at the Well, the other goblins in the area have already begun to grow suspicious. Their replacements should have been here by now and they are restless after a long shift. They are on high alert, making any approach towards the Well difficult. After an hour, two of the goblins head down the trail to try and find evidence of what happened to their comrades while the others stay behind.

The types creatures and number of creatures depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1**
  - 1x Worg (**MM Pg. 361**)
  - 3x Goblin (**MM Pg. 166**)
- **APL 2**
  - 2x Worg
  - 4x Goblin
- **APL 3**
  - 1x Goblin Brute (**NEB2**)
  - 2x Worg
  - 4x Goblin

This is a heavily Deadly encounter, but your party is meant to get the drop on the goblins with a surprise round of combat or by waiting long enough for the others to leave and check on their comrades that never returned. The goblins are also spread around a rather large area, taking time for goblins on the other side of the well to enter the fight so your party will have a round or two of actions to perform before reinforcements arrive.

Make no mistake, if your players run head first into this encounter, there is a good chance they will die, so do your best to emphasize the deadliness of these worgs and show that these goblins are trained fighters to encourage the players to use strategy when approaching the situation.

Move to **The Well of Wishes** section.

## THE WELL OF WISHES

At this point, the Well itself cannot be seen by the players. The goblins are guarding an incredibly dense portion of the forest with trees and brush grown so abundantly that passage through the area seems impossible. It creates a tall wall around a circular area with an 80 foot diameter and overgrowth at least 5 feet thick. It takes 10 minutes of hacking and slashing with sharp objects just to pierce through to the inner sanctum of the Well. 10 minutes after entering the interior of the well, the plants have all regrown and the wall is once again solid.

The Well itself is a large stone bowl, 10 feet in diameter, that is suspended over a massive pit. Thick vines from the nearby trees loop around the well and keep it held aloft, though it still hangs far below ground level. A few particularly thick roots serve as walkways large enough for a medium-sized creature to walk out and reach the stone bowl that rests at the center. Along the interior of the bowl are ancient runes that occasional glow and cause the water to become illuminated. **Success on a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check reveals that these runes are written in an ancient language, similar in nature to celestial, but nothing that seems to make sense to any member of the party.**

Each drink of water a creature takes from the Well restores 3 (1d4 + 1) hit points immediately. The water can repair deep scars, restore lost limbs, and even end magical curses on creatures, but only if they bathe in the water for an extended period of time (the duration varying depending on the severity of the injury or curse, but no more than 8 hours). A vial of the water from this pool serves as a standard healing potion, but loses its magical qualities after being away from its source for three days, so it is not a long term solution to injury.

The cavern beneath the bowl extends one hundred feet before it finally branches off into an elaborate system of tunnels far beneath the forest floor. Feel free to use this as a future dungeon that holds an ancient relic or perhaps as a passage into the Underdark, but for the sake of this adventure it is simply an obstacle that needs to be avoided at the risk of almost certain death from the fall.

## RECOVERY

In order to reach the central bowl, the party will have to make their way across the thick vines holding aloft the Well over the massive chasm. This doesn't require a skill check, but should invoke some fear in your players, as at their level falling would be certain death. Build tension by describing the light swaying of the vines as they walk closer to the bowl.

In order for Quill to restore his wings, he will need to bathe in the waters of the Well of Wishes for two hours. During this time, the party can watch as little beads of light move back and forth across his wings and slowly mend them to their former glory. They can also mend any of their own wounds from the battles they have endured. The water is always crystal clear. Even if someone covered in blood and much hops into the bowl, it is washed from them and disappears without a trace. In addition, no matter how much water is taken out of the bowl, the water level never seems to fall.

Once Quill is healed, he takes to the skies and soars around the area, overwhelmed with joy to finally be able to take flight again after all these years. After zipping around the players a few times and thanking each of them with a hug, he flies one hundred feet straight up, above the tops of the trees, and gives out a loud cheer. A moment later, an arrow flies through the air and misses Quill by just a few feet. His joy turns to terror as he dives back down to the party. *"Goblins! A lot of them! We have to get out of here!"*

## RUN!

A horde of two dozen goblins is coming, but they still must get through the protective ring of flora surrounding the Well of Wishes to reach the party. The players will need to act fast and find their own way out of the area before they are overwhelmed.

Allow your party to be creative with their escape plan. It will take the goblin horde about five minutes to cut their way to the interior of the ring, so your players will have to find a strategy that works even faster. Possibilities include burning a path through the plants with fire spells, using ropes to climb high into the trees and avoid the thick brush at the base of the area, or cutting into the trees and trying to circle around through the brush to another area before cutting their way out. There is no correct way to approach the situation, but if your players try to simply cut faster than the goblins, they will find that is not sufficient as the goblins have specialized weaponry and a small army working together. (*You can play out a combat of 18 goblins and 6 worgs - enough to easily wipe out the party - or simply narrate their capture and potentially give them a chance to escape, but this will be strictly improvisation if you choose this route.*)

**Remember that Spike is still with the party and Quill refuses to leave him behind! Remind the players of this if they come up with a plan that requires climbing - someone will need to hold the porcupine.**

Once the party is free of the central ring, they are still not yet out of danger. When the goblins break through to the center and see that it is empty, they will quickly disperse to the local area on the hunt for the intruders. Your players will need to use their speed or stealth to avoid these goblin scout parties as they head back towards Pleppil.

## FOLLOWED

On the first night your players rest after their encounter with the goblins, they will be attacked. This will not be the entire war band, but will be a significant enough force to cause your players distress, especially since they have not yet had time to finish a long rest, though they should be at max hit points thanks to the healing of the well. The goblins can see in the dark and will use that to their advantage as they encircle the camp and attempt to strike from two directions.

**Have the character on guard make a Wisdom (Perception) check against the goblin's Dexterity (Stealth).**

On a success, they will see a small goblinoid figure moving behind some nearby trees and be able to wake the party. On a failed save, they see nothing and assume it was just the wind or perhaps Spike making some noise. The goblins will get a surprise round against the party if this is the case.

If you players left no one on guard, then the goblins automatically succeed and get a surprise round of combat as your players are awoken to arrows being fired at them.

### QUILL'S INSIGHT

If your party is level 1 and risk being killed outright by a single goblin arrow, consider having Quill notice the goblins skulking in the dark and wake the party.

The types and number of goblins depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1**
  - 2x Goblin
  - 2x Pitiful Goblin
- **APL 2**
  - 3x Goblin
  - 3x Pitiful Goblin
- **APL 3**
  - 1x Goblin Brute
  - 1x Goblin Boss
  - 2x Goblin

## A TRIUMPHANT RETURN

Once these goblins are defeated, the rest of the travel back to Pleppil is without interruption (unless you wish to roll random encounters again). Quill rides in on Spike and takes him home, putting his loyal mount away in his stable. Many of the pixies have gathered around by now. Quill was gone for nearly a week and everyone assumed he was dead, so it is strange to see him back alive. Even though they never believed in the Well, they are all curious.

Quill explodes out of Spike's stable and soars up into the trees, laughing and cheering as he circles all of Pleppil. Every pixie in the city comes out and cheers him on. As cruel as they were when his wings were crippled, the pixies are still happy for Quill. The joyous pixie seems to instantly forgive them and hugs over three dozen other citizens of Pleppil before finally returning to the players.

"*Oh yeah, you need access to the PLANTS!*" he shouts and flies into his house. There is a great deal of shuffling around and a few crashes before Quill reappears holding a perfectly smooth stone with cyan runes glowing upon it. He holds it up to the players and instructs them to lick the rock, as doing so it what allows them to open the PLANTS doorways. Feel free to use this network as little or as much as you see fit for your world. It is meant to be a fun, limited use fast-travel system that may return the party to Quill and his people as they continue their adventures.

In addition to access to the network, Quill hands over a bag of holding as promised and gives every member of the party one final hug.

## ONE FINAL REQUEST!

After hugs are complete, he looks to the ground nervously before finally asking if the party would be willing to each chip in a copper coin and sign it so he can display it on the side of his home so he never forgets what they did for him.

## EXPERIENCE

The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the quest. Feel free to adjust these values if you see fit (especially if you included additional random encounters!).

- **APL 1** - 300 XP per player
- **APL 2** - 600 XP per player
- **APL 3** - 1,800 XP per player

## LOOT

- 1x Bag of Holding
- Access to the PLANTS travel system
- A wonderful friendship

# DESCENT INTO DREAMS

## A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 1-5

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The lord of a local realm is having his council members systematically killed or cast out for treason with little to no evidence to support the claims. This has been occurring for some time and a local shaman by the name of Borjah thinks he knows the cause. In his visions, he has seen a strange spirit shifting the shadows, a puppet master using the lord as its personal servant by warping his mind. This entity is slowly gaining power in the city and increasing its dominance over Lord Kestyl. Borjah attempted to warn the council of this corruption, but all those he informed ended up dead a few days later, so now he is taking matters into his own hands... with a bit of help from some willing adventurers of course.

Borjah has a few strands of Lord Kestyl's hair, enough to create a strange potion for the party to consume. A potion that will link their minds to that of the lord and be able to fight back against the corruption that has taken hold. All they need to do is wait until his mind is at its most vulnerable... when he is asleep. Then, and only then, they can plunge into the mind of this once nobleman and drive back the forces of darkness that threaten to destabilize the entire political landscape of the area.

The potion is powerful. Dying while in this dream state cause such severe mental trauma that it usually results in the death of that individual in the real world, so the party will need to be careful. The rules of the normal world don't necessarily apply in the realm of dreams, and as they close in on the entity things are sure to grow more and more chaotic and illogical. Find out if your players have what it takes to fight back against an invisible evil using nothing but their strength of will!

This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

This module contains custom monsters which are included in Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in the first Game Master Toolkit. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found at the end of this Toolkit.

### THE CORRUPTION OF LORD KESTYL

Lord Thomas Kestyl (or whichever local lord you wish you use in your own game) has ruled over this land for some time and up until recently has been a positive influence on the area. Citizens of his great city of Azmar regard him highly and trust in his wisdom. This is the result of years of preparation under his father - the previous ruler of these lands.

Unfortunately, as of late his intentions have seem skewed and his judgment flawed. The reason for this is that a dark entity has taken up residence in Lord Kestyl's mind, corrupting his thoughts in such a way that Kestyl has no idea it is even happening. His dreams are being manipulated, and as a consequence of these subtle subliminal scenarios, his sanity is slipping.

Over the last few months he has accused multiple long-time council members of treason on nothing more than a whim and has either had them locked up, exiled, or even executed. The citizens are not sure what to think – turn their back on a lord that has provided for them for decades, or take up arms against him as his reign turns from trusting to tyrannical?

### THE DREAM MANIPULATOR

The entity that resides within Lord Kestyl's mind is known as a Dream Manipulator. It has no physical form and passes from person to person through thought alone. They are born into existence when a soul is lost to a particularly terrifying nightmare and from there they seek out new victims which they can torment. Their only goal in this world is to inflict widespread pain and suffering. These beings can jump from host to host when the creatures they occupy make physical contact, and beyond a shiver up the spine, it is impossible to tell when the manipulator has set upon you.

Kestyl has been being tormented by this manipulator for three months now. At first it came in the form of paranoia – increasing the guards on the outskirts of town, turning down mutually beneficial alliances with nearby nations out of distrust, and cancelling public appearances for fear of assassination. In the last month, the treasonous accusations began and since then over six members of the high council have been removed for conspiring to take the throne from the Kestyl family.

## BORJAH HAJROB, THE DREAMCATCHER

When the party enters the town of Azmar, they are approached by a strange gnome by the name of Borjah Harjob. He wears multi-colored robes and an intricate yet beautiful dreamcatcher around his neck. On his face are a pair of oversized bifocals that make his eyes seem massive, especially with the gnome's small, crinkled nose. He has a large bald spot on the top of his head, the white hair forming a horseshoe around his sunburnt head. His beard hangs down to his belt buckle and he always travels with a walking stick with a mummified bullfrog fixed to the end of it.

Borjah walks up to the party with great confidence and speaks, *"Ah yes, you are finally here! I have foreseen your arrival for quite some time now. Quite some time, indeed. Now that you are here we have no time to waste if you are to save the city! Come now, follow me!"* He begins to walk away from the party, beckoning them to follow even before he hears a response.

When your players ask how this gnome knows who they are, he will explain his gift. *"I am a seer of sorts. Borjah Hajrob is my name. They call me The Dreamcatcher, though that is not my official title. I see visions through dreams and can extract and view the dreams of others. I also do quite a bit of memory manipulation and hypnotism, but that is not relevant to the matter at hand. I have dreamt of the arrival of a band of heroes just like yourselves. Strong minds amongst you all – vast imaginations. These are things you will need if you are to succeed!"* He gives out a laugh and taps his staff against the cobblestone streets. *"Come now, no time to waste!"*

If the party needs persuasion to follow the gnome, he will begin to list off some of their recent endeavors or perhaps one of their recent nightmares to show that he is not simply an old fool. He also informs them that he is a consultant to the high council and that other members have come to him personally to investigate Lord Kestyl's strange change in behavior. He also mentions that there is a reward to any who can help - quite a large pile of gold!

## BORJAH'S HOME

Borjah leads the party to a home a few blocks away from the main road. It is tucked back in a strange part of the town populated primarily by gnomes, so many of the buildings are much smaller and there's a seemingly endless number of doodads and gizmos decorating the various businesses and homes in this area.

Borjah's home is a regular sized building with a smaller door and shorter windows. There are no less than twenty dreamcatchers decorating the exterior of the house, some of them made of simple string and beads, while others have small gemstones and runes laced into their designs. The result is a home that glows with every color of the rainbow. Borjah pushes open the front door and invites the party inside.

Despite the door and windows being short, the home itself is made tall enough to accommodate larger folks.

Unfortunately, Borjah does not have chairs made to support a full party so some will have to sit on the floor. Borjah leads them into the den where he has two fireplaces, both of which are currently ablaze and one with a bubbling cauldron suspended over it. There are hundreds of books in the home, but they are all in complete disarray – stacked atop tables, chairs, fireplace mantels, and simply lying on the floor. There is an incredibly elaborate alchemy lab in the far corner of the main living space as well and anyone with any information about such a setup would know that the equipment alone would cost well over 500 gold.

