



DIAMONDS
AND
SHADOWS

DIAMONDS AND SHADOWS



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FOREWORD

By Rob Heinsoo

If you're reading this, it means you supported the *13th Age* Bundle of Holding to the extent that you've landed the extra goodies! Thank you!

Diamonds and Shadows is the result of a development in *13th Age* design that took me by surprise. I was convinced that *13th Age* organized play wasn't possible because—in my previous experience—organized play requires standardization: every player can expect the same experience at every table, and every GM can expect that players won't bring weird homebrewed PCs to games. The One Unique Thing made that kind of standardization impossible, I argued, because characters can have game-changing *uniques* like, "I am the only half-elf in the world".

Thankfully ASH LAW knew better. ASH had joined our *13th Age* efforts as the most effervescent gamemaster we knew, and with his characteristic ebullience said that organized play wouldn't be a problem if we simply vetoed One Unique Things which described a PC as the only character in the world who had their unique features. So long as no one's *uniques* ruled out other people's *uniques*, organized play could work. ASH and a group of enthusiastic collaborators then proved it by designing four successful *13th Age* organized play adventures—adventures that have now been updated and compiled as the *Diamonds and Shadows* campaign (together with a lot of brand new material).

A few words of explanation for those completely new to these adventures—because they were originally created for groups to play as weekly two-hour sessions

of the *13th Age* organized play program, they were originally designed with specific time limits in mind. As such if you play *Diamonds and Shadows* as written you'll find that the adventure has a natural rhythm, alternating between freeform montages, roleplaying, combat, and more combat!

The episodic format of the weekly adventures also explains the linear approach of the early parts of *Diamonds and Shadows*. ASH loves writing sandbox adventures, but organized play had to stick to specific plotlines. As a result there's less room at the start of *Diamonds and Shadows* for players to take off in a completely unexpected direction than there is

in an adventure like *Shadows of Eldolan*.

If going off on wild tangents is your players' only mode, you'll still be able to use most of the material in *Diamonds and Shadow* and the good news for such groups: possibilities do widen out at the end!

The various sections of the adventure are written for higher and higher level characters. If you play *Diamonds and Shadows* as written, moving from one section to the next, you'll level your characters up much faster than in most campaigns. Starting at second level, you're all beholden to that stealthy puppeteer, the Prince of Shadows. By the end of *Diamonds and Shadows*, you're all seventh level, and you may have chosen among several of the icons as your ally and from even more of them as your true enemy.

If you find yourself enjoying this style of play, or profiting from the examples of adventure pacing, character montages, and ASH's other GM tricks, the current *13th Age* Organized Play adventures are available as a bonus to subscribers to the *13th Age Monthly* from Pelgrane Press.

Have fun in the shadows, chasing the diamond!



CHAPTER I: ADVENTURE SET-UP

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure revolves around a mystic diamond that by rights belongs the Emperor. The Darkskye Diamond is said to have the power to levitate rock, creating flying islands in the sky.

The adventurers start as pawns of the Prince of Shadows, paying off past debts to the icon by committing crimes for him. One of the crimes involves stealing the Darkskye Diamond... and the theft of that item sets the rest of the adventure in motion.

CHARACTER MOTIVATION, AND THE ICONS

IN SHADOW'S DEBT

The adventure starts with the adventurers working for the Prince of Shadows to pay off a serious debt that they owe him. The debt could be a literal debt, or something like a debt of honor.

The characters have all somehow incurred a hefty debt to the Prince of Shadows, be it a literal debt or a figurative one. Whether it was for a good reason, bad reason, or just pure luck, the Prince isn't one to let something like that slide. The Prince wants the characters to put their skills and talents to work and they will do so, if they know what's good for them.

Ask each player what their character has done to land them in the Prince of Shadows' debt. Is the debt to the Prince a figurative one, or a literal debt of money? Is the debt related to their backgrounds? Was their debt incurred for selfish reasons, from selfless motives, or through chance? Whatever it is, it's going to take several jobs to repay. . . .

AGENT OF AN ICON

Of course not every character will fit the 'I'm in debt to the Prince of Shadows' mold, so here are some ideas for other icon-related reasons for starting this adventure:

- You are secretly working for an icon who wants to know what the Prince of Shadows is up to. You have taken the place of somebody who has a debt to the Prince.
- You are hiding from an icon, and what better place to hide from an icon than in the employ of another icon?

- You are working for an icon who is concerned that the Prince of Shadows has a plan to do harm to the Wild Wood (*Elf Queen, High Druid*). Play along with the Prince of Shadows and prevent anything that might harm the forest, and if that cannot be done then stand ready to avenge the forces of nature.
- You are working for an icon who has mystically foreseen some great disaster whose roots are with the Prince of Shadows (*Archmage, Diabolist, Priestess*). Stick with the Prince of Shadows long enough to discover what is going on, then prevent the disaster.
- You are working for an icon who is keen to get their hands on a treasure that the Prince of Shadows intends to steal (*Dwarf King, Emperor, Orc Lord*). The icon who has sent you into danger wants you to play along as long as possible, and discover where the Prince of Shadow's secret base in Shadow Port is so that they may personally raid it.
- You have been sent to infiltrate the Prince's organization and uncover its deeper secrets (*Crusader, Lich King*). The icon who has sent you to uncover the Prince's secrets intends to later use those secrets to their own benefit.
- You are working for a dragon icon who is playing the long game. You don't quite know what the icon's plan is, but you know that it involves something called the Darkskye Diamond (*Great Gold Wyrms, The Three*) and a shadowy creature.

FIGHTS

Throughout this adventure the party will encounter opposition from armed opponents, monsters, and strange spirits. Each fight in this section has an associated fight chart. To find out how many monsters of each type to use look up the number of player character adventurers in the left-hand column then read across that row. So when there is a fight you will see the following:

FIGHT!			
...any special details for the fight will appear here.			
Number of PCs	First Monster	Second Monster	Third Monster
3	1	1	5

4	2	1	10
5	2	2	15
6	3	2	20
7	4	2	25

In the above example for four adventurers you would use two of the first type of monster, one of the second monsters, and ten of the third type of monster.

HAZARDS

HAZARDS OUTSIDE OF COMBAT

Some areas have specific hazards. If the adventurers will not face a fight in an area due to there being no foes or the adventurers avoiding the fight then each adventurer must face a hazard.

Adventurers who face a hazard (usually) get a chance to avoid it by rolling a skill check and beating the DC of the hazard. This could represent noticing the hazard in time and dodging out of the way, disarming a trap, or using knowledge of the hazard to avoid the danger.

If the adventurer fails to succeed at the skill check (or if the hazard automatically hits) the hazard makes an attack against the adventurer.

SUDDEN CHASM	FALLING MASONRY	BURST OF WILD MAGIC
<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Sudden drop, painful stop +5 vs PD—2d6 damage	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Bricks +10 vs AC—3d6 damage	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Wild magic +10 vs MD—1d10 psychic damage

HAZARDS IN COMBAT

In a few combats there are specific hazards that you can introduce. This is especially true in chapter 3 as the kobolds choose to fight in environments that will force intruders or those chasing them to either dodge the hazard (a standard action) or attack the kobolds and risk the hazard harming them.

Chapter 4 is intended for 4th level characters. The fights in chapter 4 are pitched at 3rd level characters, but the inclusion of hazards increase the difficulty to something closer to what is fair for a 4th level character.

It is up to you as the GM how to use these hazards mid-combat; personally I'd recommend that each adventurer only faces a single hazard each combat, and that you only use one hazard each round.

If you want to speed through chapter 4 ignore the mid-fight hazards and allow the players some easy wins. If you want to really challenge the party and make them work for their victories then use two hazards per round and aim to throw two hazards at each adventurer every battle.

MAGIC ITEMS

There are magic items in an appendix at the back of this book, and you can find more in the 13TH AGE core book, the BOOK OF LOOT, and the 13TH AGE BESTIARY. Some parts of this adventure have specific magic items available only from that location, in those cases the items are in the adventure listed and detailed in that location.



40 HALF-LIES AND HALF-TRUTHS ABOUT SHADOW PORT

In the first and sixth chapters of this adventure the city of Shadow Port is featured quite heavily. Rather than give a full city map, long list of NPCs, and so on, we've given you forty rumors to choose from as you see fit. Add several rumors to the NPCs found in the taverns of Shadow Port and you've got yourself a living breathing city.