## THE SITUATION

Borjah invites the party to gather around the fireplace and make themselves comfortable as he grabs a book from a stack near the kitchen table. *"They call me The Dreamcatcher, but what we deal with is known as a Dream Manipulator! It is a sinister creature that brings chaos and devastation wherever it goes by subtly altering the subconscious mind of powerful individuals. They are very rare and very dangerous."* He starts to pace back and forth in front of the fireplace. *"And worst of all, they have no physical form for you to go in and hack to bits with your blades. These creatures only exist in the minds of their host, feeding off of their thoughts like a parasite."*

He looks to the party and gives a smile. *"This is where you come in! I, being a gnome that prefers to live up to his reputation, have created a way for someone to combat this entity on a new kind of battlefield - one within Lord Kestyl's own mind!"* He pauses and looks expectantly at the party, clearly waiting for applause or some sort of shocked response. When none comes he coughs and continues on, *"Yes, as I was saying, you will be able to go into Lord Kestyl's mind alongside this entity and draw it out. Once it has shown itself to you, you can strike and destroy it once and for all!"*

Borjah continues to explain the situation with Kestyl and all of the terrible things that have happened. He tells the party that the concoction brewing on the fireplace is a Potion of Mental Freedom. When consumed, your body will fall to the wayside and the only thing left to exist is the mind. Borjah has added in some of Lord Kestyl's hair to the brew, which will cause their minds to latch on to his while he sleeps. Their entire world will be dictated by Kestyl's thoughts and that is the world they must conquer to bring the old lord back.

The potion comes with a significant drawback, however. While it does give complete freedom of mind, allowing one to infiltrate the subconscious thoughts of another, if someone dies in this reality of the mind, then their physical body will perish along with it. It is a danger just like any other, but with a bit more room for the unexpected and the unexplainable. They will only be able to control their personal actions within the bounds of a world created by another.

The players can continue to ask questions and Borjah will answer them all the best he can, stating that they must wait for nightfall to start the ritual regardless as Lord Kestyl needs to be at rest for it to work correctly. He will also inform the party of their reward which scales based on your APL:

- **APL 1** - 75 gold per player
- **APL 2** - 150 gold per player
- **APL 3** - 250 gold per player
- **APL 4** - 350 gold per player
- **APL 5** - 500 gold per player

## THE RITUAL

Once Borjah has explained the situation to the party, he sets them free to do as they please until nightfall. He will make them a nice dinner and is willing to share stories. He will also give them access to his grand collection of books whilst they wait... but when the time comes, he quickly turns serious.

He gathers the party and pulls a small ceremonial blade out of his pocket. *"In order to ensure that you all stay together and wake up in the same place within Kestyl's mind, I need to add a little extra something to the mixture to bind you to one another... so if you don't mind, I will be needing some blood."* He passes the blade to each of the party members, holding a glass vial beneath their fingertip as they make the required cut. Once all of the blood is collected, he runs over and adds it to the cauldron. The smoke billowing out turns lavender in color. *"It's almost ready,"* Borjah whispers.

The gnome runs to his bedroom and comes back with multiple blankets and begins laying them out on the floor. He then runs into the bedroom a second time, this time coming back with pillows for each of the players. *"Once you consume the potion, you will fall asleep in less than a minute, no matter how hard you struggle against the urge. I suggest you simply embrace the sleep and go willingly so your mind is at ease when this all begins."*

Borjah extinguishes the flames of the fireplace and immediately begins ladling out the contents of the cauldron into various cups. Even though the fire was extinguished only moments ago, the cup and its contents are cool to the touch. It is a deep violet color and smells of tea leaves. If anyone questions this Borjah adds, *"Yes, unlike most brewers I like my potion drinking experience to be pleasant. Usually adding something to give it a more palatable taste does not disrupt the other key components of the mixture."*

Once Borjah has handed a cup to all of the players, he gives them one final look. *"Now, this may seem like it takes a while, but that is just because your mind is at ease. I expect you to wake up in no more than ten minutes, though it may seem like many hours or maybe even many days in Kestyl's dreams."* Borjah strolls over to the window and looks out at the moon high overhead. *"Alright then... drink!"* He cries out and smacks his staff against the floor.

The players immediately have their vision blur as an overwhelming need to sleep hits them. If they concede to the desire, they are asleep within ten seconds and they wake up within the mind of Lord Thomas Kestyl and his special guest – the dream manipulator.

## THE FIRST DREAM: THE PRISON IMPRISONED

When the players next open their eyes, they are all within prison cells. The party is paired off in a dark, decrepit dungeon. Though they are asleep, everything they experience here feels real. They can smell the stench of other prisoners and hear the scurrying of rats through the area. Directly across from the party are other people in cages – mostly older men locked away, some of which are unmoving – possibly dead. Metal bars surround them on three sides with a stone wall on the fourth. They can reach through the bars of these cages and touch one another, but the doors to all of their cells are locked. Torches scattered every fifteen feed provide dim light along with faint sunlight that bleeds in from outside.

There is a single sound that pierces through the rest of the noise in this awful place – the sound of a man crying. They can hear the whimpers echoing throughout the halls from far away, *"I didn't mean to, I didn't mean to. It wasn't my fault..."* This is Lord Kestyl, a prisoner within his own mind.

If the party tries to speak to any of the other prisoners, they are met with nothing but savage, snarling responses. They are all essentially mindless, ravenous beasts that claw at their own flesh and the walls of the cells. Blood pools on the floor beneath them as a result of their self inflicted wounds.

## ESCAPE

The party is without armor, without weapons, and without magic in this world. Any of their ordinary supernatural abilities seem to fail as they are nothing but ordinary prisoners here. They will have to get a bit creative to free themselves from this place.

The players are in cells next to one another. The stone wall behind them is solid, as are the bars that barricade the window that allows a single square of sunlight to shine into the cells. **Success on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that two of the bars between their cells are quite rusted. With a few hard kicks they can be knocked down and the party can all crowd together in one cell.**

Once the party is together, they can use a variety of tactics to get themselves free. Options include using the broken bars to give themselves leverage and have everyone make Strength checks to rip the cell door right off its hinges. They can wait a few minutes or so for a guard to pass by and when he sees they have crowded into the same cell, he will open the door with sword drawn. This is a CR  $\frac{1}{8}$  Guard (**MM Pg. 347**). The party can quickly dispatch him and take his keys. There are other solutions the party can employ as well, just make sure it is plausible and allow them to break free from their imprisonment.

## FINDING THE VOICE

Even once the players have escaped their cells, they are far from being free. They can still hear the voice of Kestyl whimpering throughout the area, but it is impossible to determine its origin. Each end of a hallway branches into a three way intersection that leads to more cells, which also lead to more cells, and so forth. This prison is illogically endless.

The party will need to wander through this endless prison until they find Kestyl in his cell. Have them encounter a few very weak guards along the way that they will either need to defeat or avoid via stealth or distractions. Have these encounters be simple role-playing events as there is no need to bog down the adventure rolling for initiative to dispatch a single foe.

After what seems like an eternity of walking, the party finally finds Kestyl. He is dressed in tattered royal garb and covered in dirt and grime. It appears he has been here for quite some time. He is curled up into a ball, holding his knees to his chest as he continues to whimper, taking no notice of the party until they move next to the cage.

### KESTYL, A MAN TERRIFIED

Kestyl runs to the bars of his cell and cries out to them in desperation, *"Please... please help me! I've been here for so long..."* The players can talk to Kestyl and he will explain that he was betrayed by the captain of his guard and has been in prison for years now. He will rant about how he always knew that Captain Gronell was a traitor and he will have his revenge. Kestyl's cell, unlike the others, does not even have a door they could hope to open to free him, so the best they can do for now is talk some sense into him.

The party will need to start to explain to Kestyl why they are here and what is going on, and when they speak to him for long enough a look of revelation crosses his face. *"I'm... being tricked,"* he mutters. *"Help me kill this thing. Whatever it is. Please!"* He calls out in desperation and reaches a hand out to the party.

## THE MANIPULATOR SPEAKS

A voice interrupts: *"I'm afraid it is time for Kestyl to go to his quiet place once again."* The voice is deep and speaks at the volume of a whisper – sinister. There seems to be no origin for the voice, it simply resonates throughout the entire prison.

The bars on Lord Kestyl's cell begin to transform, twisting and bending and morphing into brick. The bars on the window close off first and cast him into darkness. *"No, not again. Please!"* He cries out. *"I can't fight back against him... but perhaps I can give you a fighting chance!"* As Kestyl speaks these words, the party has their armor and weapons returned to them, or at least a version of their gear close enough to be useful. The bricks continue to form and just moments after he is done speaking he disappears into the brick box.

## OPENING THE CELLS

*"Now, time for our uninvited guests to take their leave,"* the sourceless voice speaks again and the door to the cells swing open – all of them. The entities within the other cells stand and begin to shamble out of their containment, their eyes filled with savage intent and a primal ferocity painted on their faces. They see the players and begin to surge forward through the now open doorways of their cells.

### Roll for Initiative.

The type of enemy your players face and their numbers depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1**
  - 3x Zombie (**MM Pg.316**)
- **APL 2**
  - 1x Ghoul (**MM Pg.148**)
  - 3x Zombie
- **APL 3**
  - 2x Ghoul
  - 4x Zombie
- **APL 4**
  - 1x Ghast (**MM Pg.148**)
  - 2x Ghoul
- **APL 5**
  - 2x Ghast
  - 2x Ghoul

The players can move to engage the zombies and potentially even shove them back into their cell to keep them contained (*once the doors close again they become locked*). The path between the cells is ten feet wide and extends in each direction for fifty feet from Kestyl's cell before splitting into three-way intersections. The limited width of these halls can make combat a bit difficult as characters block line of sight of enemies beyond.

Once all of the creatures are dead, the torches at the ends of the hall begin to flicker out one at a time, closing in on the players from each direction. Even creatures with darkvision cannot see beyond when the light goes out... Even the sunlight that was pouring in through the windows moments ago disappears as the entire world seems to collapse in upon the party.

*"You've made a deep mistake coming here,"* speaks the voice. *"You attempt to help but all you have done is given me more minds to feed upon, more nightmares I can use to fuel the flames."* The light continues to fade until the party is left with a single torch providing all of the light for the area and beyond its fading light is an abyss. As the torch burns out and casts the party into complete darkness, another voice interjects - the voice of Kestyl in a forced whisper that pierces the entire prison with desperation - *"I will not be silenced again! Kill It!"*

## THE SECOND DREAM: THE BATTLEFIELD

The world goes dark for just a moment, then light flickers before the party's eyes once again. The blasts of cannons can be heard all around along with the screech of blades clashing against one another and against armor. The air smells of blood and of waste from the soldiers that lay dead around the party - some scorched from the attacks of enemy wizards, others slain from the arrows of a far off archer. "*They're going to breach the wall!*" A voice shouts out that cuts through the sounds of battle and brings the world into focus.

*"Interesting, he brought you to this dream. His mind is stronger than I realized. No matter, this should do nicely,"* the entity's voice calls out and then gives a twisted laugh that slowly fades as the cacophony of battle returns.

The party members are in full military garb, bearing the symbols of the city of Azmar. They are behind a great wall that protects the castle at the heart of the city. Through a few holes in the stone through which they can see figures adorned in green and white outfits – those of the Kingdom of Kathera. **Success on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check has the players recall a war between Azmar and Kathera some twenty-five years ago.**

Stone begins to crumble from the wall next to the party as the boom of a battering ram slamming into it resonates through the dream. Looking further down the wall, the figures of soldiers fighting is visible but they are all out of focus no matter how hard one tries to look at them. The terrain in the distance resemble that of a painting, still and unliving, the memories of a man who didn't have time to take in the full details of the moment and fills in the gaps the best he can.

A man calls down to the party, *"Raise your weapons and get back! They are going to be storming through the breach in moments! Hold them off and destroy that battering ram before it reaches the castle!"* This is the voice of Lord Kestyl. He is much younger now and dressed in a set of glorious plate mail armor. His face is covered in a mixture of dirt and blood, but his armor seems to be without damage.

## WHAT LIES BEYOND

More stone erupts towards the party as the battering ram strikes again. Kestyl turns and looks out over the battlefield from atop the wall and shrieks, *"What by the mercy of the gods is that?"* His voice is filled with terror as he stares with wide eyes. The entire world seems to shake with terror and fear as Kestyl reflects on this critical moment in the battle. As the wall explodes, soldiers begin to swarm in as expected and they can see what lies beyond the wall that has caused such fear in Kestyl – a humanoid at least twenty-four feet tall. It is wearing thick black armor and wields a blade as large as a full grown horse.

*A fire giant.*

The party can feel the temperature drop a full ten degrees and the world blurs around the edges. They can see Kestyl up on the wall slope down to his knees, still beyond the safety of the stone but no longer providing the much needed leadership that his armies require in this crucial time. They can hear his heavy breathing echoing through the sky, but no one else seems to take notice. Blurred soldiers run all along the walls, scrambling for cover and for weapons. The enemy troops with the battering ram make their way through the wall.

**Roll for initiative.**

## STOPPING THE ASSAULT

The type of enemy your players face and their numbers depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 1**
  - 5x Guard (**MM Pg. 347**)
- **APL 2**
  - 5x Guard
  - 1x Orc (**MM Pg. 246**)
- **APL 3**
  - 4x Guard
  - 4x Orc
- **APL 4**
  - 1x Berserker (**MM Pg. 344**)
  - 2x Orc
  - 2x Guard
- **APL 5**
  - 2x Berserker
  - 2x Orc
  - 2x Guard

The orcs in this battle are simply soldiers of the enemy army wielding greataxes. Feel free to have some of them roll 2d6 for their weapon damage instead of a d12 to represent that they are using a maul or a greatsword and adjust the damage type accordingly.

These are not the only enemies that surge through the breach in the wall, but many others divert to the sides and engage in combat with other soldiers of the Azmar army and immediately fade out of focus. Those that remain are guarding the battering ram and it is up to the party to stop them before it reaches the castle. Two of the enemies of the list above are on either side of the ram, pushing it forward through the dirt and mud. They will continue pushing unless engaged directly by the party, but the other enemies will do everything in their power to prevent interruption.

## A HASTENED BATTLE

Give your players 6 rounds to stop the battering ram or it reaches the castle and results in a loss of the battle. If the players fail, have a cinematic vision play out of the walls of the castle crumbling, massive armies surging in through the breach, and they are enveloped by more soldiers than they could ever hope to face and are cut down. They do not wake up from the dream...

On a successful combat, the players turns and see numerous guards fighting in the breach itself, keeping the path relatively well blocked from the enemy. Archers are up on the wall firing down and one of them yells out. *"My lord, what do we do?"* He is panicking and it is easy to see morale of the troops is starting to slip away. Kestyl peeks over the edge of the wall one more time and sees the fire giant cleaving through multiple soldiers with each powerful sweep of its blade.

*"It's over. We can't beat it."*

## KESTYL, A MAN DEFEATED

The sinister voice fills the air again. *"He thinks about this moment frequently. This is the moment he revealed that he is a coward who fears death just as any man. That he was not willing to die for his own people. This is the day he lost the respect of his entire army. The day he let all of his citizens down. Such a shame. They still won the battle thanks the bravery of a handful of young soldiers... but that isn't how his dreams play out."* The voice starts laughing with insanity, a laugh that is harsh on the ears.

In the same moment, the fire giant swells to three times its already massive size, towering up to a staggering sixty feet tall. Its sword is now the size of a small ship and it carves through entire lines of soldiers, shearing through dirt, stone, and flesh effortlessly. A gargantuan foot stomps down, crushing a dozen soldiers from each side of the battle, destroying without discretion. The ground rumbles and shakes, causing many soldiers to fall down in the area surrounding the titan.

## HELP HIM

The party must move up to Kestyl and the process starts again in a similar fashion. He is in a pool of self-doubt, cursing himself for being too afraid to do anything against the coming danger. The muscles in his arm strain as he slams a clenched fist against the stone with enough force to break the bones in his hand.

The party must give him a pep talk and call out to the man trapped in this nightmare. Force your party to roleplay this scene. Encourage them to use their own experience and pull out details of their back stories of past battles together as a team. Award inspiration for truly moving speeches that your players may give. Do not have your players make a Charisma check for this, simply let them speak and convince Kestyl.

He snaps back to his sane mind far quicker this time around and looks the party with confidence. *"Quickly now, there is a ballista at the top of the castle. If we use that, it might be able to take the giant down. Follow me!"* Kestyl charges back towards the castle and calls to his men, *"Distract it the best you can. We are going to take it down!"* The men cheer, reinvigorated by their leader's bravery.

## LUCID DREAMING

As they approach the walls of the castle, a giant boulder fired from a trebuchet explodes against a tower and causes stone to collapse and block the pathway. *"Well, this is still my mind, right? Hopefully I still have some control here."* Kestyl closes his eyes for a moment and an explosion roars through the area as the giant smashes into the outer walls. A few seconds later, a rope ladder tumbles down from the upper levels of the castle and hangs mere feet away from the party. Kestyl looks over with a smile. *"I guess so!"*

The party ascends the wall which takes a few minutes even climbing at a rapid pace. All around them the world is falling to pieces. Even the background, which still appears to be nothing more than a painting, has gone up in flames and smoke. Soldiers scream in rage and agony below as sword clashes against shield and against flesh, but the party remains safe until they reach the top of the wall and find themselves at the ballista.

The soldiers that were operating it before are both dead, multiple arrows piercing their bodies. Kestyl pushes them aside and grabs a new bolt. *"Ok, someone aim this thing. It should be a pretty easy target."* He glances out to the battlefield and they are still shorter than the giant's head, but only be a few feet. One of the players will need to man the ballista and make a shot using their Intelligence modifier for the attack roll, as this is more about using the device than reactionary aiming. The giant has an armor class of 10, so it should be fairly easy to hit.

When the first shot strikes true, the giant turns its attention to the players and Kestyl. *"That's it, hit it again!"* Kestyl screams as he loads another bolt. *"Quickly!"* The creature reaches down, picks up a massive handful of rubble from the shattered wall, and hurls it at the players. Each player must make a DC (8 + APL) Dexterity saving throw, taking (APL \* d4) bludgeoning damage on a failed save. The player manning the ballista then gets to make another shot at the giant.

## A GIANT POSSESSED

After the next shot hits or misses, the giant's eyes change from fiery red to a deep black. The massive creature halts its rampage and stares. The giant no longer has pupils but the players can feel its gaze piercing, as if they are being mentally violated. It sees through them and down into their insecurities which surge to the surface.

Then with a flash, a speed not shown in any of the giant's previous movements, it reaches out and snatches Kestyl. *"Well this was fun for a time but now I think it's time you left."* The giant is speaking the words but it clearly the voice of the manipulator. Kestyl begins to scream as the giant clenches its fist. The party can hear the sounds of his bones breaking and blood begins to seep from the corners of his mouth. His eyes bulge nearly out of their sockets as his cries for pain are sharply cut off as another agonizing snap rings through the area.

With the other hand, the giant raises its sword and sweeps it at the party in a gigantic arc. As it swings, time seems to slow around them but their bodies are frozen in place as the sword edges closer and closer, moment by moment as they see their impending doom. Just as the blade is making contact with the first member of the party, they hear an determined "No!" whisper through the skies – the voice of Kestyl.

## THE THIRD DREAM: THE IMPOSTER

Every member of the party snaps violently awake on the floor of Borjah's home. He looks up from a book startled and rushes over to them. *"Are you ok? What happened? Did you kill it?"* He unleashes rapid fire questions upon them, running from one player to another as he does so.

When the party explains the situation he will sigh and exclaim, *"Perhaps when your minds realized their certain doom, they forced you all awake, saving your lives. Or perhaps Kestyl did something to help you all escape the situation."* He paces around the room stroking his white beard. *"Either way, this is quite unfortunate because that was likely our only shot at defeating the creature. Now it knows who you are and if you try to invade again it will stop you."*

## THE REAL SITUATION

Just as the party was about to die to the fatal blow, Kestyl used the rest of his strength to stop the creature from taking their lives, but in doing so exhausted his mind entirely. The creature had no choice but to abandon Kestyl and leap into the minds of the players. If it had not acted so fast, it would have been cast from Kestyl's drained mind and killed immediately.

The entity will now attempt to manipulate the party against one another and try to get them to devise a plan to kill Lord Kestyl with the hopes that when they wake up this anger towards one another will persist and the idea to kill Kestyl will be cemented deep in their subconscious.

However, the entity cannot mimic Borjah perfectly and the world beyond the immediate home is going to be lacking detail. **The players will need to make succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence (Insight) check to notice that anything is wrong, as things in a dream often seem normal even when they are not, but do not trigger this unless the players explicitly ask!** Feel free to subtly change the gnome's speaking accent and certainly change his general behavior so that the players will hopefully catch on to what is occurring before it is too late.

## BORJAH'S PROPOSAL

Once the party is up and about, Borjah will offer them some soup and tell them to take a quick rest to calm their minds after all they have been through. **Your players can take a short rest at this point, but during this rest Borjah will talk to them and start to plant ideas.**

*"So if the potions failed... I think we have but one option left if we are going to save this kingdom."* He looks around to the group, struggling to conceal his emotions. *"We have to kill Kestyl!"* He will start to talk through various strategies to do so: *"Perhaps a poisoned beverage at a banquet, a poisoned-tip arrow shot from a great distance, or my personal favorite, a good old fashioned fireball!"* Make sure to give Borjah a strangely uplifting attitude when discussing these methods to murder the Lord of his city. Have his breathing grow heavy and perhaps he occasionally subconsciously licks his lips when going into detail.

He will attempt to prod ideas out of the party and get them to discuss their own ways to kill Kestyl. He builds off of their ideas and encourages them to think outside the box and get creative with their ideas. He wants the idea to be completely set in their mind when they wake (if they wake).

## TURNING FRIEND AGAINST FRIEND

Once the conversation on killing Kestyl has come to a close, Borjah will move on to the next topic of discussion very casually. *"So, whose fault was it that the mission failed?"* The party will likely tell them it was no single person's fault, at which point he will ask for additional details and will point out any mistakes the party members may have made. *"Ah, so she missed the ballista shot, I see."* *"Oh, so he wasn't even strong enough to break the bars of the prison cell in a dream?"*

Whenever he makes one of these statements, have the other players make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they hear the logic in his words and start to become convinced that Borjah is right and will start to spread the blame, causing unrest in the party. Be sure to hold your players to role-playing this situation and reward them with inspiration if they do a good job!

## DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Keep in mind that during all of this, the party should eventually start to realize that there is something wrong with Borjah. Be prepared to improvise from the path if needed, because it is quite possible they will attempt to attack him or subdue him via magics. Be prepared to jump to the appropriate follow up section at any time.

Remember that this creature is infiltrating their minds, so any plan they try to hatch in secret he will hear and be able to react to and deflect. If their suspicions raise too high and he knows they are going to attack, move to the next section.

## TEA TIME

This is Borjah's response for a party that is suspicious of Borjah, but doesn't necessarily know they are dreaming. If they plot to take him down when his back is turned or when he goes to sleep, he will immediately begin this path.

"You all seem quite stressed and for good reason. I am sure your minds are still addled from what happened and a weak mind can go rampant with paranoia and unrest. Let me make you some tea. It should help calm your thoughts and will prevent any headaches that would be coming your way."

Borjah moves into the kitchen and begins to prepare tea, but in the midst of his preparations he pours a hefty helping of poison into each of the drinks. **If the players attempt to spy on him while he prepares, be sure to do a contest of his Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) with a +3 bonus versus their Wisdom (Perception).**

He brings the drinks out and presents them to the party. If they consume the tea, it deals ( $d6 \times APL$ ) poison damage to each party member. At this point they will obviously know they have been deceived and you can continue to **The Final Dream – A City Ablaze** section for the follow up.

## THE FINAL DREAM: THE CITY ABLAZE

When Borjah is revealed to be the entity pulling the strings, everything goes to hell. The walls of Borjah's home fall away and the roof tears loose and flies off into the distance. All around them the city is in flames, many homes have already burnt to the ground. The castle is in ruins, with only a single spire still standing and the rest collapsed in massive piles of rubble.

"Have a taste of the future to come," speaks Borjah, the voice now that of the dream manipulator as it spoke in the prison and on the battlefield. As they look at the gnome, his face begins to tear away, revealing black, oily flesh beneath. Claws rupture from his fingertips and toes as the gnome's height increases to over seven feet, his torso ripping in half with a sickening pop as the creature stands and finally reveals its true form. It tears away the gnomes face, no longer needing to maintain the façade, revealing a single massive eye in the center of a face with no other features. The iris of this singular grand eye is royal purple and darts from player to player, drinking in their fear.

**Roll for Initiative.**

## FIGHTING THE NIGHTMARE

The dream manipulator shifts in power and stats depending on your party's APL. Consult the information below to determine the power level of this entity in your adventure.

- **APL 1**
  - CR 1 Dream Manipulator, 1 Legendary Action / Round
- **APL 2**
  - CR 1 Dream Manipulator with + 15 hit points, 1 Legendary Action / Round
- **APL 3**
  - CR 3 Dream Manipulator, 2 Legendary Actions / Round
- **APL 4**
  - CR 3 Dream Manipulator with + 15 hit points, 2 Legendary Actions / Round
- **APL 5**
  - CR 5 Dream Manipulator, 3 Legendary Actions / Round, Collapse Mind DC 15

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dream manipulator can take a set number of legendary actions per turn, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dream manipulator regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Slam and Crush.** The dream manipulator uses its Assail the Mind attack.

**Collapse Mind (Costs 2 Actions).** The dream manipulator attempts to completely overload the senses of target creature within 90 feet that it can see. That creature must succeed on a DC 13 Intelligence saving throw or become incapacitated until the end of its next turn as its mind is overwhelmed.

This fight is meant to be far from the ordinary. It is a battle of creativity and chaos and gives your players free reign to do what they want and contest those actions against these evil entity. *As combat starts, say this to your players: "You can feel the ground shifting beneath your feet as you walk. The world seems to warp and stir on a whim. The logic that holds this world together seems to have shattered and you can feel your subconscious causing subtle changes to the environment around you."* This should let them know that they can shift the world to their will during this fight. It is not necessary for the combat, but it will certainly help.

Your players can say they want to try to throw a house at the entity, conjure a massive sword to slice him in twain, or perhaps lift off the ground and fly – all of these things are possible, but the demon will fight back with similar creativity and vigor so be prepared to think on your toes and react. If the players try to drop a giant sword on the entity then perhaps it counters with a massive shield of energy or if they throw a house at him, he may rip it to shreds before it reaches him. The point of this combat is to be cinematic and memorable, so be creative!

When your players use these creative techniques, have them either make an attack roll using their primary stat or have the creature make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw (depending on the nature of the attack. It is up to you as the DM to decide). This deals psychic damage based on your party's APL on a successful hit or a failed save.

- APL 1/2 - 2d8 psychic damage
- APL 3/4 - 3d8 psychic damage
- APL 5 - 4d8 psychic damage

## AFTER THE BATTLE

When the creature finally falls to your party, the dream begins to fade. The world simply goes black and blurry around the edges, fading inward until only the world directly around them exists. Just before the blackness consumes them entirely, they hear the strained voice of Kestyl speak, "Thank you" and they awake in Borjah's home a second time.

He looks down at the party with a smile. "*Gone almost five hours! Far longer than I anticipated! I was afraid he was going to wake up before you could finish the job. I assume all went well?*" He asks, putting down the book he was browsing through and walking over to the party. "*You may feel a bit dizzy for a while, side effect of the potion, but it will fade.*"

The party can explain the situation to Borjah and he will chuckle with delight at the creature's tactics. He will offer for the party to stay over just as he did in the dream, but this time they will be discussing going to the king to explain the situation and let him know he is free of the dream manipulator and the control it had over him.

*Feel free to have this meeting with Lord Kestyl proceed however you see fit. If you are dropping this into your world and not as a one-shot, then perhaps he will recognize the party's strength and have another task to attend to on his behalf. Regardless of how you want this meeting to proceed, the players will receive a reward for their actions. Suggested rewards for the encounter is listed below.*

## EXPERIENCE

The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the quest. Feel free to adjust these values if you see fit (especially if you included additional random encounters!).