1. A bard's guild has moved into some rooms on Nectarnare Street across the road from the Bank of Glitterhaegen, but their playing is awful. The neighbors are complaining but their landlady Mrs Wilberforce thinks they are playing beautifully.
2. A big bunch of ranger types rowed ashore in a tiny boat the other day. They came from the direction of the Bitterwood. They looked to be about serious business.
3. A bunch of talking multi-colored ponies and other animals have been hanging around the Sand Street pub where the wizards hang out. Probably illusionists playing tricks.
4. A moose went berserk in the Strut Square market ... again. Yet again nobody knows where the moose came from. It tore around the place, knocking down stalls and biting people.
5. A scribe was found dead on a rooftop near Catfindell Street. His eyes had been stolen.
6. A ship carrying Orcish Slug Fever has been quarantined down at Quartz Quay.
7. Alderman Chesmun stabbed up a whole tavern, and today is due to be hanged until dead. They insulted her milliner, who then went mad and burnt down his hat shop. All true, I swear.
8. All over Latchmound district strange warm black fungal spores have been falling. It ain't no problem, just an oddity. I 'ave a jar of it 'ere if'n you wanna buy some.
9. An elf was found hanging from the Waxweasel Bridge last night. That is the third one in as many days. Whelp... it looks like the Waxweasel Hangman is back!
10. At the last Feast of Gold the Prince of Shadows auctioned his mask.
11. Captain Bigfinger the halfling pirate has been down at the docks, looking for a new crew.
12. Jimmy the Needle is on the run. He stole something big from an emissary of the Elf Queen.
13. Jobe Addermun found a dead body in a chest today, down by the Hanged Stabman tavern. The body was full of fungus, someone had emptied the body and put mushrooms inside.
14. Jobe Chesmun was found dead today, stabbed and left hung from the Alderman Inn's sign. He was covered in thousands of sand crabs, burrowing into his skin.
15. Kraal One Tusk the half-orc burnt down his own haberdashery and won't say why, but he cringes whenever he sees a mushroom. Must 'ave been the fumes wot sent 'im mad.
16. Lady Rumpdent is to hold a grand gala tonight. The balls of the rich elite of the Cite Crescent district are legendary, and Lady Rumpdent has the biggest balls of them all (second only of course to Morgan Navale). They say she is playing host to centaurs!
17. Lumberhulk Way has a new shop opening this week. Nobody knows what the new shop will sell, the signs are covered in tarpaulins and there are dust sheets over the windows. It is all terribly mysterious.
18. Madame Bluestaff of Cherrychase Alley is offering runes and potions at a lower than usual price. I hear she is trying to raise a lot of money very quickly. Maybe she needs to leave?
19. Madame Vanda has decided to purchase a ship, the Deep Swing. The captain of the Deep Swing isn't keen on selling. Madame Vanda is hiring 'guards' as is the captain.
20. On the Street of a Thousand Fools is a fortune teller who can see the time of your death.
21. Owls have been seen slouching around Tenderhill district. Slouching I tells ya! It ain't natural.
22. Rampqueen Passage was the scene of a recent murder, and now is haunted by a ghostly woman in white. The owner of the warehouse nearby is offering money to anybody who can get rid of the ghost, his workers are getting spooked.
23. Rents are going up on Ralrain Avenue, and the tenants are not well pleased. The landlord, Kamock Slant, has sent his thugs around to collect and kick out those who are late paying.

24. The 'Mucklarks' street gang are in hiding. Their leader Quin Half-Elven was last seen entering a temple of Vo ("May His inky tentacles rise from the deep to caress you with His knowledge").
25. The Coomb Canyon slaughterhouse district is the place to find the best fresh meat and the deadliest assassins. You have to know the right people first though...
26. The Dazedasher is back in port, with yet another captain. Some say there is a curse on the ship that makes captains gamble their ship away.
27. The dwarves of Stonedale are visiting relatives in the city, and are drinking the place dry!
28. The Flowhag Street flower shop was the only one left alone by the 'Edgebasher' gang when they went on a rampage. I wonder why that is - it's just a pair of little old ladies and some flowers. What goes in in the back room of that shop that is covered by the scent of flowers?
29. The halfling street gang 'the Shalediggers' are out in force tonight.
30. The Iron Moor tavern is home to a great new house band called The Roottles. They come from Anvil and are looking for a new drummer (the last one was eaten by orcs).
31. The Jade Palm tavern is having an all-you can eat contest tonight.
32. The ladies of Shaftshade Street are rioting. The street is barricaded and they are hurling insults and clumps of mud at anybody who tries to go up the street.
33. The people of Shoeshire Street have had their fountain stolen, their pride and joy.
34. The scent of roses is powerful near the Screamscarpe Hill cemetery.
35. The seamen's mission on Rabblerate Street is looking to hire a guard.
36. The skullball team from Jawletcher Narrows is due to play the crew of the Sea Seed tonight. Lots

of locals are wagering on the Jawletcher girls to win. Gooooooo Narrows!

37. The urchins of Cham Corner have suddenly become wealthy and purchased fine new waistcoats. I hear they mugged the Prince himself, and he let them keep the coins!
38. The wizards and enchantresses of the White Unicorn Circus are back, setting up their tents and putting out their stalls. This time they have some goblin acrobats from the Bad Moone Faire, so it should be a grand show. I hear they have a fire-eating dryad this year!
39. The yearly parade of brightly colored siege engines arranged by the dwarves of Scrimshaw Street had to take a different route due to subsidence under the parade route. The Empire is sending a huge diamond to the parade, with a thousand guards. Must be a big rock, eh?
40. Thornleech Lane disappeared last Middenmass Eve, when it came back the butcher's shop was missing. Somewhere out there is the dread Butcher's Shop... lurking.... waiting.



CHAPTER 2: SHADOW PORT

NIGHTS

This section of the adventure is designed for 2nd level characters. 1st level characters might find the fights too hard and subsequently might have to flee and thus suffer campaign losses, though smarter players will be able to avoid some fights through careful planning.

Chapter 2 is split into six parts: the first five parts are each a different criminal caper but the last part deals with the sudden betrayal of the adventurer's by their patron, the Prince of Shadows.

DEEP IN THE RED

OVERVIEW

The adventurers must steal a treasure from a guarded mansion as part of paying off a debt to the Prince of Shadows.

EARLY YOUR WAY

The characters are in debt to the Prince of Shadows and they must work it off by completing several tasks in the city of Shadow Port.

Just because the adventurers are indebted to the Prince doesn't mean that they're actually qualified to do anything for in his name and the Prince wants to make sure that they won't be a bumbling group of incompetents who stain his reputation. To that end, he's arranged a simple test for the characters. The individual characters receive, in unlikely and unsettling ways, a missive from the Prince, directing them to arrive one hour past sundown at The Dark Jester Tavern, take the table with the golden mug, and wait for their contact to arrive. Each missive has a description of the other adventurers.

Start the session with a montage. Turn to each player and ask them what unusual way the player to their left received their message from the Prince, then turn to the player who received the missive and ask them what they did in order to both find the tavern and arrive there on time. The Dark Jester Tavern is not one of the more well-known or trafficked places in Shadow Port and the characters will have to work at getting there on time. Do this until each player has had a chance to introduce an

odd way for a message has been delivered, and has told a short tale about how their character got to the tavern at the appointed hour.

If players need ideas for how they received their message here are some options to nudge them along. No rolls are necessary here, just narration.

- Woke up with a sealed scroll on their chest written in blood, and a fresh wound on their body.
- A random stranger bumps into the character and reverse-pickpockets a piece of paper into their coin pouch, the paper has cryptic directions on it but is unmistakably from the Prince.
- The serving woman whispers in the character's ear as she sets down breakfast.
- A crow alights on a character's head and verbally relays the message on them.

If players have a problem coming up for ideas for how to find the tavern here are some ideas to give them.

- Dice with some well-connected gamblers for the information.
- Pay off a notorious street rat to take the adventurer there.
- Call in a favor with some merchants or craftsmen.

This is also an excellent place to let players use the stories behind their Icon relationships and Backgrounds to help guide them along, so a reminder of this might be beneficial as well.

THE DARK JESTER TAVERN

The Dark Jester Tavern is located down a dark staircase in an otherwise unremarkable alley, and if it weren't for the sign hanging outside it would likely be overlooked entirely—for the regulars there, the tavern is all the better for that.

Those who find their way into The Dark Jester find that despite its appearance as a complete dive it stocks a good selection of drinks under the bar. Some of the best musicians, bards, and minstrels in the Dragon Empire have played the tavern when traveling through Shadow

Port and aspiring musicians sometimes seek it out as a good luck token.

NOTABLE DENIZENS OF THE DARK JESTER TAVERN

Marek Lightsbane— A half-orc who is notorious for being a horrible gambler and an even worse cheat, but he's so charming and witty that most of the regulars overlook these particular flaws. Usually, he's sat at a table alone, building a house of cards.