- **APL 1** - 300 XP per player
- **APL 2** - 600 XP per player
- **APL 3** - 1,800 XP per player
- **APL 4** - 2,700 XP per player
- **APL 5** - 4,500 XP per player

## LOOT

The reward your party receives is based upon its APL.

- **APL 1** - 300 gold and a +1 weapon
- **APL 2** - 600 gold, a +1 weapon, and 4 healing potions
- **APL 3** - 1,000 gold, a +1 weapon, and 4 healing potions
- **APL 4** - 1,500 gold, a +1 weapon, and an uncommon magic item
- **APL 5** - 2,500 gold, a +1 weapon, and an uncommon magic item

## THE DREAM MANIPULATOR

CR 1

### DREAM MANIPULATOR

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 30 (4d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft., 60 ft. (fly)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

|         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Telepathy (120 ft.)

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

#### Actions

**Assail the Mind.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) psychic damage. This attack takes on a random appearance and nature - conjuring items into existence, greatly manipulating the surrounding world, or through otherwise physically impossible feats.

## CR 3

### DREAM MANIPULATOR

*Medium aberration, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 60 (8d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft., 60 ft. (fly)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) |

**Skills** Deception +2, Insight +4, Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Telepathy (120 ft.)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If the dream manipulator fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

#### Actions

**Assail the Mind.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) psychic damage. This attack takes on a random appearance and nature - conjuring items into existence, greatly manipulating the surrounding world, or through otherwise physically impossible feats.

## CR 5

### DREAM MANIPULATOR

*Medium aberration, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 90 (12d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft., 60 ft. (fly)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Deception +4, Insight +6, Perception +6

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Telepathy (120 ft.)

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

**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If the dream manipulator fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

#### Actions

**Multiattack.** The dream manipulator can use its Distort Reality. It then uses its assail the mind attack.

**Assail the Mind.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) psychic damage. This attack takes on a random appearance and nature - conjuring items into existence, greatly manipulating the surrounding world, or through otherwise physically impossible feats.

**Distort Reality.** Each creature of the dream manipulator's choice that is within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw or have the world begin to shift and melt before them. These creatures become disoriented. While disoriented, attacks against the dream manipulator are made with disadvantage. A creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success and becoming immune to this effect for the next 24 hours.

# THE COPPERBOLT CONUNDRUM

## A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 4-6

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### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The party approaches the Dwarven Kingdom of Narol'Duun, where things are far different than in your typical dwarven empire. The first major difference is that Narol'Duun is split into three distinct categories of dwarven tribes based on the main type of ore that they mine and refine. The dwarves take on characteristics of these ores - the Cobalt Dwarves having a tinge of blue to their hair, the Copper Dwarves having tough skin and beards of shining reddish-brown, and the skin of the Iron Dwarves is a deep grey in color. These dwarves engage in trade and drink, but the one thing that they are sure to never do is breed outside of their respective tribes. To be found in a relationship with a dwarf of another tribe is to be exiled to the surface - a punishment worse than death for most of these dwarves.

On this particular adventure, the party finds themselves caught up in a case of forbidden love between a royal member of the Cobalt Dwarf family - Nadom Glintstone - and a simple merchant woman from the Copper Dwarf tribe by the name of Lajeera Copperfist. They have been doing their best to keep their love a secret for they both know the risks, but the Cobalt King, Norgith Glintstone, has suspicions and is deeply afraid of the damage such a scandal could have on his family's reputation. He doesn't want to draw any attention to the situation, so it is difficult to find a dwarf of his own tribe that could look into it further, so when the party comes along he sees it as a perfect opportunity.

He will hire the party to look into the situation with Nadom, offering grand rewards in exchange for the truth if they can provide proof. The party will be torn between multiple threads of possibility in this adventure – telling Norgith the truth about his son's affair with Lajeera, helping Lajeera to permanently change her form to that of a Cobalt Dwarf so they can be together, or perhaps even trying to end the tribalistic ways of the dwarven kingdoms all together.

This is a heavily role-playing based adventure, perfect for those who would rather talk their way through a difficult situation than cut their way through it, but there is still some combat along the way depending on the party's choices. This story will decide if love can win out against all odds or if the temptation of coin is greater than the happiness of others. Prepare for a journey filled with ale, secrecy, and romance as your players face The Copperbolt Conundrum!

This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.

This module contains custom monsters which are included in Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in the first Game Master Toolkit. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found at the end of this Toolkit.

### NAROL'DUUN – KINGDOM OF THE METALLIC DWARVES

#### THE CULTURE

As mentioned in the synopsis, the Kingdom of Narol'Duun is made of three distinct dwarven tribes. These dwarves have lived in these mountains for thousands of years with their own specific mines that span for dozens of miles underground. Prolonged exposure generation after generation has caused each of these tribes to form characteristics that reflect the primary ore that they mine in their particular portion of the kingdom. They are all considered allies, but there is a huge stigma against breeding between dwarves of different tribes and those who are found together are almost always exiled to the surface by their people. Any dwarf that is born as a mix between these two tribes (typically in secret) is known as an Unrefined Dwarf and are immediately cast out, even if they are just babies.

Most of these dwarves go their entire lives without ever seeing sunlight. Their darkvision far surpasses that of a normal dwarf, but they have also developed a sensitivity to sunlight similar to many other subterranean creatures. They protect their lands fiercely and thoroughly screen anyone who wishes to enter their kingdom simply to pass through the mountains or to trade for their finely crafted goods. The Cobalt Dwarves protect the entryways to the kingdom which consists of a two sets of double doors a mere 10 feet wide, one on each side of the mountain range. These entrances are protected by strong dwarven fighters and piles of rocks that can be remotely triggered to collapse on aggressive guests.

With mines expanding rapidly as their cities flourished, the dwarves realized long ago that they would need help traversing the great distances required to reach additional ores. They now use a combination of coal-powered minecarts and giant moles that can move quickly through the tunnels. To feed themselves and these giant mole mounts, the dwarves have expansive subterranean mushroom farms. Some of these mushrooms grow up to ten feet in height and are used in almost all foods consumed by the dwarves with a few specially grown mushrooms dedicated to making their famous Shroom Ale.

Luminescent mushrooms light their pathways and their cities. It is breathtaking to first look upon. The pathways and city blocks are cast in a beautiful mix of deep blues, greens, and yellows from these mushrooms that grow directly into the stone. Some of these luminous mushrooms are even used to make special glowing beverages, but these come at quite the premium as they give temporary darkvision to ordinary creatures. These luminescent mushrooms have the unique characteristic that they grow to full size within a matter of days, but can survive for decades with nothing but natural rainwater and the minerals themselves for sustenance.

## THE COBALT DWARVES

The dwarves of note within the Cobalt Kingdom, which is the kingdom most outsiders interact with as they are responsible for guarding the passage through the mountain and the entrances to the kingdom, are as follows:

- **The Cobalt King** - Norgith Glintstone
- **The Cobalt Queen** - Galina Glintstone
- **Son's of the Royal Family** - Nadom, Vozzoul, and Jorborn

Norgith is considered a strong king by his people and has ruled for fifty years. Next in line to take his place is Jorborn, the eldest of his sons. Norgith does the best he can for his people, but also cares quite deeply about the perception and reputation of his name, which is why the rumors of his son Nadom being involved with a Copper Dwarf is such a delicate topic. He has only chosen to share the information with his most trusted of advisors. He sent two guards to follow Nadom for some time, and while he was acting strange, they never found anything concrete.

Only about one in ten dwarves in the Cobalt Kingdom speaks common, mostly due to their seclusion from the outside world. Traders and the upper class are typically the only ones who take the time as it is part of their livelihood. In the other Kingdoms this number plummets even lower with one in twenty speaking common in the Copper Kingdom and one in fifty speaking it in the Iron Kingdom.

The Cobalt Dwarves make fine goods which the party can buy at fair prices. They have every kind of armor and weapon available, including silvered, adamantine, and mithral versions of most of them. They have multiple sets of plate mail at the ready at any given time and can be shaped to fit any medium sized individual in just a few days thanks to their large groups of skilled blacksmiths.

## A WARM WELCOME

As the party heads into the kingdom, dwarves will try to sell them wares as usual, using various marketing tactics to prove how their products are superior. Copper and Iron Dwarves congregate along the main pathway as well, displaying their goods and competing with each other in a sometimes less than friendly manner. The banter between the dwarves is constant and humorous, but always spoken in dwarvish.

**Have your party arrive at Narol'Duun late at night, encouraging them to spend a night at the local inn, for the mountains beyond are full of dangers that only come out at night. If your players refuse, intervene with a persistent guard that prevents them from leaving for their own safety.** This tavern is The Cobalt Crossroads and features a number of mushroom ales and colored beverages. Make sure your party overhears the rumor of Nadom being involved with a Copper Dwarf while they are here and continue to feed information about the culture through conversation with the locals.

## A REQUEST FROM THE KING

When morning comes, the party is greeted at the top of the stairs (as the rooms here are downstairs as opposed to upstairs) by a pair of dwarven guards dressed in mithral plate mail. These dwarves are Korvin and Fargail, royal guards of the Glintstone family, and they have orders that the king would like to have words with the party. It would be deeply disrespectful to turn down such a meeting and the king is offering a lucrative reward for the party's assistance in a personal matter.

The dwarves lead the party deeper into the Cobalt Kingdom. The mushrooms grow more vibrant and frequent through this area with almost every nook and cranny being illuminated by the oddly beautiful fungus. Before long, they come to a large stone structure, its architecture clearly superior and the stonework more expensive than nearby houses. More guards are waiting around the area, but they let the party through without issue and without even taking away their weaponry. They are led through this structure until they enter a room containing only an older dwarf wearing a stunning blue crown. He sits at the head of a large wooden table with eight chairs around it – a private meeting space.

Korvin and Fargail gesture for the party to enter the room. The King stands and requests they take a seat before Korvin and Fargail step in and close the door behind them. King Norgith is a taller dwarf with white hair mixed with thick strands of dark blue. His beard extends down to his waist and is split into two large braids adorned with small gemstones. His crown is made of a cobalt unlike all the rest - a metal that shimmers even in the faintest of light. It is dazzling to behold. His eyes are a steel blue, regal and powerful. He looks at the party with confidence but also with a touch of concern.

*"Normally I am quite untrusting of surface dwellers and I believe my distrust is justified, but I need the help of someone that neither my people nor my son will suspect... I think my son may be involved with a Copper Dwarf and I need to find out the truth."* Norgith explains to them the situation as he understands it.

## THE RUMOR

The rumors of Nadom being involved with another dwarf were brought to the king's attention when a local merchant claimed that saw Nadom walking back from the Copper Kingdom early in the morning with a large smile and copper dust still on his face. It didn't take long for rumor to spread about what had happened.

He didn't want to believe the rumors, but also knew he had to tread carefully because such words could potentially lead to devastating consequences in his popularity and approval amongst his people. He sent Korvin and Fargail, his two most trusted guards, to follow Nadom for some time and see what happened. During their time following him, Nadom never went through the Copper Gates (the only pathway into the Copper Kingdom), but he did manage to slip away from them on two occasions, both time disappearing for multiple hours before they tracked him down again. They still don't know how it was he vanished, for he simply went down a commonly used passageway and they lost him shortly thereafter.

Norgith questioned his son who denied the accusations, but Norgith could feel deep in his gut that his son was lying to him. He asked his son about where he disappeared to and was given evasive answers, claiming that Korvin and Fargail must be slipping because he merely left the passageway and went to the local market before returning home, though no one in the market remembered seeing Nadom on those days.

Nadom has known guards are watching him for suspicious activity and Norgith feels deep down that he is somehow crossing into the Copper Kingdom, but he can't send royal guards over to their side without raising all kinds of suspicions by both sets of people. This is where the party comes into play. Outsiders commonly cross into the Copper Kingdom when they are looking for specialty products, so they can cross over without anyone thinking anything of it. Norgith wants them to discreetly follow Nadom, and if he disappears again, do everything they can to figure out where it is he is going and if it is in fact the Copper Kingdom.

If they ask what will happen to Nadom if they do find him in the Cobalt Kingdom, Norgith will sigh deeply and say, *"Hopefully it isn't too serious or it truly is a misunderstanding. We can make sure word of this never gets out and go along with our lives as usual. My people don't need to know... it would devastate the reputation of the Glintstone family."*

In exchange for their help, Norgith offers to reward them handsomely. They can either take 2,000 total gold or have their choice of one of their finest weapons upon return with a message of confirmation or denial. Part of this payment is to assure their discretion on the matter. He expects them to keep lookout for at least three days to be certain, and afterwards they will report to him with all of their findings, but should not intervene until then unless absolutely necessary.

## THE REALITY

Nadom is deeply in love with Lajeera Copperfist, a simple merchant in the Copper Kingdom. A few months ago, Nadom was sent to negotiate a trade deal with their Copper cousins and it was love at first sight between the two. After a bit too much drinking, they decided to spend the night together and this was what sparked all of the (true) rumors. They knew they would need to see each other again, but also knew it was forbidden, so they would need to proceed with utmost caution. Fortunately, Lajeera had a plan.

Her father was also a trader and when he passed away, he left her a set of pendants that he simply said were from his youth. Lajeera discovered these were smuggler's pendants - one copper and the other cobalt. If these are worn and the correct words are spoken at the designated location, a secret passageway will open and reveal a pathway that leads between the two tribes and bypasses the normal security checkpoints and trade inspections.

Nadom has done his best to keep their love a secret, meeting in these hidden passageways whenever he can sneak away so they can spend time together, but he knows it isn't enough. The thought of not being together forever tears at his heart and while the risk at first made things exciting, now the reality of their situation is making itself more apparent – drastic action needs to be taken.

## PURSUIT

The king gives the party a description of Nadom - who looks very similar to his father but without any white in his beard just yet. He also tells the party which taverns he frequents in the area - The Blue Shroom, The Mineshaft, and The Broken Pickaxe. The players can visit these taverns and eventually find Nadom sitting alone and nursing a drink. His eyes are constantly shifting and scanning the room, and after thirty minutes of this (barely touching his drink), Nadom gets up to leave.

When the players follow Nadom, they will eventually see him head down a side corridor and disappear, just as the high guard mentioned. **Success on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a small imperfection in the stone that marks the secret doorway.** Alternatively, *Detect Magic* or other such spells will reveal Abjuration magic present along the stone. At this point, the party can choose to cross into the Copper Kingdom, but he never shows up as their secret meetups happen in the hidden passageway itself. A final way to catch Nadom in the act is to simply wait for him to return. He is gone for roughly eight hours, but eventually the stone slides open and out steps Nadom, but he will only appear once the passage is clear, for the tunnel allows someone to peer through to the other side without opening the door.

If Nadom sees the party, he will plead for them to hear him out and explain to them his situation with Lajeera, hoping that they will provide him aid rather than giving him up to his father. He invites them to step into the passageway so they can discuss in private. He says that he and Lajeera have been in conversation about how they could realistically be together and have come up with a few possibilities, but they will need aid.

There are obviously a lot of different ways that these things can go down. Players have magic available and may use different methods of spying. They may ask around town with some of the other dwarves about Nadom, but be careful as they shouldn't spread any additional rumors. Just keep in mind the intentions of all of the characters in this story and have them react accordingly.

Continue to **Helping Nadom** if your players want to help the lovers or to **Telling the King** (towards the end of the module) if they choose greed. Your players may not immediately discover Nadom, but make it to where they eventually runs into him and he questions if they are following them since he is so paranoid.

## HELPING NADOM

If the party chooses to help Nadom, he will ask that they meet him at the smuggler's passage tomorrow just after the mushrooms turn green (evening time on the surface). He leaves a small blue stone just outside the exit to the Copper Kingdom. Lajeera knows that the presence of this stone means he wants to meet that night.

When the two gather in the evening, it is obvious they are crazy for one another. Their smiles are contagious and their eyes swell with joy just at the sight of one another. Nadom explains the situation to his beloved and she nods in agreement and the two of them let the party know of their plans.

The preferred method is a Cobalt Potion. When Lajeera drinks this, her appearance will permanently be turned to that of a Cobalt Dwarf. It is unknown how their children may turn out if they have any, but there is no reason Norgith should disapprove of a Cobalt Dwarf. The person who can create this potion is a Copper Dwarf wizard (which are quite difficult to find) by the name of Garin. Nadom protests that Lajeera should not throw away her family's business, but she insists that this is the best option. Nadom begrudgingly agrees. See **The Cobalt Potion** below for additional details about this plan.

If they were found together, they would both be exiled, but it would also bring great shame to both of their houses. Lajeera does not have much in the way of family, a brother and a sister, but their businesses would certainly go under if Lajeera was found with a dwarf of another tribe. The situation for Nadom is far worse as his family is royalty. The second option would be to fake their deaths and run away to the surface together, smuggled out with the party somehow. This option is far less preferred because it means leaving behind their homes and families. (**This module covers The Cobalt Potion option only, so if your players decide faking death is the route you will need to improvise.**)

Be sure to let your players pitch additional options if they are feeling creative. Another alternative might be to somehow persuade both Norgith and Borlin (leader of the Copper Dwarves) into changing their ways. Magic or blackmail would be required to change their minds on a matter that is such a core part of their lives – simply persuading them will fail miserably and simply confirm Norgith's suspicions about his son.

Either way, if the party agrees to help Nadom and Lajeera, the couple offers them a reward – a magical cloak left in this tunnel from decades ago - a **Cloak of the Cobalt Kingdom (NDMT2)**

## THE COBALT POTION

Lajeera pulls out a slip of paper she had stowed away and reads a simple list of ingredients aloud. *"One pound of ordinary cobalt bars, one vial of Cobalt Dwarf blood, and one chunk of resplendent cobalt ore. Garin has the rest on hand. It's the last bit that's the problem."*

Nadom explains that resplendent cobalt ore was found in a rare vein deep in the mines. It was discovered to have natural magic qualities and made incredibly powerful items, and so the dwarves scrambled to mine it as quickly as possible... and they awoke something when they did. Creatures that dwelled within the stone depths wiped out dozens of miners. They sent in squads of soldiers on two other occasions and neither returned from those deep tunnels. Eventually the king decided to seal the tunnels and search for another vein. That passageway has been closed off for decades. No one is sure if any of those creatures still lie beyond, but to open that tunnel is to risk the deaths of more dwarves. Unfortunately, no other veins of the ore have been found.

Nadom has the connections to be able to get the party down to those tunnels and they can even use some explosives to clear the pathway as it is a far, far off any other active mine shafts. He is royalty, but not much of a fighter, which is why they have needed someone like the party to go investigate the caves on his behalf and secure a chunk of ore. When they get the ore, they will need to bring it back to the smuggler's passage when the mushrooms turn green and he will be waiting for them.

## INTO THE DEPTHS

Nadom tells the party to meet with a friend of his named Kronas in the Wrought Ingot tavern on the following night. This is the tavern closest to the mines and if they are careful, they should be able to sneak down without being spotted once everyone has cleared out for the day. Kronas provides them with a small set of explosive charges that should blast a hole through the rubble in the path. It will create a lot of noise, but during this hour and with how far down the mineshaft is, he doubts anyone will hear. While he does support their mission, he does not feel comfortable putting himself at any more risk and opts to provide the party with a map rather than guiding them himself.

It takes almost two hours of walking to reach the collapsed mineshaft. The explosives requires someone with an Intelligence score of at least 13 to use correctly, otherwise they will not fully clear the path and the players will need to clear part of the way by hand. Each player that helps clear must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion. Once clear, the pathway continues for another fifty feet before opening into a much larger area that has been exposed to extensive mining. It is over a hundred feet wide and fifty feet high, the ceiling cast in total darkness even with torchlight. The walls are smoothed down from the mining and roughly a dozen other tunnels branch off of this main room.

One of these tunnels has a azure light emanating from it.

**As the players approach this glowing tunnel, a sound rings throughout the room – the sound of claws scraping against stone. A DC (10 + APL) Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the exact tunnel it is coming from, the third from the right of the entrance.** If your players do not succeed on this check, the creatures seem to be coming from everywhere and the players cannot determine the location of these entities. If that is the case, the creatures get advantage on their initiative roll.

It is only a few moments later that a similar sound is heard from a tunnel on the opposite side of the room. It crescendos louder and louder, seemingly coming from all directions until finally the first of these creatures burst from the darkness and charge the party.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number and the type of creatures the party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4**
  - 1x Ankheg (**MM Pg. 21**)
  - 2x Rust Monster (**MM Pg. 262**)
- **APL 5**
  - 2x Noxious Savageclaw (**NEB1**)
  - 1x Ankheg
- **APL 6**
  - 2x Noxious Savageclaw
  - 2x Ankheg

## RETRIEVING THE ORE

Once the creatures have been dealt with, the party can make their way down the faintly glowing side tunnel where they find a moderately sized chunk of resplendent cobalt ore. As far as rocks go, this one is quite beautiful, with extraordinary blue lights that pulse and dance through the mineral as if the light was trying to break free of its prison. White crystals are scattered throughout the ore as well, causing a brilliant blend of colors to dance along the wall, choreographed to unheard music.

The party can use the mining equipment given to them by Kronas to extract the precious mineral. While this chunk is a nearly six inches across at the widest point, it is as light as a rock a quarter of that size. If someone touches their bare flesh to the ore, the lights that flow through it will all swarm to that point and cause it to flash with vibrant light as all of the white crystals go bright and the blue lights begin to rapidly spiral around the point of contact. This is painless, but startling.

## MORE PESTS

As the party is in the process of retrieving the ore, they quickly realize that more creatures than the ones they faced are down in these tunnels and looking for a meal. The ground rumbles and shakes from every side before more creatures explode out of the walls and attack the party.

#### Roll for initiative.

The number and the type of creatures the party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4**
  - 2x Rock Wurm (66% normal hit points) (**NEB2**)
- **APL 5**
  - 1x Rock Wurm
  - 1x Rock Wurm (Mithral)
- **APL 6**
  - 1x Rock Wurm (Adamantine)
  - 1x Rock Wurm (Mithral)

## THE RETURN TRIP

The party makes their way back towards the entrance of the mines the same way they came, but about halfway back they begin to hear voices and footsteps coming down the passageway. **One player can try to sneak closer and listen in, making a Dexterity (Stealth) check with a DC of 13 (guard's passive Perception). Afterwards, have that player make a DC (8 + APL) Wisdom (Perception) check to overhear the conversation.** The voices speak in dwarvish about how they heard a rumble down in the tunnels and that it had come from the direction of the old resplendent mines. They just want to make sure that the creatures down there hadn't burst free and come for their people..

Regardless of if the players listen in on the conversation, they can clearly hear the sounds of roughly half a dozen sets of boots hitting the stone.

The group is a single miner with a squad of Cobalt Dwarf guards. They are on their way to check out the mines and if the party is discovered down here they will attempt to arrest them for stealing precious dwarven goods and endangering the lives of the dwarven kingdoms with their recklessness. Just being down in their mines without permission is a crime, but if they discover the resplendent cobalt, the guards will go into full attack mode to capture the party. **The party will need to make their way into one of the nearby alcoves, making a group DC (8 + APL) Dexterity (Stealth) check as they do so.** On a failure, the guard will overhear the sound and go to inspect more closely (**Go to the Encountering the Guards section**). On a success, the guards continue down the path without noticing the party (**Skip to the Beautiful in Blue section**)

## ENCOUNTERING THE GUARDS

If the party is spotted the guards, the dwarves will approach with weapons drawn, calling out for the party to drop their own weapons and surrender. At this point, the party can try to talk their way out of this via a bribe, by threatening to reveal their king's secret, or by telling them they are down here on behalf of Nadom. Any of these methods can work on the guards with a sufficient Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check (whichever is appropriate). Alter the DC based on your players role-playing and the arguments used against the guards. On a failure, the dwarves won't have any of it and attack. The dwarves will also attack if the party tries to run or cast any sort of spell, at which point you will need to roll for initiative.

The number and the type of creatures the party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

- **APL 4**
  - 2x Local Champion (**NEB 2**)
  - 4x Guard (**MM Pg. 347**)
- **APL 5**
  - 2x Headstrong Smasher (**NEB 2**)
  - 2x Local Champion
  - 4x Guard
- **APL 6**
  - 1x Fireheart Devotee (**NEB 2**)
  - 2x Local Champion
  - 4x Guard

## FIGHTING THE GUARDS (AFTERMATH)

Make sure to ask your players if they want to go for lethal attacks or simply to disable the dwarves. Knocking a guard out is a horrid crime, but nothing compared to slaughtering them in cold blood for doing their jobs. If the guards do not return from the mines, search parties are dispatched in the morning and the bodies are discovered that same day. Once Kronas gets word of this, he will turn the party over to the king and they will be hunted down to be executed.

If the guards are simply knocked out, they will remember the party's faces and the city will come after them, but if the players complete Nadom's quest he will vouch that they were working on his behalf and have all charges against them dropped. He uses the story that he wanted to contribute towards the family legacy and has been seeking ways to reopen the resplendent mines, but knew the others would oppose the idea. He hired these powerful outsiders to go and clear the area out of any residual creatures, which they did. He also uses this as the explanation for why he has been acting so strange as of late and sneaking off.

## BEAUTIFUL IN BLUE

When the party gets out of the mines, they can make their way to the tunnels when the mushrooms turn green (evening on the surface). Nadom is anxiously waiting inside with Lajeera and beckons them into the secret passage. "So?" he asked excitedly. "*Did you get it?*"

When the party reveals that they have the resplendent cobalt ore, the two dwarves embrace for a long while, ecstatic that they will at long last be able to be together. Nadom asks Lajeera one final time if she is willing to leave her life behind in the Copper Kingdom to be with him and she does not hesitate to agree. Lajeera conceals the chunk of ore in her bags and looks to the party with a smile.

"*As promised, your reward,*" she says and walks over to the walls of the tunnel. She runs her fingers along the stone in an intricate design and a secret cache reveals itself. From this cache she retrieves a navy blue cloak with glimmering cyan runes running along the edges. At the center of the cloak is a picture of a pickaxe embedded in a stone and a blue crown resting on the handle – the symbol of the Cobalt Kingdom. This is the **Cloak of the Cobalt Kingdom (NDMT2)** (*This is a fairly strong magical item, especially since your party is quite low level. You may consider removing either the AC or the Constitution bonus, or you can be generous and give them a powerful magic item as a reward for a job well done.*)

## THE AFTERMATH

It takes a few hours to brew the potion. During that time, Lajeera prepares her affairs. She leaves a note for her kin to let them know she is leaving the city indefinitely and that they will need to take over the family business in her absence. She also brings a large sack of gold with her and a single pouch of personal belongings.

When the potion is ready she drinks without hesitation. The transformation takes place over ten minutes of agony for Lajeera. She screams and writhes on the floor as her skin slowly turns blue along with her eyes. The subtle features that separate the dwarves such as the shapes of their eyes and nose are reformed with loud cracking sounds. But when all of the pain is over, Lajeera is alive and as far as anyone on the outside can tell, she is, and always has been, a Cobalt Dwarf.

Nadom and Lajeera embrace without fear for the first time in their lives and thank the party again for all of their help in this endeavor. Lajeera looks over at her personal effects and decides that if she is with Nadom, she won't need her own wealth and offers the sack of coins to the party. It contains 350/650/1,000 gold, the value depending on the party's APL.

The happy couple tells the party that they will always have a friend in the Cobalt Kingdom and leave together to finally be able to walk side by side.

Nadom then goes over the cover story for what to tell his father. He has been acting strange because he has working on a way to impress his father and wanted to reopen the resplendent cobalt mines. The party killed a few monsters but it is still dangerous. Nadom has decided it is a lost cause after hearing how deadly the creatures that lurk below truly are and has decided to give up on this dream and earn his place of honor in the family some other way. The king is pleased with the story, ecstatic even, and does not punish the party for trespassing in off limit areas of the kingdom.

The king asks to speak to the party privately and offers them their reward of 2,000 gold or a **Dwarven Cobalt Longsword (NDMT2)**.