Revka Marass— The mysterious tiefling owner of The Dark Jester. An extremely talented player of a game involving knives and fingers, she invites newcomers to play against her (a DC 15 skill check, a success earns a gold coin, a failure loses a gold coin and the losing PC takes 1d4 damage).

Kovaryl— A dragonspawn bouncer and musician who plays an unusual string instrument known as a grakaal which has more than once doubled as a club when fights get too much.

Vun Dar'zes— A dark elf, or as he prefers to be called 'a silverfolk'. A lowly cutpurse and thief.

Ironsteelbrass Smashface— A forgeborn wizard that describes itself as a 'battle poet'.

Red— A forgeborn sellsword, it has returned from Moonwreck with news of orcs on the move. Lots of people returning from the north have tales of orcs on the march, of seeing battles, and of red banners. Feel free to make up wild and unbelievable tales of brutal orcish warbands - be as outlandish as you like. There have been some skirmishes near dwarven lands in recent months— that much is true.

Harmonious First Oak— A forgeborn guard, deep in conversation with Red about possible jobs.

Draven Darquespawne, and Bugeyes— A scarred half-drow sorcerer and his impling familiar.

Jimmy the Needle— A counterfeiter of coins and forger of documents. A nice fellow, and willing to buy a drink for any humans in the group of adventurers (especially if they beat Marek at cards).

Father Faust— The others in the tavern refer to him as 'your holiness'. A defrocked priest of Cathol.

Salmanthra Ashburn— A tiefling bard, she is playing a melancholy tune on a dulcimer.

Krod— It is hard to say what Krod is. She's got some tiefling in her, some drow, and maybe a bit of orc too. She is a deserter and wears the battered armor of an imperial soldier, but with no insignia.

THE GOLDEN MUG

As soon as all the adventurers are at the table with the golden mug (*actually a brass mug, at least if anybody wants to appraise it*), their contact arrives—he is a rakish tiefling dressed in fashionable clothing, and fits the description they were given in their message.

The tiefling seats himself at the table with a grin and orders a round of drinks for all the adventurers; he explains that his name is Samuel Dirrel and he is there on behalf of a "mutual acquaintance". Samuel explains the situation to them once more: the adventurers each owe the Prince of Shadows and the Prince is calling in his markers. They will be asked to do several tasks for him and when they have successfully completed them, the Prince will consider their debt wiped clean. Samuel notes that people who refuse the Prince often end up regretting it rather quickly.

THE CAPER

The party's first task is as follows...

A loudmouthed and rich noble named Morgan Navale has, rather unwisely, bragged about the security around his latest acquisition: The Winter Seal. The Winter Seal is an obsidian statue of an owl, encrusted with sapphires that are set in silver. It is said to have been owned by the Wizard King and may contain untapped arcane power. The adventurers will retrieve the statue for the Prince, in the face of the not-inconsiderable security as well as rival groups also attempting to take possession. When they have taken possession of the statue, they will return to The Dark Jester Tavern and order a "round of the golden ale" and Samuel will come to deliver the Winter Seal to the Prince. Before he leaves, Samuel suggests that they visit a man named Lars Redfist, also known as the King of Valegate.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

A bar brawl might break out in this disreputable tavern, especially if the adventurers provoke one.

Number of PCs	Bar Patrons
3	6
4	7
5	9
6	10
7	12

BAR PATRONS

Careful, they are belligerent when roused.

1st level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Improvised weapon +5 vs. AC—4 damage

AC 17

PD 14 HP 27

MD 12

FOLLOWING SAMUEL... BAD IDEA

Like all messengers of the Prince, Samuel has ways to ensure he is not followed. If the adventurers insist on following Samuel it is a DC 25 check to keep up with him before he ducks into the back room of a tavern and disappears, then a DC 25 check to find a hidden door that leads to a natural cave. This is a thieves' guild hide-out and the thieves don't like being surprised.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Chasing or attempting to capture of fight Samuel will provoke a fight with the thieves' guild. If a fight occurs here use the bar fight above, but the improvised weapons can attack at range (nearby only) on turns when the escalation die is odd.

For the purposes of the fight the cave hide-out is accessed through a hole in the back room of a tavern known as The Wolf and Moon Pub. During the confusion of the fight, Samuel disappears and makes good his escape.

PETTY KING OF VALEGATE

If the adventurers decide to take Samuel Dirrel's advice and go see Lars Redfist use this section, otherwise skip ahead to the next section.

There are few people, even in the seedy underbelly of Shadow Port, who have the knowledge and connections to be of assistance on such a difficult task as the ones the adventurers find before them.

Known as the 'King' of Valegate district, Lars Redfist might be able to help the adventurers. Lars works both sides of the law and is well known in the city—he's neutral in all conflicts, buying and selling from all comers. Fence-sitting generally doesn't go over very well in a city like Shadow Port, but Lars is too useful and too well connected to be threatened by any of the power groups within the city. Lars is known to have a generous face, but a will of iron.

The adventurers find their way to Lars' office without any problem (just about any person on the street will point them in the right direction). The 'king's' office is a solidly constructed three story building that is obviously well defended: there are armed guards, iron bars across the narrow windows, and thick iron-banded doors.

The adventurers are stopped by a guard at the front entrance, who demands the characters identify themselves and let him know what they want.

GMs: Let the players sweat it out. The guard will try to bully them a bit no matter what they say. Eventually the guard lets the adventurers in without a die roll. The guard doesn't get paid enough to start a fight. Of course if the adventurers make a show of force the guard will let them in earlier.

The guard shows the adventurers up the stairs to the top floor and Lars' office.

GMs: Go around the table and have each player describe something distinctive about Lars. It could be his hair, his accent, his height or weight, or his clothing. Play up these player-created things when acting out this scene.

Lars is willing to help out, but it won't come easy. He can get them guard schedules, building schematics, notes about traps and wards, and can even obtain tickets to the ball that Navale is hosting that very evening so that the adventurers can get inside and examine things for themselves... but he won't do anything for them without something in return.

Go around the table, one player at a time, and have them describe how they help to convince Lars to help them out, then let them roll a skill check with an appropriate background (DC15). If players want to use their Icon Relationships results to turn a failed die roll into a success they succeed by spending a 6 (and succeed with something owed to Lars with a 5).

IF THE PLAYERS ROLL MORE FAILURES THAN SUCCESSES

The adventurers have completely been unable to get Lars' assistance and they're going to go into the situation blind. Lars informs the players about the ball that evening so they can do their own legwork, but insists that he's not going to get involved.

IF THE PLAYERS GET AT LEAST AS MANY SUCCESSES AS FAILURES

The adventurers have persuaded Lars to help them out. He will send a runner to them with tickets to the ball once he has them, as well as enough information about the people involved and the place the relic is being held. This will give the adventurers +2 on all skill checks in both the

Ballroom Blitz and the Melee à Trois sections of this adventure.

IF ALL OF THE PLAYERS SUCCEED AT THEIR ROLLS

The adventurers have managed to seriously impress Lars with their savvy, knowledge, or charisma and they will be rewarded for it. In addition to the ball tickets and information, give each adventurer a healing potion. The adventurers will also get 2 on all skill checks in both the Ballroom Blitz and the Melee à Trois sections of this adventure.

MAGIC ITEMS

If any players succeeded with their Icon Relationship rolls at the beginning of the session, now is a good time to hand out true magic items as well. Lars might have a stolen item that is too hot to fence but he'll trade it to one of the adventurers if they put in a good word with an icon that they are connected to for him.

COME OUT TO PLAY

It doesn't take long in Shadow Port for word to get out that something interesting, and possibly profitable, is going down. Someone has linked the adventurers to this rumor and a group of thugs has decided that they want a piece of the action. Hint to the players that someone sold them out, and let them guess who. Maybe it was Lars or the guard they were dealing with earlier. Maybe it was Samuel from back at The Dark Jester. Maybe it was the Prince of Shadows himself, looking to keep the characters on their toes. Exactly who it is isn't important, outside of the role-playing possibilities. This lets the characters (and the players) know that they can't take their time with this heist and that they're going to need to be careful in Shadow Port.

FIGHT!

These are opportunistic thugs who find strength in numbers, not die-hard fanatics. Don't hesitate to have the bad guys in this fight run away if the battle goes against them or you need to speed things along.

Number of PCs	Sneak Thief	Bruiser	Street Scum
3	1	1	10
4	2	1	10
5	2	2	10
6	3	2	10
7	4	2	10

ELVEN STREET SCUM

Her eyes have an unnatural shine to them.

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +13

Knives +6 vs. AC—4 damage

R: Rock +6 vs. AC—3 damage

AC 17

PD 15 HP 6 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one street scum mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

HALFLING SNEAK THIEF

2nd level spoiler [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Whip +7 vs. PD—4 damage

Aggressively sneaky: When the halfling sneak thief disengages, the enemy it disengaged from is hampered until the end of its next turn.