## TELLING THE KING

The other primary option for the party to tell the king about everything. This is a cruel thing to do, but the players will be rewarded appropriately. Norgith will be furious that his suspicions were confirmed and that his son was lying to him.

The king rewards their honesty with the 2,000 or a **Dwarven Cobalt Longsword (NDMT2)** and assures them they will always have friends in the Cobalt Kingdom.

He will arrange a meeting to confront Nadom, but it does not go well and ends with Nadom running from the room and proclaiming his love for Lajeera. As a result, Lajeera and Nadom are both exiled. They are free to live out their lives together amongst the surface dwellers, but both family names are forever tarnished and they are forbidden to return home. It is a bittersweet end for the two of them... together, but so alone.

But their adventure does not end here...

## **HELL HATH NO FURY**

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Lajeera goes mad with the lust for vengeance against the party for ruining her family's name. She gathers up as much gold as she can and hires a set of assassins to track down and take out the party. Lajeera also makes sure to let the party know that she sends her regards before the assassins make their fatal blows.

The number and the type of creatures the party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL. All of the enemies mentioned are also found in **(NEB2)**.

- **APL 4**
  - 1x Deep Speaker
  - 1x Wolf Trainer
  - 1x Mage Hunter
- **APL 5**
  - 1x Deep Speaker
  - 1x Wolf Trainer
  - 1x Mage Hunter
  - 1x Blade Dancer
- **APL 6**
  - 1x Wolf Trainer
  - 1x Mage Hunter
  - 1x Blade Dancer
  - 1x Elemental Shaper

These assassins are well above the threshold for a deadly encounter, as she hired the best to avenge her love and the party needs to learn that their actions have consequences. Have the attack occur within three days of the party leaving the dwarven kingdoms. These assassins will strike at night and will go for the kill, taking back trophies of the dead but leaving their bodies if some of the group dies and others escape to fight another day.

## **EXPERIENCE**

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The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the quest. Feel free to adjust these values if you see fit.

- **APL 4** - 2,700 XP per player
- **APL 5** - 4,500 XP per player
- **APL 6** - 7,000 XP per player

## **LOOT**

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- 1x Cloak of the Cobalt Kingdom
- 1x Dwarven Cobalt Longsword (maybe)
- Gold (varies for party APL and options taken)

These items can all be found in the Magic Items section of this Toolkit.

# THE SHOWDOWN IN SKALINTOWN

## A ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 4-7

### ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The party makes their way into a small mining village by the name of Skalintown. They quickly realizes that the people here are terrified, hiding behind closed doors and peering out through boarded up windows. A gang of criminals that call themselves The Calamity have promised to destroy the city and everyone in it if they don't receive a tribute of twenty thousand gold by the end of the week. This is a poor town and even with everyone's wealth combined, it doesn't come close to that value ... but they are fighters. Perhaps all they need to hold back these invaders is some help.

The deadline is four days away and the closest town that would be able to help is three days travel one-way. Skalintown tried to reach out for aid, but no one cared enough to risk their own lives to help them. Now they must rely on your players for help. The party will need to rally the townsfolk and strategically decide how to prepare for the assault. Do they dig trenches to trip up enemy wolves, do they train the townsfolk to use crossbows, or perhaps they create explosives to detonate when the bandits make it into the city? Each of the party's decisions affect the final battle and means that every group will have a unique experience in their fight against The Calamity.

This adventure is heavily influenced by the traditional Wild West shootout. Try to capture that feeling for your players by playing music of that era, in the way the townsfolk act and speak, and the way the town itself is operated. There are thousands of different options for the fight and if your players play their cards right, they make quick work of the gang and earn a pretty penny while they do so.

**This adventure uses the Average Party Level (APL) to scale the difficulty of encounters. This is simply the average of your players' total character levels assuming you have 4 party members. If your group is larger than 4, increase your APL by 1 for each additional player. If your party is smaller than 4, decrease your APL using this same rule.**

This module contains custom monsters which are included in Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary and Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary 2. These monsters will be denoted with (NEB1) and (NEB2) respectfully. The monsters denoted (NEB1) can be found in the first Game Master Toolkit. Refer to it to find any monsters noted (NEB1). Monsters denoted (NEB2) can be found at the end of this Toolkit.

### NOTABLE ESTABLISHMENTS

Skalintown was founded as a mining town, taking advantage of the great deal of wealth just waiting to be extracted from the nearby mountain range. A map of the town can be found on the next page and I would highly recommend sketching out a version of this when your players arrive to give them a clear idea of what they are trying to defend. Some of the key structures of the town are listed below.

#### THE CHURCH

Dedicated to the God of Prosperity or Luck in your campaign, church is a part of every man, woman, and child's life. There isn't a single member of Skalintown that can't be found sitting in the pews on Sunday morning (or whatever the day or worship happens to be in your setting) giving their respects. The church comes with a bell tower that is used to signal the beginning and end of the work day, but also makes for a great place to hide out and shoot bandits. The church has a priest by the name of Paul Karnson. He is skilled in medicine but he has no magical healing abilities.

#### TERESA'S SALOON

The most popular place in town after the final work bell has rung is Teresa's Saloon. Teresa is the owner of this establishment and makes sure all of her guests needs are taken care of, no matter what those needs may be. Gambling, drinking, music, and brawling are a constant at Teresa's. She has a background in alchemy and uses the skills she learned in her youth to create exotic and flavorful specialty drinks.

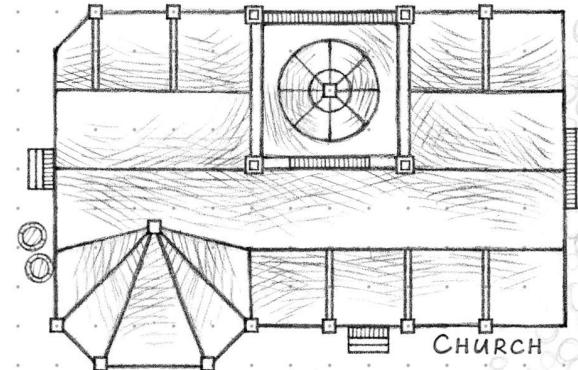
#### THE MINING FACILITY

This building has a large warehouse attached that is filled with various mining supplies. This includes pickaxes, shovels, rope, lanterns, oil, and explosives. There is also a great deal of raw ore that is stored here as they wait to ship it off to nearby towns. The interior has plenty of room for cover, but it is also the most likely building in town to explode when exposed to fire.

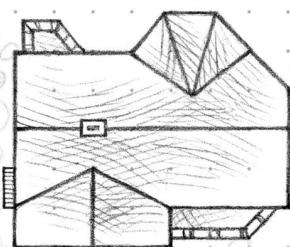
#### THE JAIL

This building is more heavily fortified than the others as it is made entirely of stone rather than wood. Even before The Calamity, this little mining town has had trouble with bandits. There are already two of them locked up, but there are three more available cells. In the back room are a few dozen iron bars that were going to be used for another cell if they ever needed to expand.

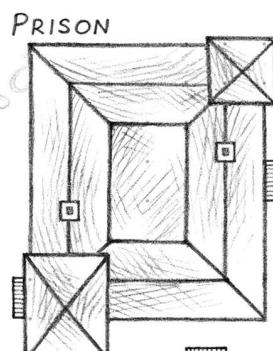
## SKALINTOWN CITY MAP



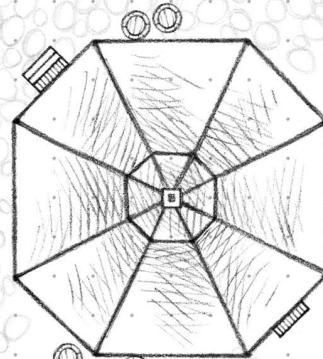
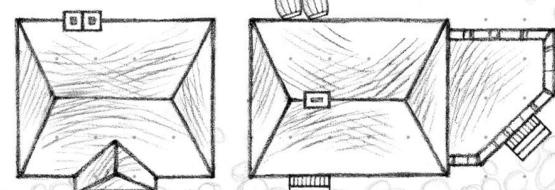
CHURCH



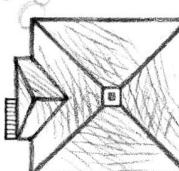
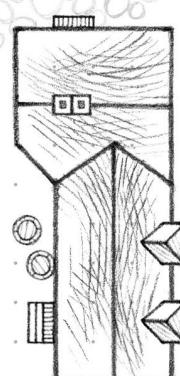
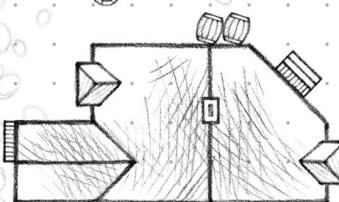
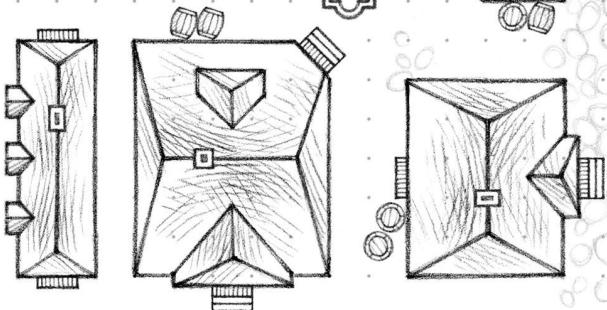
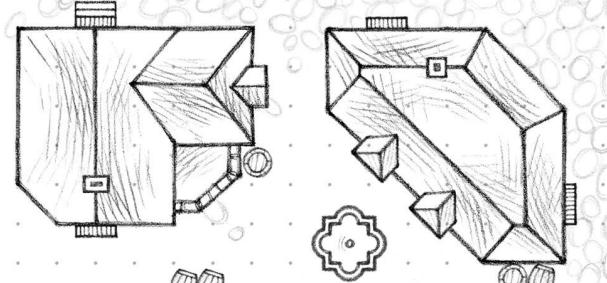
BLACKSMITH



PRISON



TAVERN



## **THE PEOPLE OF SKALINTOWN**

Most of the men and about half of the women in Skalintown are miners. Those who are not actively mining are processing the raw materials, scouting for new mining locations, or running shipments to nearby towns. The people here are tough and hard headed, so they are prepared to fight without much need for persuasion. While most of them are just basic townsfolk, there are a few who stand out above the rest and will be of importance to the players depending on how they approach the battle.

### **RONALD GARDNER - THE SHERIFF**

Ron is a human man in his late forties. He has a thick grey handlebar mustache, deep brown eyes, and always wears his cowboy hat and a sturdy pair of boots. He speaks slowly and confidently, no matter the situation or its dangers. While he may be a bit older, his skills with a crossbow and with a shortsword are quite impressive. He has a background in the military and knows how to command and train troops. The people of the town show just as much respect to Ron as they do the Mayor and put deep trust in his decisions. Ron is ready to stand and fight and rally the townsfolk behind him if needed.

### **JUSTIN SKALIN - THE MAYOR**

Justin is a young Mayor, only twenty-six years old. He took over the job when his father died a few years back and the people naturally turned to his next to kin for guidance as the Skalin family has been in charge of the town since its establishment. He is a slender man with short, curly brown hair and kind green eyes. He has an athletic build, but no combat skills. He refuses to leave his town behind, but will not ask his people to fight and die for it. At the very least, he wants to ensure the women and children are kept safe and will suggest that they be hidden away in the mines when the raid occurs.

### **KORVOC CRAGJAW - THE BLACKSMITH**

Korvoc is a sturdy, broad-shouldered half-orc and has served as Skalintown's master blacksmith for over a decade now. He is as strong as an ox and his knowledge of smithing is immense. He towers at over six and a half feet tall and proudly displays a smooth bald head covered in tattoos. His flesh is decorated in burns and scars, same as any lifelong blacksmith. Korvoc is willing to work through the night to craft whatever is needed to keep the town safe.

## **RYSA KALSYRII - THE ENGINEER**

Rysa is a elderly tiefling woman, the only tiefling in town and the only one many of these people have ever seen. Her skin is a light purple with small white horns that curl around the side of her head - similar to those of a ram. She has a gold ring attached to each of her horns and runs a chain from these rings to her ears. This chain is decorated with various charms depending on her mood. Rysa prides herself on her looks and tries to appear regal at all times. She is also as smart as they come. She is in charge of creating new explosives to be used in the mines. Given the right materials, she can make a blast of any size your heart desires.

### **JEFFREY BLACK - THE WILDCARD**

Jeffrey is a strange man who has been hanging around town for a few months now. He was once a member of The Calamity, but has turned to a life free of crime. Jeffrey is a shorter man with a blonde goatee that is always immaculately trimmed and styled. His mouth is half-filled with gold and silver caps that make his smile glimmer. Many in the town want Jeffrey locked up in the jail as they fear he will turn on the townspeople and go back to his roots with The Calamity, but he also knows the appearances of the leaders of the bandits. He suspects killing the leaders may be enough to make the rest of the men turn and run, but he is only willing to divulge this information is if he is free to fight against them when the time comes.

## **ARRIVAL**

The party makes their way into Skalintown early in the day. As they walk through, they can see frightened townsfolk staring out at them through the slits in closed windows. The streets are completely desolate, giving an ominous vibe to the quiet little mining town. It remains quiet until a man comes walking out of a building labeled "Jail" with a crossbow at the ready. *"We got enough trouble on our hands without any more bandits trying to come into my town. You aren't wearing markings of The Calamity... so who are you?"* This is sheriff Ron Gardner.

## **HELP WANTED**

Once it becomes clear the party is not here to pillage or steal, people become to cautiously walk out of their homes looking relieved. Ron explains the town's situation and The Calamity's impending arrival. Many of the people in town are packing their bags and plan on simply leaving. Others are preparing themselves to battle to protect their homes. Others are drinking so much they might not even remember the raid after the fact. Ron sees that the party are no ordinary folk passing through town and asks kindly that they help them fight back against the impending attack. He does not beg or plead, he merely tries to appeal to their decency to help those in need.

The town doesn't have twenty-thousand to spare, but it does have a few thousand they could spare in profits from the mining industry. Ron offers this to the party in exchange for their help - once he gets approval from the Mayor of course. (*The party can negotiate the price if they'd like, but these are the suggested amounts*).

- **APL 4** - 1,600 gold
- **APL 5** - 2,500 gold
- **APL 6** - 3,600 gold
- **APL 7** - 5,000 gold

When the party takes on the job, it is time for the real work to begin. Ron rallies the people around him, shouting for them to gather at Teresa's. It takes ten minutes or so for everyone to flood in but it seems nearly the entire town is in attendance - almost two-hundred people. Ron gives a rousing speech about how Skalintown is their home and it will not be taken from them, that they will fight and they will win. He gestures to the players and declares them as the town's saving grace - its ace in the hole. He instructs the townsfolk to go back to their houses and anyone who is able to fight, be ready to get to work.

The townsfolk go wild with cheer and Ron grabs the party to go see Mayor Skalin as the crowd disperses, the town now alive with energy and chatter.

## A WEARY MAYOR

The party follows Ron to the oldest house in the town. Despite its age, it is still in amazing condition and is quite luxurious. This is the Mayor's home and Ron walks inside without so much as a knock, beckoning the party to follow him. The sheriff leads the party to the parlor where Mayor Skalin is leaned over a large table. The room is dominated by the smell of coffee and it is clear the Mayor has been without sleep for a few days. On the table is a map of the town drawn on a massive piece of parchment. Small figurines are scattered all around the edges - representing barricades, explosives, citizens, and more.

Mayor Skalin looks to them with a weak smile, his eyes sunk into his skull with dark lines at their edges. "*So you found some help?*" Ron nods and allows the party to introduce themselves. Mayor Skalin thanks the party and speaks again, "*I appreciate your willingness to stand beside us in our hour of need, but I'm afraid we have no time to waste. We have only three days until they arrive... so if you are serious about helping us, let's get to it.*" He finishes off a cup of coffee, then gestures to the map and explains the various options available to defend the town.

## MAKING PREPARATIONS

The party has three full days to prepare for the assault on Skalintown by The Calamity. Each day they can choose 3 actions from the list below. If your players are creative and think of other ideas to give them an advantage in the battle, do your best to determine the time and people required and the benefits they will gain as a result.

Some preparations have a repeatable action to gain the same benefit multiple times, while others continue to grow stronger with each day. The players will have to assign people to work on those specific tasks all three days to see the greatest results. Some of these preparations also require the dedication of one of the skilled townsfolk, so they must also choose where their time is allocated. Certain skills can be used to enhance each of these preparations, so your players will also need to decide how they want to split themselves among the tasks. Let your players get creative in how they can aid, even if their specific skills might not be listed.

Inspirational speeches and acts of kindness can do a great deal for morale in such trying times! Reward your players for role-playing these situations and have it show in the final battle.

## LIMITED RESOURCES

### PEOPLE

Some of the resources that the players need to use in their preparations are limited. Korvoc can only work on one project per day so the party cannot arm the townsfolk and create advanced weaponry. Rysa can help create explosives, either thrown or triggered. Ron can help lead the townsfolk as they perform various labor tasks that they may perform incorrectly without his leadership.

If one of these NPCs are listed in the Required NPCs section they are locked into this specific task and any other preparation requiring them cannot be performed on this day.

## PREPARATION OPTIONS

### BARRICADE THE ENTRYWAYS

There are many entryways into the town, which can be a lot to cover even for the small town. By adding barricades, the enemy can be funneled in through fewer points of entry. Each 10 ft. x 10 ft. segment of these wooden barricades has 25 hit points and an AC of 15.

### REQUIRED NPCs

Ron

### FIRST DAY

Barricades are created to completely block off access to one side of the town.

### SECOND DAY

Barricades are extended to cover two sides of the town.

### THIRD DAY

Barricades are extended to cover three sides of the town. Increase the hit points of the walls to 30.

### PLAYER AID

If one of your characters is trained in Carpenter's tools, they can attempt to aid in the construction of the walls. That character can make a DC 15 Strength (Carpenter's tools) check for each day this option is chosen. For each success, increase the AC of the walls by 1.

## ARM THE TOWNSFOLK

The townsfolk are ready to fight, but don't have much in the way of ranged weaponry. Korvoc can craft some light crossbows while Ron trains the citizens in their use. These townsfolk will hide on rooftops and fire down on the enemies every round of combat.

### REQUIRED NPCs

Korvoc, Ron

#### FIRST DAY

One initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), deal 3 (1d6) piercing damage to 2 enemies chosen at random. If your APL is 5-6, deal 7 (2d6) damage instead.

#### SECOND DAY

One initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), deal 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage to 3 enemies chosen at random. If your APL is 5-6, deal 8 (2d6 + 1) damage instead.

#### THIRD DAY

One initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), deal 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage to 4 enemies chosen at random. If your APL is 5-6, deal 9 (2d6 + 2) damage instead.

### PLAYER AID

If one of your characters is trained in Performance or Persuasion, they can attempt to aid in the training of the townsfolk. That character can make a DC 15 check for each day this option is chosen. For each success, increase the number of enemies damaged on each round by 1.

## CREATE ADVANCED WEAPONRY

Korvoc has the crafting ability required to create some powerful mounted defensive weapons that can be placed around the town to help defend from intruders. These deal massive damage but require constant operation and can be destroyed.

### REQUIRED NPCs

Korvoc

#### FIRST DAY

Create a mounted arbalest that can be mounted to the top of any building. This weapon scales in power depending on your Average Party Level.

#### APL 3-4

**Bolt.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage. Requires the Action of a creature proficient with martial weapons to fire. This weapon has 25 hit points and an AC of 17.

#### APL 5-6

**Bolt.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (3d8 + 4) piercing damage. Requires the Action of a creature proficient with martial weapons to fire. This weapon has 35 hit points and an AC of 17.

## SECOND DAY

The arbalest is upgraded with advanced reloading and aiming mechanisms and no longer require training in martial weapons to be fired. Additionally, a citizen of the town can now be assigned to operate it during the final battle. A citizen in charge of the arbalest fires it on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties). This citizen will attack the nearest enemy unless given instructions from a player to fire at a specific target. These citizens have 10 hit points and AC 11.

#### THIRD DAY

A second arbalest is crafted and made available.

### PLAYER AID

If one of your characters is trained in Smith's tools, they can attempt to aid in the creation of these weapons. That character can make a DC 15 Strength (Smith's tools) check for each day this option is chosen. For each success, increase the attack bonus of the arbalests by 1.

## CREATE THROWN EXPLOSIVES

Rysa is a master of explosives and can carefully create bombs that will be sure to deal plenty of damage to any enemies clustered together during the final battle. She has two different types of throwable bombs available to be crafted:

#### EXPLOSIVE BOMB

A creature can use an action to throw an explosive bomb at a point up to 50 feet away. Each creature within 10 feet of the bomb must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 2d6 fire damage and 2d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If your APL is 5-6, these instead deal 3d6 fire damage and 3d6 bludgeoning damage and have a save DC of 15.

#### SHRAPNEL BOMB

A creature can use an action to throw a shrapnel bomb at a point up to 50 feet away. Each creature within 20 feet of the bomb must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d4 piercing on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If your APL is 5-6, these instead deal 6d4 piercing damage and have a save DC of 15.

### REQUIRED NPCs

Rysa

#### FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD DAY

Rysa crafts 6 bombs in any combination of the options listed above.

## DIG TUNNELS

If there is one thing the people of Skalintown know it is digging. By using the skills they know best, the townsfolk can construct systems of underground tunnels between builds in the town or even to create escape tunnels outside of town. This allows defenders to reinforce various locations without exposing themselves to attacks while moving.

## REQUIRED NPCs

None - they've got this

## FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD DAY

The townsfolk dig 5 ft. wide tunnels anywhere beneath the town with a total length of 60 ft. These tunnels begin and end in a trapdoor and a ladder which take 10 ft. of movement to ascend or descend but keep the tunnels concealed from any enemy that does not actively see someone using these trapdoors.

### PLAYER AID

If one of your characters is trained in Mason's tools or Carpenter's tools, they can attempt to aid in the creation of these tunnels. That character can make a DC 15 check each day this option is chosen. On a success, the total length of the tunnel is increased to 75 ft.

## ENEMY INTEL

Jeffrey has specific knowledge on each of the bandit leaders. See their stat blocks and descriptions at the end of the adventure for more flavorful information that you can give to you players. The result of this knowledge is that your group will be better prepared to do battle against these enemies. Unfortunately, the townsfolk are still distrustful of Jeffrey and will grow angrier with each day he is left free (covered later in the adventure).

## REQUIRED NPCs

Jeffrey

### FIRST DAY

Players gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls against bandit leaders and can immediately identify them.

### SECOND DAY

Bonus to attack and damage rolls is increased to +2. Party knows AC values of the bandit leaders.

### THIRD DAY

Bonus to attack and damage rolls is increased to +3. Party knows current hit point values of the bandit leaders.

## BREW POTIONS

It has been a long time since Teresa has brewed potions, but she still has the knowledge from all those years ago. Fortunately, she also has the ingredients since she first transitioned to the saloon business when she began making alcohol from the components of a healing potions. Unfortunately, she will need the help of multiple assistants to craft these potions under such intense time constraints.

## REQUIRED NPCs

Teresa

## FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD DAY

Teresa crafts 4 Healing Potions or 2 Greater Healing Potion.

### PLAYER AID

If one of your characters is trained in Alchemist's tools, they can attempt to aid in the creation of these potions. That character can make a DC 15 check for each day this option is chosen. For each success, Rysa is able to craft 1 additional basic Healing Potion.

## SETUP DETONATED EXPLOSIVES

Rysa can craft explosives that can be setup on the battlefield to be detonated either by a character or set to explode when an enemy steps upon them. She has two different types of detonated explosive available to be crafted:

### EXPLOSIVE BARREL

This is an ordinary 2 ft. tall barrel stuffed full of explosives. A creature can use an action to can throw a lit torch at a barrel within 30 ft., causing it to immediately detonate. Each creature within 10 feet of the barrel must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 6d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If your APL is 5-6, these instead deal 8d6 fire damage and have a save DC of 15.

The barrel can also be rigged with a fuse and explode after a set amount of time. When the barrel is crafted a fuse lasting 1 to 6 rounds can be attached. As a bonus action, a creature can light the fuse. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) the fuse burns. After the set number of rounds goes by, the barrel detonates.

### GUNPOWDER MINE

When this 1 ft. wide gunpowder mine is buried, it is invisible to anyone not explicitly looking for it. If a creature enters the same space as a mine, roll a d20. On a result of 10 or less, the creature steps on the mine and cause it to immediately detonate. Each creature in that space must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5d10 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If your APL is 5-6, these instead deal 7d10 fire damage and have a save DC of 15.

## REQUIRED NPCs

Rysa

## FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD DAY

Rysa crafts 3 of the explosives from the options listed above.

## THE FIRST NIGHT

The party is offered free rooms on the second floor of Teresa's Saloon.

After the first day of preparations, the townsfolk seem to be in high spirits and most of them head to Teresa's Saloon to drink and calm their nerves. They are miners, so they are used to a hard day of work as well as a strong pint of beer. The citizens invite the party to join them for drinks as they head over, and hopefully the party will agree since it is where they will be staying regardless.

Things start out fine, until one group begins to get rowdy and finally the party hears, "*He can't be trusted! We need to lock him up!*" A man stands up and begins to stomp across the room towards another man silently drinking at the bar, a man by the name of Jeffrey Black. As mentioned in his character information, he was once a member of The Calamity and now many of the townsfolk don't trust him, especially now that they are coming to siege the town itself. They fear his true colors will bleed through.

The party can choose to intervene with this conflict, otherwise this lone drunk man will manage to rally enough other saloon patrons to throw Jeffrey in one of the spare cells in the jail. If the party chooses to let this happen, their ability to gain Jeffrey's help and gain information about the bandit leaders will be permanently lost to them. If they aid Jeffrey, he will stay up late and spend a few hours to fill them in on the details of the leaders and advance them one day in the **Enemy Intel** preparation.

## THE SECOND NIGHT

On the second evening, Justin invites the party and Ron to his house for a lovely dinner that his wife Mallika has prepared. They are served fine wines, an entire assortment of fruits and vegetables, and even offered fresh baked apple pie. It is quite a delicious meal, but there is important discussion to be had as well.

During dinner, Justin proposes that tomorrow evening they take all of the women and children of the town and put them up in the mines to hide. He doesn't want to see any innocents die and he knows that The Calamity aren't ones to spare a life, even if it is that of a child. The problem is that many of the women are going to object and want to stay and fight which Ron brings up. Justin believes that the men of the town and the party will be enough to keep them safe, but asks the party if they can help him convince the women to go to safety.

Your party is free to disagree with Justin and it is possible they even change his mind on the subject. Should the party convince Justin that the women should stay and fight, the town automatically gains the benefits of one day of the **Arm the Townsfolk** preparations thanks to the extra fighters. If they agree to help Justin, they will need to leave dinner a bit early and go speak to the women at Teresa's again. If they convince all of the women to leave, they will receive an extra 150 gold from Justin's personal stash as thanks.

## THE THIRD NIGHT

There is no drinking on this night. Women (at least some of them) and children will be heading up to the mines since it is unknown when the raid will occur. Many of the other townsfolk cram into Justin's parlor with the map of the town. Now the table is covered in various decorations representing the preparations made by the townsfolk to ready the town for combat. Here the party can make final decisions on where each of them wishes to start the fight, if there is a plan for retreat, when they want to use their explosives if they crafted any, etc...

At the end of the night, the Mayor will give an inspiring speech and send everyone off to get some much earned rest before the fighting begins.

## THE CALAMITY ATTACKS

It is an hour after sunrise when a man walks out of the forest near the town and calls out, "*We were expecting payment, Skalintown! Looks like you've chosen to die with your pitiful town instead! We'll give you one last chance to give us what we asked for... otherwise, well, it's going to get bloody.*" The man is an ordinary member of the bandits, clearly not a leader, but he speaks with the confidence of a man with an army behind him, even though none of the other members of The Calamity have been spotted just yet.

Ron will call back to them, "*Oh, it may be bloody, but it is the blood of your kind that is going to be spilled on this day,*" and he fires a bolt into the man's chest, killing him instantly.