AC 18

PD 11 HP 34

MD 17

HALF-ORC BRUISER

He stinks of stale beer and sweat.

2nd level wrecker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Brass knuckles +7 vs. AC—7 damage

Amazing strength: Once per battle the half-orc bruiser does double damage on a hit.

AC 19

PD 15 HP 38

MD 12

BALLROOM BLITZ

If the players decide to avoid attending the party and just try to rob the vault go the *Vault Hunters* section.

Morgan Navale is hosting a costume ball at his extravagant home in the evening— although The Winter Seal won't be on display, it's a great opportunity for the party to gather information about the security, building layout, and more as they hobnob with merchants, nobles, and famous people. Describe the environs as being decadent and opulent: the food, the music, the elaborate costumes, the decorations.

Here are some good high-class party words: *ambrosia, amphora, aquiline, baroque, bas-relief, beguile, cad, caper, cinnamon, dauphin, debauch, dowager, ebullient, eclair, epicurian, fop, fresco, frolic, gentry, glass, gossamer, halcyon, harlequin, imbroglio, iniquity, irascible, jabber, jeer, jape, kowtow, lucre, madrigal, nubile, opaline, parasite, pompous, rake, shrill, throng, umbral, vapid, zest.*

NOTABLE GUESTS

Tagral Bloodaxe— A half-orc gladiatorial champion and surprisingly nice guy. He's out of his element in these extravagant surroundings, and he knows it, but he manages to be charming and fun to be around in the party anyway as he tells gorey and action packed stories about the arena.

Marwyn Baran— A scholarly dwarf with a not-undeservedly puffed up opinion of himself. He's the archaeologist who found The Winter Seal for Navale and he's happy to talk to anybody and everybody about it, whether they want to hear or not. He's a very dull conversationalist.

Sir Ward Rokat— Sir Rokat is the perfect example of a knight in shining armor. The problem is that nobody knows why he's there or who invited him. Not even Sir Rokat.

Lady Ferenscia— A high-class woman of middle years. She is desperate for an excuse to get away from the terrible conversation she is in with a bunch of twittering noblewomen.

Factor Penhalligan of the Merchant League— He's desperate to impress his high-class host.

Lord Articus Windle of Horizon— A wizard and nobleman who has decided to visit old friends.

Baroness Angelincia Griven— An elderly woman who considers herself above most other people.

Sir Hugh Mondian— He's fought in some duels but never in a battle. He has vile political opinions.

Lord and Lady Moonbaugh— Elven dignitaries, here to do their duty to mix with 'lesser mortals'.

Eldin Castlands— Heir to the castlands shipping fortune, he is bored and looking for a diversion.

IDLE PARTY CHATTER

"Did you see what she is wearing? How daring. Of course I would never attempt to wear something like that. Poor dear."

"The shipping money is all in spices from the Wild Wood these days."

"So I say to him: 'Sir, I've never touched copper in my life.' Haw haw haw haw!"

"Oh, this vintage? Terrible year for grapes, good year for horses. Haw haw."

"Yes, to the OwlBarrens. Of course her husband was beside himself with apoplexy."

"Apparently the grubby little dwarf found it in some ruins near Throne Point."

"Frost giants? A taste of cold steel is what they need!"

"Yes, from the Wake Islands. Its all the rage my dear."

"Terrible guests this year. How did they get in?"

"Well who invited him to air his opinions?"

"His ring?"

PARTY MONTAGE/SKILL CHECK

This montage/skill challenge revolves around fishing for information from guests, using people as distractions to sneak behind the scenes, bluffing in conversation, sneaking into areas uninvited, and so on.

Go around to each of the players one at a time and have them describe an interaction or event at the ball. Then turn to the player on their left and have them tell how they took advantage of that event to learn something that will help them when stealing The Winter Seal, rolling a skill check with any appropriate background (DC 20). Don't forget about any potential bonus received from the *Petty King of Valegate* section.

Every adventurer that succeeds here gains an additional +2 to any skill rolls made in *Vault Hunters* section. This stacks with any other bonuses they may have received.

VAULT HUNTERS

This section might take place during the Morgan Navale's party as the players sneak off to steal the Winter Seal, or at a later time as they return in the dead of night to rob the vault.

It's time to get down to business. The characters have gathered as much information as they can, studied their opposition, and scouted out the traps and obstacles

they'll have to face as they raid Nagale's mansion for The Winter Seal. Nagale has spared no expense and the adventurers' tasks will be difficult, but if they've done their legwork up to this point they could have as much as a +4 bonus to their rolls (or if they just came straight here and avoided meeting Lars or attending the party they'll have no bonuses).

Have each player describe what they're doing to sneak through the halls and rooms to get to The Winter Seal. Choose the most appropriate trap or obstacle from the following table given what they've described and have the player roll an appropriate background to spot, disarm, and/or avoid the trap waiting for them. However, for each failed check, each subsequent check the players need to make increases by 2 as the mansion's security tightens against the intruders and they have to rush to avoid any guards catching them.

PIT TRAP	EXPLOSIVE RUNES	DART TRAP
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Spiked floor +5 vs PD—2d6 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Explosion +10 vs AC—3d6 force damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Darts +10 vs AC against each party member—1d12 damage</p>
POISON GAS	EXPLODING LANTERN	TRAPPED LOCK
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Gas attack +15 vs PD against every party member—1d12 poison damage.</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Woosh! +15 vs AC—4d6 fire damage.</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Poison needle +15 vs AC against every party member—2d8 poison damage and the target is weakened at the start of their next battle (easy save ends).</p>

THE WINTER SEAL

Regardless of whether they players succeed or fail at their checks to avoid the traps they eventually arrive at the vault containing The Winter Seal. However, there's a problem here. There's no way to get the item and get it out of the vault without setting off the biggest alarm yet. There's no choice but to invoke another time honored Shadow Port tradition: *Grab what you came for and leg it.*

As mentioned earlier the Winter Seal is an obsidian statue of an owl, with sapphires set in silver settings.

Once the adventurers have grabbed the Winter Seal a shrieking noise fills the vaults below the mansion, alerting the mansion guards. The adventurers will need to run as fast as they can.

MELEE À TROIS

The adventurers have gotten what they came for, but that doesn't mean that they've gotten away clean. Far from it; in addition to Navale's guards that come streaming out into the street at the sound of the magical alarms in the vault, other thieves and thugs are also following a time-honored Prince of Shadows tradition: *let some other poor sap do the dirty work and grab their loot on the way out.*

Fortunately for the characters, the guards and the rival thieves have no reason to cooperate and every reason to beat each other into submission. The rival groups will fight each other at least as much as they fight the adventurers. A guard who hits a thief (or vice versa) does no damage, but gives that NPC -4 to all defenses until the end of the battle.

FIGHT!

This has the potential to be a complicated fight to run, with two different sets of enemy combatants to keep track of. In addition, there are a greater than normal number of enemies fighting to make up for the fact that they are fighting each other as often as they are attacking the adventurers. If the adventurers flee have the players pick which group they successfully escape from and then have them run into the other group. Remember that the guards are paid and the thieves are not fanatics—enemies might start running away if the adventurers put up too much of a fight.

Pick the chart below that represents the fight—just thieves, just guards, or both.

Number of PCs	Thieves		
3	3		
4	4		
5	4		
6	5		
7	5		
Number of PCs	Brute Guard	Vault Guard	
3	1	2	
4	1	3	
5	2	2	
6	2	3	
7	3	2	
Number of PCs	Brute Guard	Vault Guard	Thieves
3	2	1	2
4	2	2	2
5	2	2	3
6	3	1	3
7	3	2	3

BRUTE GUARD

Double strength 2nd level wrecker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Massive club +7 vs. PD—10 damage

Natural even hit: ongoing 4 damage.

AC 18

PD 17 HP 70

MD 11

THIEVES

3rd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +7

Knives +8 vs. AC (2 attacks)—4 damage

R: Crossbow +8 vs. AC—10 damage

AC 18

PD 15 HP 40

MD 12

Vault Guard

2nd level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Club +7 vs. AC—7 damage

R: Crossbow +7 vs. AC—6 damage.

Shouted orders: Once per battle when a vault guard misses or is missed an ally gains +2 AC against the next attack.

AC 19

PD 15 HP 34

MD 12

THE HANDOFF

Back at the Dark Jester the Prince's man Samuel Dirrel eagerly accepts The Winter Seal, and cavalierly cracks it open on the floor. Inside is a map, which he pockets. The map looks like it is of the Necropolis. On his way out of the tavern he looks over his shoulder and says: "You can keep the statue, the Prince isn't interested in that tonight. He has more interesting plans."

GMs: let the players know that the adventurers realize that the Prince will have more jobs for them to do, their debt is far from discharged and they will be in Shadow Port a while longer.

Selling the broken statue will raise enough money to be split for 200 GP per adventurer, or it can be simply used as cash (it has sapphires set in silver in it) for 1d3x100 gp worth of goods.

WEARY HEADS

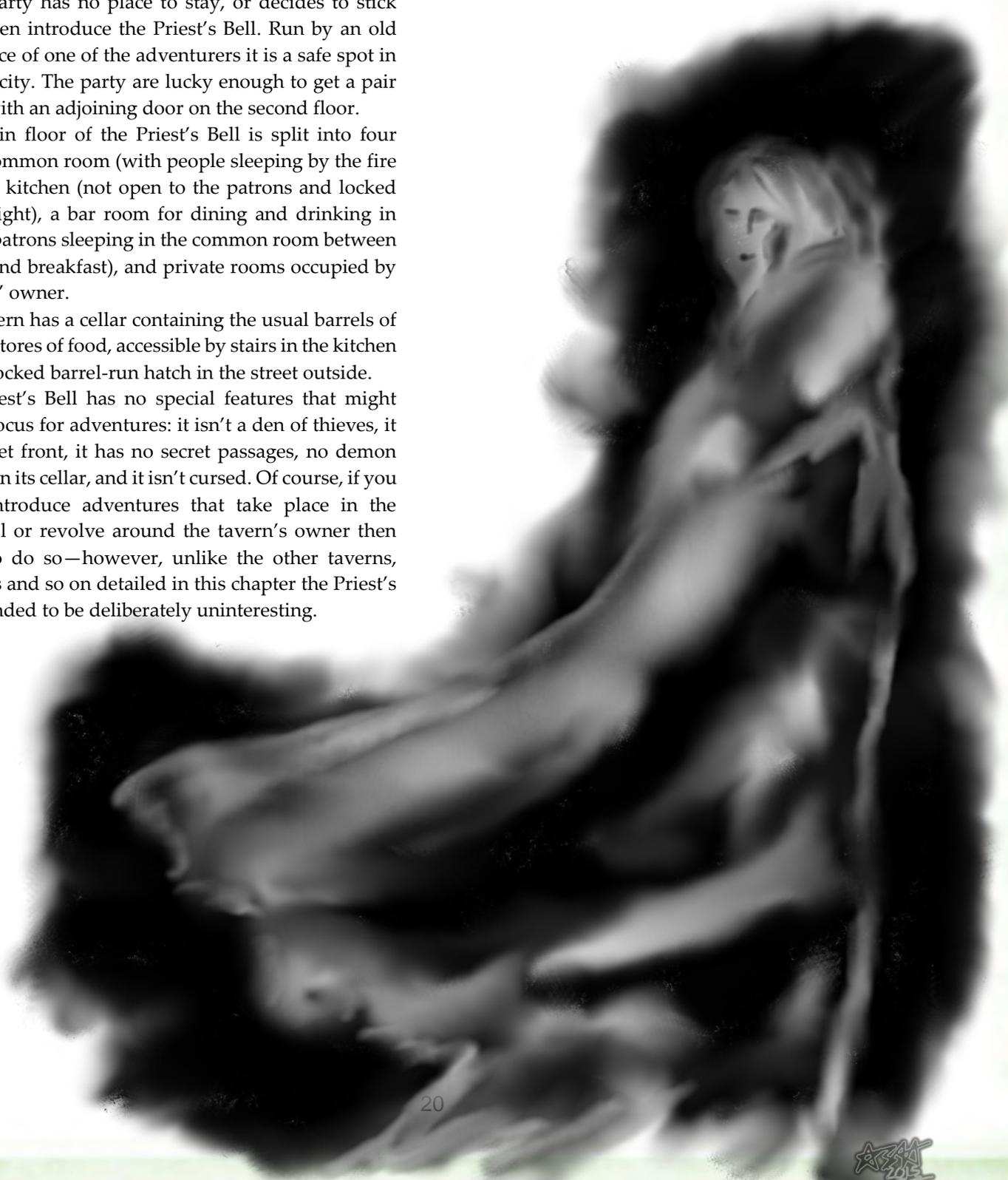
The adventurers will need to find a place to stay for the night. Maybe the adventurers have their own resources: the druid who sleeps in the form of a cat on a roof, the oozefolk who sleeps as a puddle, the rogue who has connections, the bard who knows somebody in the city already.

If the party has no place to stay, or decides to stick together then introduce the Priest's Bell. Run by an old acquaintance of one of the adventurers it is a safe spot in a troubled city. The party are lucky enough to get a pair of rooms with an adjoining door on the second floor.

The main floor of the Priest's Bell is split into four rooms: a common room (with people sleeping by the fire at night), a kitchen (not open to the patrons and locked after midnight), a bar room for dining and drinking in (closed to patrons sleeping in the common room between midnight and breakfast), and private rooms occupied by the taverns' owner.

The tavern has a cellar containing the usual barrels of drink and stores of food, accessible by stairs in the kitchen or from a locked barrel-run hatch in the street outside.

The Priest's Bell has no special features that might make it a focus for adventures: it isn't a den of thieves, it isn't a secret front, it has no secret passages, no demon cults meet in its cellar, and it isn't cursed. Of course, if you want to introduce adventures that take place in the Priest's Bell or revolve around the tavern's owner then feel free to do so—however, unlike the other taverns, pubs, dives and so on detailed in this chapter the Priest's Bell is intended to be deliberately uninteresting.



THIS PLACE GROWS ON YOU

OVERVIEW

With the first debt paid, the party must now proceed to pay off their next debt, by stealing an artifact from a strange cult of fungus-worshippers.

DAWN IN SHADOW PORT

Dawn breaks over the uneven skyline of Shadow Port, and the sounds of the city fill the adventurer's ears (and the smells their noses).

Go around the group and ask each player in turn what sounds the party hears, what they smell, and what it portends. Then turn to the next player and ask them how their character reacts to dawn in Shadow Port. Go around the group until each player has had a chance to help breathe life into Shadow Port, and each player has had a chance to react to the city.

If the adventurers chose to make the Priest's Bell their base of operations, mention some of the everyday Shadow Port folk who come into the inn for breakfast on their way to their places of employment. Shadow Port has more than just thieves and assassins and pirates: there are butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers, not to mention book-binders, grocers, cobblers, fishmongers, smiths, carpenters, and so on...

That morning during breakfast each adventurer in the party receives a trine coin with the mark of the Prince of Shadows defacing it, with instructions to give it to the doorman at the Pious Gardener, a tavern considered by elves to be home away from home. The coin could be given to them in change and the instructions hidden in their breakfast, or slipped in an envelope into their pocket, or even just handed to them openly by a messenger.

THE PIOUS GARDENER

Under the eaves of the Pious Gardner many a shady character has conducted their business away from prying eyes.

GMs: If anyone in the party is familiar with both elves and Shadow Port, or better yet is a local elf, feel free to have them add details to the Pious Gardener not mentioned here.

The adventurers are here to discover what the next favor the Prince wishes them to perform is, and maybe gain some insider information to help them with the caper. Everyone in the tavern knows not to meddle with

the affairs of others, so most patrons will quietly point the adventurers to the bartender and owner Kiel.

NOTABLE PIOUS GARDNER DENIZERS

Kiel Xu'bulon— An old, one-eyed dark elf with a thick accent. *"Ah, landlubbers headed out to meet Stormmaker, I see. Aye, I'm the owner of this fine establishment. What can I get ye?"*

Olan Longfeet— A halfling who is constantly grinning. He wears the symbol of the Diabolist.

Erelan Curse-eye— A lithe, middle-aged wood elf, whose left eye seemed to be pulsating with a disturbing red glow. *"I see that you're new here. Want to play a game of chance with me?"*

Reese Grodshank— A young human who is wearing the robes of a wizard's apprentice. He's at the farthest corner of the bar from the entrance, drinking away like there's no tomorrow. He talks with a bewildered stutter and is a nervous wreck. *"Th-th-the th-th-things I-I-I've s-s-seen... wh-wh-who are y-y-you? Did my master send you? You c-can't make me go back!"*

Aloy Goldbough— An elven trader looking to pick up some cheap silks from Horizon.

Eblis Starcircle— A wood elf, working in the city as a tanner. Today is his day off.

Cottis Merrybegotten— A half-elf spice-dealer, down on his luck due to some poor trades.

Silcen Grynwolde— A wood elf potter. She's here to relax and meet some friends.