### DEADLY ENCOUNTERS

All 3 waves of the assault are considered to be Deadly encounters, no matter your group's level. No need to fear, though! Your players have had time to prepare for the attack and know that they can expend all of their daily resources in this one set of combat so they should be just fine if they stick to their plan and you don't roll too many critical hits!

## THE FIRST WAVE: RELEASE THE HOUNDS

As the man collapses to the ground in a quickly growing pool of blood, another voice calls out from the nearby forest, "*Let the dogs tear them to pieces!*" Howls and snarls begin to fill the air and it takes only a few moments before the first of them are bursting out of the treeline 150 feet away and start charging at the town.

**Roll for initiative.**

### ENEMIES

The number and the types of creatures the party faces depends on your party's APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 4

- 4x Wolf (**MM Pg. 341**)
- 2x Thug (**MM Pg. 350**) mounted upon 2x Worg (**MM Pg. 341**)
- 1x Lakira Rain [CR 2] mounted upon 1x Armored Dire Wolf (**NEB2**)

#### • APL 5

- 4x Dire Wolf (**MM Pg. 321**)
- 2x Thug mounted upon 2x Worg
- 1x Lakira Rain [CR 2] mounted upon 1x Armored Dire Wolf

#### • APL 6

- 4x Dire Wolf
- 2x Bandit Captain (**MM Pg. 344**) mounted upon 2x Worg
- 1x Lakira Rain [CR 4] mounted upon 1x Armored Dire Wolf

#### • APL 7

- 4x Dire Wolf
- 2x Bandit Captain mounted upon 2x Worg
- 1x Lakira Rain [CR 4] mounted upon 1x Runed Scarred Dire Wolf (**NEB2**)

### SETUP AND TACTICS

This fight consists of 4 wolves set loose on their own and 3 additional wolves/worgs with riders on their backs. The sets of creatures acting as a rider and mount roll for initiative together, so both rider and mount will attack at the same time.

If you constructed barricades around the city, this group of enemies does not concern themselves with breaking them down. They will circle around to the nearest entryway, the wolves taking Dash actions and their riders taking Dodge actions or using ranged attacks against any exposed targets. It takes the wolves and riders two rounds to reach the town.

The wolves are savage, always attacking the nearest target they can see or smell unless commanded otherwise. They will run over traps without hesitation and will continue to attack their target even after they have been knocked unconscious, insuring their prey is dead.

Once the wolf riders are within the walls, they will continue to use ranged attacks and shout out the positions of any advanced weaponry or party members they can see so that the next wave of attackers will be ready. If their mounts are ever killed or if they get too low on health, they will run into the buildings of the town and fire from the safety of the windows.

## LAKIRA RAIN, THE FIRST BANDIT LEADER

Lakira Rain is the first of The Calamity's leaders. If the party members took time to gather intel, they will recognize her immediately. She is covered in tattoos and is known as a master with a bow. Once inside the walls, she will do her best to get to a rooftop and fire down upon others from the high-ground, setting her powerful wolf loose to attack party members that may be engaging in melee combat.

If you have a higher level group and want to give them an extra challenge, you can use a Deadly Hunter from Nerzugal's Extended Bestiary in place of Lakira Rain. This enemy excels with a bow and arrow and can certainly pack a punch, but if it is a one-shot then some extra deadliness may be welcomed by your players.

During all of the fighting with the wolves, other bandits are shifting around outside the bounds of the town. An observant player on the high ground can see movement in the nearby forest. They will start to spread to every side of the town. **3 rounds after the first wave, the second wave begins their attack! These foot soldiers take 3 turns to reach the town, sprinting across the field in their approach.**

## THE SECOND WAVE: OVERWHELMING FORCES

The second wave consists of an entire army of foot soldiers that swarm after the initial attack of the wolves and wolf riders. **Simply add them to the existing initiative order. No need for the players to roll again.** It is clear that the bandits were not expecting such resistance by the townsfolk, that they would be gone or hiding with maybe a handful who would stand to fight. While these bandits may be weak, their sheer numbers still make them a threat to the town.

### ENEMIES

The enemies listed are broken down by your APL. See the beginning of the module for information on determining your party's APL.

#### • APL 4

- 4x Squad of Bandits (**NEB2**)
- 1x Squad of Thugs (**NEB2**)
- 1x Sal'kin Bloodfist [CR 3]

#### • APL 5

- 3x Squad of Bandits
- 3x Squad of Thugs
- 1x Sal'kin Bloodfist [CR 3]

#### • APL 6

- 3x Squad of Bandits
- 3x Squad of Thugs
- 1x Sal'kin Bloodfist [CR 5]

#### • APL 7

- 6x Squad of Thugs
- 1x Sal'kin Bloodfist [CR 5]

## SETUP AND TACTICS

If the sides of the town are blockaded, these groups of enemies will attempt to smash through. They will find a single point along the wall and begin to hack and slash, potentially wasting multiple turns as they do so. About half of the force will attempt to break through on any given side, the rest will swarm to the nearest entrance and make their way in from there.

These soldiers stick together in their small groups always and are particularly vulnerable to thrown bombs and detonated explosives. Beyond that, these enemies are fairly straight forward in their intentions. They will charge directly at the party members, assuming they have the advantage with their superior numbers. If there are arbalests on the rooftops, some of these groups may stop and try to destroy those as they are a great threat.

### SAL'KIN BLOODFIST, THE SECOND BANDIT LEADER

Sal'kin Bloodfist is the second of The Calamity leaders. If the party members took time to gather intel, they will recognize him immediately. Sal'Kin is a brutish half-orc, far more powerful than the individual units of the scattered bandit groups. His body is covered in scars and there is a large chunk missing from his lower jaw. He uses a steel maul to crush through opponents as well as structures and is not afraid of making his own doorways into the homes of the townsfolk.

He will stick relatively close to the groups of bandits, shouting commands to keep them focused on high-priority targets such as arbalests. When Sal'Kin is killed, make sure the other bandits are visibly startled and seem a bit frightened.

## THE FINAL WAVE: THE ELITE FORCE

The leader of The Calamity is a man by the name of Voln Elstrum. He started out as a beggar in the streets in a nearby city and was adopted by a gang when he was still quite young. He had taken his first life before reaching age ten. Now, almost thirty years later, he is an elite fighter with an esteemed reputation amongst all thieves and bandits. Because of this reputation, he thinks himself too good to dirty his hands with the slaughtering of peasants, but after seeing Sal'Kin and his men begin to fall, he realizes he must engage with his loyal pets, Snarl and Howl. **Voln and his wolves attack 4 rounds after the second wave, reaching the town in 2 rounds.**

## ENEMIES

### APL 4

- 1x Dire Wolf (**MM Pg. 321**)
- 1x Armored Dire Wolf (**NEB 2**)
- 1x Voln Elstrum [CR 4]

### APL 5

- 2x Rune-Scarred Dire Wolf (**NEB 2**)
- 1x Voln Elstrum [CR 4]

### APL 6

- 1x Armored Dire Wolf
- 1x Rune-Scarred Dire Wolf
- 1x Voln Elstrum [CR 6]

### APL 7

- 2x Rune-Scarred Dire Wolf
- 1x Voln Elstrum [CR 6]

## SETUP AND TACTICS

Voln comes charging in through the main entrance of the town, sending Snarl and Howl to engage the enemy ahead of him. He is a smart man and has survived dozens if not hundreds of encounters, causing him to be incredibly cautious in his fighting tactics. He will hide behind buildings, attempt to take hostages, and use potions to make sure he has the upper hand in battle. With a simple whistle he can command Snarl and Howl to attack any foe and they will obey even if it means receiving attacks of opportunity from another enemy. If the party allowed women to stay and fight, be sure to have one of them be captured by Voln and used as a human shield as soon as he arrives in the town.

## AFAIR TO DIE

When Voln is reduced to 0 hit points for the first time, instead reduce his hit points to 1 and immediately interrupt combat as he surrenders, throwing his weapons to the ground and holding his wounds. If the party chooses to show mercy, give them additional gold or XP as reward, as Voln is a wanted criminal and is responsible for many deaths that typically calls for a public execution in front of the family members of those he has wronged.

## AFTERMATH

At the end of the battle, the party will have defeated over 30 total bandits - quite the feat. Ron will run over to the party, swinging his crossbow high overhead in joy. *"We did it! We got 'em all!"* he shouts and the citizens that remained in the town to help fight all join in the celebrations as they flood into the street.

One of the townsfolk goes running off to the mines to gather the women and children, and before long the town is overflowing with people once again. There is joy in the air and dozens of bottles of various alcohols have already been opened (and many of them emptied). They celebrate the lives of those who died rather than mourn them, as is traditional in Skalintown.

Let your players relish in a hard earned victory.

## **EXPERIENCE**

The Experience listed below represents a blend of monster encounters, non-combat encounters, and some bonus experience for finishing the quest. Feel free to adjust these values if you see fit.

- **APL 4** - 4,000 XP per player
- **APL 5** - 7,000 XP per player
- **APL 6** - 9,000 XP per player
- **APL 7** - 11,000 XP per player

## **LOOT**

Your party's reward is based on their APL. These are however just suggested values. Feel free to increase or decrease these numbers or reward them with a magic item - perhaps there is a magic weapon that has been passed down in the Skalin family for generations and the Mayor is willing to part with it. Perhaps the sheriff's crossbow is magical and he feels it would be of better use in the hands of the party.

- **APL 4** - 1,600 gold
- **APL 5** - 2,500 gold
- **APL 6** - 3,600 gold
- **APL 7** - 5,000 gold

# CUSTOM ENEMIES

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## LAKIRA RAIN

Medium humanoid (half-elf), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (leather)

**Hit Points** 53 (7d8 + 21)

**Speed** 35 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 9 (-1) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Insight +3

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Command the Pack (3/Day)** As a bonus action, Lakira shouts out a command to her wolves. One wolf within 120 feet can that can hear Lakira can use its reaction to make a bite attack.

**Mounted Combatant.** Once per turn while riding a mount, Lakira can deal an additional 4 (1d8) damage with a ranged weapon.

### Actions

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

## LAKIRA RAIN

Medium humanoid (half-elf), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 82 (11d8 + 33)

**Speed** 35 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 10 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 9 (-1) |

**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Insight +4

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Command the Pack (3/Day)** As a bonus action, Lakira shouts out a command to her wolves. One wolf within 120 feet can that can hear Lakira can use its reaction to make a bite attack with advantage.

**Mounted Combatant.** Once per turn while riding a mount, Lakira can deal an additional 5 (1d10) damage with a ranged weapon.

### Actions

**Multiattack** Lakira makes two attacks with her longbow.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

## SAL'KIN BLOODFIST

Medium humanoid (half-orc), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (unarmored defense)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 16 (+3) | 7 (-2) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) |

**Skills** Athletics +6, Intimidation +2

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Orcish

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Demolisher.** Sal'Kin's deals double damage to objects and structures.

**Fervor For Battle.** If Sal'Kin has been in combat for at least 3 rounds, he deals an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage with all melee weapon attacks.

**Unarmored Defense.** While Sal'Kin is wearing no armor, his AC includes his Constitution modifier.

### Actions

**Multiattack** Sal'Kin makes two attacks with his maul.

**Maul. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage or 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage if he has been in combat for at least 3 rounds.

**Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

## SAL'KIN BLOODFIST

Medium humanoid (half-orc), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (unarmored defense)

**Hit Points** 102 (12d8 + 48)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 12 (+1) | 18 (+4) | 7 (-2) | 13 (+1) | 12 (+1) |

**Skills** Athletics +6, Intimidation +3

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Orcish

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

**Demolisher.** Sal'Kin's deals double damage to objects and structures.

**Fervor For Battle.** If Sal'Kin has been in combat for at least 3 rounds, he deals an additional 2d6 bludgeoning damage with all melee weapon attacks.

**Unarmored Defense.** While Sal'Kin is wearing no armor, his AC includes his Constitution modifier.

### Actions

**Multiattack** Sal'Kin makes two attacks with his maul.

**Maul. Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage or 18 (4d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage if he has been in combat for at least 3 rounds.

**Javelin. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Juggernaut Sweep (1/Day).** Sal'Kin stomps the ground, then swings his maul in two massive sweeping arcs. Each creature within 10 feet of Sal'Kin must make two Dexterity saving throws, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage for each failed save.

## VOLN ELSTRUM

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 19 (splint mail, shield)

**Hit Points** 65 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Str +5

**Skills** Athletics +5, Deception +5, Persuasion +5

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Orc

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Presence of Power.** All bandits within 60 feet of Vолн that can see him are bolstered in combat. Whenever one of these bandits makes an attack roll or saving throw, roll an additional 1d4 and add the number rolled to the attack roll or saving throw.

### Actions

**Multiattack** Vолн makes two attacks with his longsword, replacing any attack with a bleeding slice or debilitating strike if able.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Bleeding Slice (Recharge 4-6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target begins to bleed. At the beginning of a bleeding creature's turn, it takes 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. This effect persists until a creature uses its action to treat the wound.

**Debilitating Strike (Recharge 4-6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, that creature's highest stat is reduced by 2 for 1 minute. If it is a tie, randomly choose which stat is reduced.

## VOLN ELSTRUM

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 19 (splint mail, shield)

**Hit Points** 104 (16d8 + 32)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Str +7, Cha +6

**Skills** Athletics +7, Deception +6, Persuasion +6

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Orc

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Presence of Power.** All bandits within 60 feet of Vолн that can see him are bolstered in combat. Whenever one of these bandits makes an attack roll or saving throw, roll an additional 1d4 and add the number rolled to the attack roll or saving throw.

**Determined Combatant.** Vолн is immune to any effect that would cause him to make an attack roll or saving throw with disadvantage.

### Actions

**Multiattack** Vолн makes three attacks with his longsword, replacing any attack with a bleeding slice or debilitating strike if able.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Bleeding Slice (Recharge 4-6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, and the target begins to bleed. At the beginning of a bleeding creature's turn, it takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. This effect persists until a creature uses its action to treat the wound.

**Debilitating Strike (Recharge 4-6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, that target's highest stat is reduced by 3 for 1 minute. If it is a tie, randomly choose which stat is reduced.