Use this as an opportunity for role-playing, and for introducing citizens of Shadow Port who aren't cutthroats.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Nobody in the tavern is looking for a fight, the adventurers will really have to provoke one. Of course players being players we've put a fight in the back of the book just in case.

Even if a brawl should take place, once the adventurers leave the tavern (or are kicked out), they'll find the map and a note with a drawing of a dagger in the pockets of the adventurer with the lowest Wisdom (or in the case of a bar fight, the one who had the most patrons engaged with them).

Number of PCs	Gardener Patron	Named Patron
3	5	1
4	10	2
5	5	2
6	10	3
7	5	3

PIOUS GARDENER PATRON

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Drinking mugs and broken bottles +7 vs. AC—4 damage

AC 16

PD 14 HP 9 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one pious gardener patron mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

NAMED PATRON

4th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Broken bottles and barstools +10 vs. AC—10 damage

Natural 16+: The target moves down 1d3 points in initiative order, to a minimum of 1.

Natural even miss: 5 damage.

R: Barstool +8 vs. AC—10 damage

Named NPC Specials

R: Kiel's hook +10 vs. PD—12 damage.

Olan's Nasty Shiv +10 vs. PD—14 damage and 5 ongoing poison damage (limited use, one successful hit per battle).

Erelan's Haunting Glare +10 vs. MD—10 psychic damage

Natural even hit: Target becomes weakened until the end of its next turn.

C: Reese's Bloodstorm +10 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)—10 psychic damage

Natural 16+: Target becomes confused until the end of their next turn.

AC 21

PD 15 HP 48

MD 17

KIEL XU'BULON

Kiel welcomes the group and passes them a bottle of nectar wine on the house. The inside of the label on the bottle has a note in it, visible only once the bottle has been drunk from (which Kiel prompts them to do with a knowing look).

The note reads:

SACRED DAGGER

CULT OF THE SAND CRAB

DON'T DISAPOINT ME

...and is signed with the symbol of the Prince of Shadows.

Kiel has extra information for the group. There is a Cult of the Sand Crab in Shadow Port, which occasionally meets down by the docks in an old run-down warehouse. Kiel knows that the area is watched and guarded by armed cultists disguised as vagabonds. The Cult of the Sand Crab funds itself by selling hallucinogenic fungus, but apart from that the group is considered small-fry. Lately, however, the cult has been attracting more members and nobody knows why. Kiel has helpfully made the adventurers a map, outlining where they need to go. Kiel thinks that the dagger has ceremonial rather than magical importance, but it is very old and recognizable by the way that fungus grows more quickly near it. The Prince wants the dagger stolen and given to Kiel.

PREPARATION

The adventurers prepare to confront the cult and steal their sacred dagger. But how to go about that? The party can attempt a couple of the following things...

ASKING ABOUT

Use this if the adventurer try information gathering.

If the players prefer the traditional 'ask everyone, get as much information as possible, then prepare to enter the lair prepared', feel free to skip the *Breaking And Entering* section, and instead allow everyone to make DC 20 checks in the Pious Gardner to acquire information on the lair, then for each success they acquire, lower the DC to spot/avoid/disarm one trap in the *Into The Fetid Depths Of A Fungal Hell* by 5; failure results in misleading information that increases the DC to spot/avoid/disarm one trap by 5.

Limit the information-gathering to 1-2 questions per adventurer, as asking too many questions tends to make patrons very nervous (and slows the adventure down).

PREPARATION IS KEY

Use this section if the players decide that their adventurers are going to physically prepare.

Rather than have a long sequence that revolves around preparing, gathering supplies, etc have each adventurer roll a skill check against a background that they think might come in useful and record the result.

During the *Into The Fetid Depths Of A Fungal Hell* a player can replace a failed roll with the result that they rolled while preparing—of course the player must tell the story of how their prior preparation saved the day when they use the prior roll.

Each player gets one roll to prepare.

FOOLS RUSH IN WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

The guards are dressed as dock-workers and vagabonds, and surround the adventurers as they approach the cult lair.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers have forgone any preparation at all then they meet guards at the outside of the warehouse, otherwise skip this fight as the adventurers can choose to sneak past—unless the party chooses to initiate a fight instead of sneaking past.

Number of PCs	Infested Cultists	Cult Watchguard
3	5	1
4	5	2
5	5	3
6	5	4
7	5	5

INFESTED CULTIST

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Fungal fist (with poisoned spikes) +5 vs. AC—5 damage

C: Buzzing Chant +5 vs. MD—4 psychic damage

Natural 18+ hit or miss: The target is confused until the end of its next turn. Each target can only be confused once each battle.

AC 16

PD 11 HP 9 (mook)

MD 14

Mook: Kill one cultist mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

CULT WATCHGUARD

4th level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

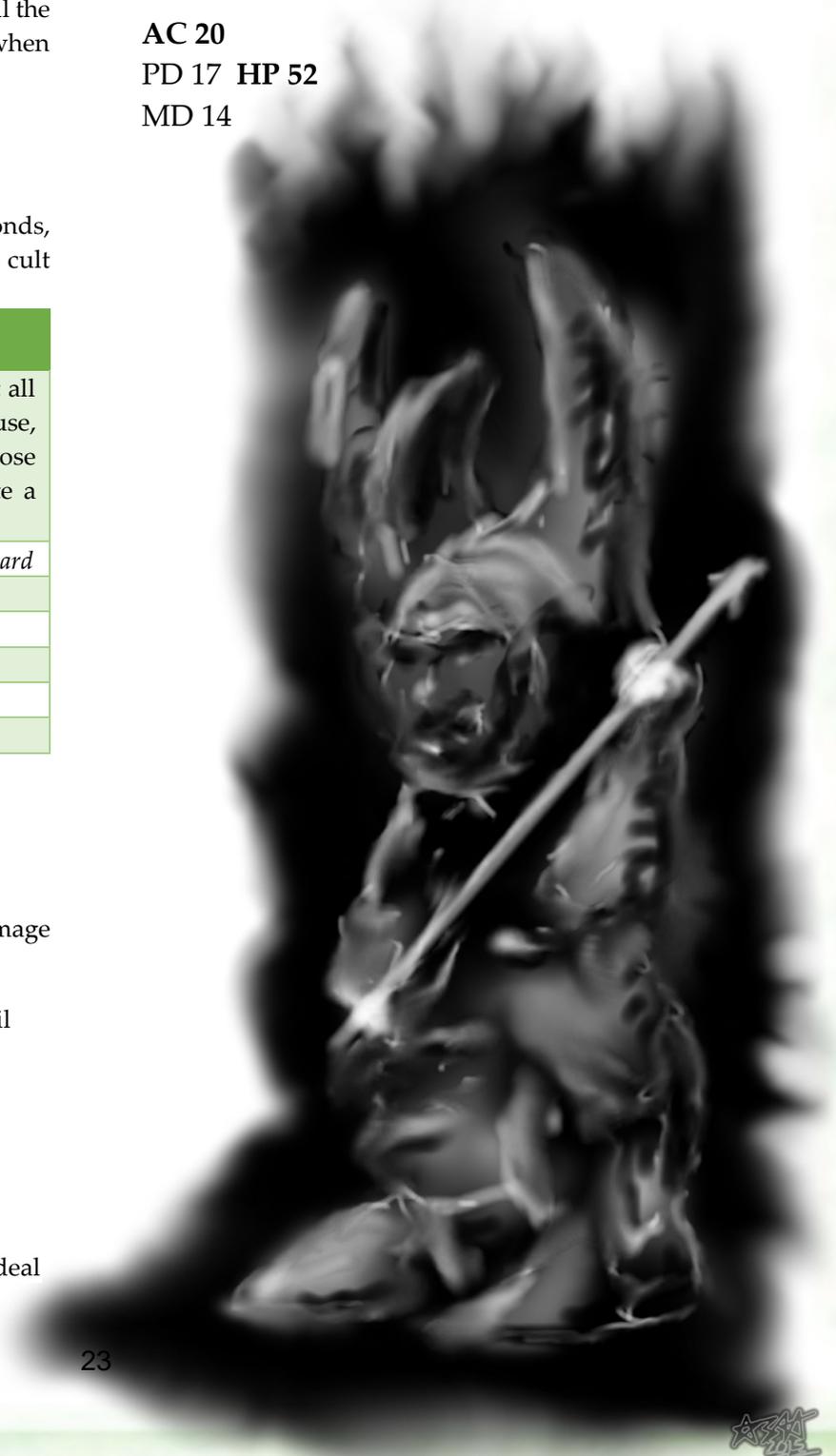
Spiked club (with poisoned spikes) +9 vs. AC—14 damage

Natural even hit or miss: Target is stunned until the end of their next turn. Each target can only be stunned once each battle.

AC 20

PD 17 HP 52

MD 14



INTO THE FETID DEPTHS OF A FUNGAL HELL

The adventurers have entered the old warehouse.

† TWYGZOGS

A playable fungal race (the twygzog) appear in the 13th Age Bestiary, and this caper involves worshipers of fungus. If a party member is a twygzog then this makes the trek into the fungus-infested cult lair almost a return to home: give twygzog PCs +5 to skill checks and saves in the cult lair.

GMs: Describe how the hideout changes from what looks to be a normal abandoned building on the outside to a nightmarish hell inside.

There are strange fungi growing all over the place, and an odd miasma permeates the air. Unidentified sounds come from deeper within. Throw the following traps at the adventurers, as appropriate, as they move through the rotted warehouse trying to find the dagger.

ROTTEN FLOORBOARDS

Difficulty to avoid:
DC 15

Drop +5 vs AC—2d6 damage, and a DC 20 check to avoid another trap or hazard that was on the floor that the adventurer fell down into.

HELLISH FUNGI

Difficulty to avoid:
DC 20

Dripping poison +10 vs PD against each party member—1d12 poison damage, and 5 ongoing poison damage at the start of their next battle.

ENLARGED MAGGOT SWARM

Difficulty to avoid:
DC 20

Bite and gnaw +10 vs PD against each party member—1d12 damage and 5 ongoing damage at the start of their next battle.

MADDENING NOISE

Difficulty to avoid:
DC 20

Psychic attack +10 vs MD against every party member—1d12 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage at the start of their next battle.

FUNGAL BLOOM

Difficulty to avoid:
DC 20

Choking spores +15 vs MD—The target is weakened at the start of their next battle (save ends).

FUNGAL TENTACLE

Difficulty to avoid:
DC 25

Lick lick lick +15 vs PD against every party member—2d8 damage and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage at the start of their next battle.

UNCLEAN SANCTUM

The fungus is thicker the further in the party goes, and biting sand fleas can be found everywhere. The smell of blood and decay is overpowering.

The adventurers enter the musty inner sanctum, and discover a strange altar with four grotesque mushroom-crab-being statues at its corners, each one has a bowl as part of its head. It looks like there is a mechanism attached to the bowls.

GMs: Normally a sacrifice is made so that as the blood flows into the bowls it triggers the mechanism. Once all four bowls are pushed down (by blood, or whatever the adventurers choose use as weight) the hidden door in the altar opens.

It is a DC 20 skill check to find the hidden door and DC 15 to bash it in. Using brute force will bring the cultists running.

Loot!

Not only does the real inner sanctum contain the sacred dagger, but also treasure. There is enough loot in the vault for each adventurer to get 100gp each. In addition, each player may roll their relationship dice with an icon of their choice. Any successes will determine the availability and nature of the magic items that they find in the vault.



CAUGHT RED-HANDED

As the adventurers finish with the vault, shambling fungal things arrive at the altar.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers supplied a blood sacrifice this is heralded by the blood on the altar transforming into thick clouds of buzzing red flies; the fungal things and cultists will be too busy inhaling the cloud of flies to bother the adventurers. If the fungal things arrive and there is no blood then the fungal things will attack the adventurers and feast on their blood.

Number of PCs	Infested Cultists	Fungal Things
3	5	1
4	5	2
5	5	3
6	5	4
7	5	5

INFESTED CULTIST

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Fungal fist (with poisoned spikes) +5 vs. AC—5 damage

C: Buzzing Chant +5 vs. MD—4 psychic damage

Natural 18+ hit or miss: The target is confused until the end of its next turn. Each target can only be confused once each battle.

AC 16

PD 11 HP 9 (mook)

MD 14

Mook: Kill one cultist mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

FUNGAL THING

4th level troop [PLANT]

Initiative: +9

Crab claws +8 vs. AC (2 attacks)—6 damage

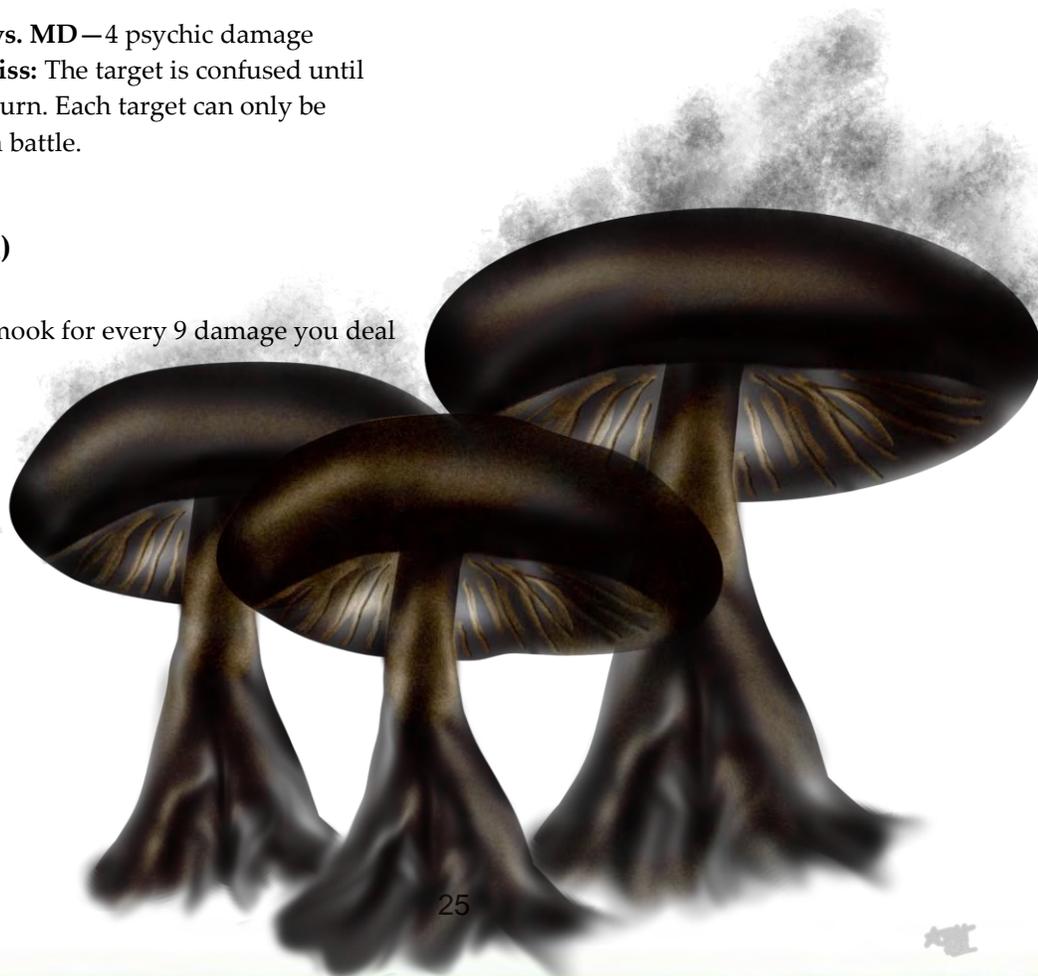
R: Psychic spores +9 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy)—15 psychic damage, and the target is confused (save ends); OR the target can choose to avoid the confusion effect by taking 6d6 psychic damage to clear their head...

C: Mycotic tendrils +9 vs. PD (2 nearby enemies engaged with the same creature or with each other)—one target makes an at-will melee attack against this power's other target (limited use: once per battle) as the tendrils drag the victims around.

AC 19

PD 14 HP 52

MD 18



THE CARNIVAL CAPER

OVERVIEW

The carnival is in town and all of Shadow Port is out on the streets. It is an ideal night to break in somewhere unobserved while the party is on. The Prince of Shadows wants the party to steal a legendary diamond.

INVITATION TO MISCHIEF

The adventurers have received an invitation to an exclusive tavern, with drinks and entertainment laid on by their benefactor. The location—the Crown and Gown.

TONIGHT AT THE CROWN AND GOWN INN

THE CROWN AND GOWN

The Crown and Gown occupies the very upper end of the public drinking establishment spectrum, any higher class and it would be a private club: the drinks are pricey, the food is good, and the music is always top-notch. The Crown and Gown is the place to be seen in Shadow Port if you are wealthy (or just want to be seen as such). There is a door charge to get in to the Crown and Gown (if you aren't on the door list), and a much higher charge to rent out one of the private suites that overlooks the dance floor.

ON THE LIST

The adventurers have found themselves 'on the list' thanks to their patron the Prince of Shadows and are shown into a private suite.

The suite is a room with sumptuously thick drapes that muffles sound from those below, and beyond the drapes is a balcony that overlooks the main floor of the tavern. A latticework surrounding the balcony allows those in the room to see out while obscuring them from the view of those not fabulously wealthy enough to afford such lavish accommodations. Through another set of thick curtains is a similar enclosed balcony that overlooks the street, where the Shadow Port carnival is currently passing by. The drinks are all paid for, the food comes for free with the room, and the adventurers can even request private entertainments (bards, jugglers, mimes) to be sent to their suite. Tell the players that it is obvious to them that this night out is a gift from their 'benefactor' the Prince of Shadows.

GMs: Go around the group and ask each player to give you a description of something that is happening outside on the street or down on the main floor of the tavern, then go on to the next player and ask them what crime they see happening while

everybody is distracted by the occurrence. This montage is an opportunity for players to add color to the world that their adventurers inhabit.

THE PRINCE'S NOTE

Just as the carnival hits high gear a note is delivered to the adventurers in their private suite, handed to them by a construct of animated shadow who vanishes as soon as it hands over the note.

The note is from the Prince of Shadows. It informs them that they are to steal a chunk of glowing rock (in full public view) from a specific float and bring it back to another private suite at the Crown and Gown. They have to bring it back to a tiefling called Shez-a-kah, who will be waiting for it upstairs at the Crown and Gown, but do so in a way they are not spotted or caught giving it to her.

The float in question can already be seen coming down the street, they had better act fast!

The hunk of glowing crystal is the fabled Darkskye Diamond, said to have once had the ability to bring flying islands crashing out of the air. It is normally heavily guarded in an impenetrable imperial vault guarded by mind-reading warlocks, hellish orbs of disintegration, and unsleeping un-bribable slime-constructs. This is the one night a year that the gemstone is in any way stealable, and they have just minutes to steal it!

GMs: Make it very clear to the players that this is a now-or-never situation.

THE CARNIVAL

The crowds are thick, there is a lot of noise, and there are fireworks going off. All that gives the adventurers plenty of cover for moving about unnoticed. However, there are hundreds of people on the street, which makes stealing a hunk of glowing crystal very difficult to go about unnoticed. Added to the problems facing the adventurers is the fact that they have barely minutes to plan their heist before their window of opportunity closes. Oh, and the diamond is a foot across and glows very brightly, so slipping quietly away with it tucked under a cloak isn't going to work.

Challenge (Only one shot at passing each one, one roll for success or failure. Don't let one or two PCs hog the limelight, let each PC handle at least one challenge each.)	Success	Failure
1. Get quickly through the crowd Throw money = DC 15 and 20 gp Threats of violence = DC 20 Amazing acrobatics = DC 25 Just ask nicely = DC 30	Proceed to the next challenge	See 'Problems with the crowd'
2. Avoid being recognized while committing the crime. Buy a mask = DC 15 and 10 gp Impromptu disguise = DC 15 Steal a jester's clothing = DC 20	Proceed to the next challenge	See 'Spotted'
3. Slow the float down Create a panic in the crowd = DC 15 Block the road somehow = DC 20 Bluff another float's horseman into stopping = DC 25	Proceed to the next challenge	The next challenge has DCs 5 higher than they would otherwise be.
4. Get close to the float Pushing and shoving = DC 15 Ducking and dodging = DC 20 Acrobatics / swashbuckling = DC 20 or 25 (GMs call)	Proceed to the next challenge	See 'Problems with the crowd'
5. Avoid a crossbow bolt from a rival thief on a rooftop Duck and weave = DC 15	Proceed to the next challenge	See 'Rivals'

Grab a gnome, instant shield! = DC 20 Notice the rival thief in time to find cover = DC 20 Snatch it out of the air and grin = DC 25		
6. Get past the guards marching alongside the float Slide and dodge = DC 15 Just run past = DC 20 Bluff "Just here to polish the huge diamond, don't mind us! Can't have a non-polished diamond." = DC 25	Proceed to the next challenge	See 'Guard fight'
7. Grab the diamond and run! Snatch it and run as fast and as far as you can = DC 15 Use magic to do the deed = DC 20 Hijack the float! = DC 25	Proceed to 'Back to the Crown and Gown'	See 'The Chase'

PROBLEMS WITH THE CROWD

Treat the crowd as a trapped area, only the traps are people.

Pick-pocket / mugger	Trampled	Food vendor's cart
<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Quick fingers +10 vs AC —Lose 15 GP or take 1d12 damage from a knife to the side	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Underfoot, over cobblestone +10 vs AC —1d8 damage as you are knocked down and trampled on.	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Spilled oil +15 vs AC —2d8 fire damage from an overturned pot of boiling oil

SPOTTED

Somebody has spotted an adventurer: maybe the adventurer owes them money, maybe they are an old friend, maybe an enemy. Whatever the case, this means trouble for the party. The acquaintance is gesturing in the party's direction while approaching, calling out the adventurers' name. The adventurer can expect complications down the line.

RIVALS

A rival group of ne'er-do-wells is after diamond, and the party has stumbled right into the middle of the heist: they had cunning disguises, daring rooftop getaway routes planned, and a buyer lined up for the huge gem—and now the adventurers have spoiled it all. The rivals decide to take some pot-shots. The rivals get off three shots with a crossbow against the adventurers. The player who triggered this event gets to pick who is targeted:

Crossbow with barbed bolts +7 vs AC—7 damage

Natural even hit: +5 difficulty to all skill rolls for the rest of the scene while stealing the diamond.

GUARD FIGHT

The guards have spotted the adventurers!

FIGHT!

You can use any mix of the two guard types here.

Number of PCs	Guards
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
7	8

IMPERIAL GUARD

2nd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Stout club +7 vs AC—7 damage

AC 18

PD 17 HP 34

MD 11

PSIÖNIC GUARDIAN

2nd level Troop [humanoid]

Initiative: +6

Fancy-looking staff +6 vs AC—4 damage

C: Cephalalgia +7 vs MD (1 nearby or far away enemy)—4 psychic damage and the target is weakened (save ends)

AC 18

PD 12 HP 32

MD 16

THE CHASE

The party has the gem, but have yet to make good their escape. Maybe you were followed, maybe the press of the crowd slowed you down, or maybe the fact that you are carrying a foot-wide brightly glowing magical diamond through Shadow Port means that a clean getaway was never really an option.

This is now a skill challenge. Each player in turn must narrate how they help to throw off pursuit and make an appropriate skill check using an appropriate background, with a DC as determined by the below chart. When a player succeeds move one place upwards on the chart, but a failure moves the group one place down. Start where the chart says 'Start...'

Each position on the chart has a listed consequence. When you move up or down on the chart the adventurer who made the roll takes the consequence listed in the new position on the chart. The chase ends when the player characters are cornered by the pursuing guards, or when they make good on their getaway.

End Getaway!	The adventurers have got away clean with the huge glowing diamond!
DC 25	You are almost home free! Just a few more twists and turns to get rid of your pursuers!
DC 20	Take 1d6 damage from skids, slips, and pulled muscles <i>or</i> go to 'cornered'.
Start DC 15	Take 2d6 force damage from the energy blazing from the diamond <i>or</i> go to 'cornered'.
DC 20	Take 3d6 psychic damage from the mind-blasts of the guardians of the priceless gem.
DC 25	Take 4d6 damage from crossbows fired by the pursuing guard <i>or</i> go to 'cornered'.
End Cornered!	Fight your pursuers (see <i>the Guard Fight</i> in <i>The Carnival</i> section).

BACK TO THE CROWN AND GOWN

The adventurers have made good their getaway, either by cunning and speed or by fighting through the guards.

However, the streets around the Crown and Gown are now crawling with guards sent up from Axis as extra security for the Darkskye Diamond. The guards were supposed to be on the scene during the carnival, but were bribed by Morgan Navale to help his guards look for The Winter Seal. Now that the treasure that they were supposed to be guarding has been stolen they are in trouble—if they return to Axis without the magical gem they will probably be sent to the gladiatorial arena!

The guards are detaining as many bystanders as possible, beating up anybody who looks shifty, and generally acting like people with their necks on the line; they are doing everything they can think of to find the mystical gem.

In this scene the adventurers must find some way to get the glowing diamond past the imperial guards and into the Crown and Gown where their mysterious contact is waiting for them. Remember that the diamond is very heavy, glows brightly, and is at least a foot across. The group must succeed on three skill checks to get into the inn and to the room, the DC is set by what they decide to do; DC 15 for something hard but not impossible, DC 20 for something that is risky if it goes wrong, and DC 25 for something that stands *almost* no chance of working. Reward cunning plans and daring-do with a +2 bonus to the roll, or a +4 bonus if it makes you laugh or is attempted with panache. Every failed roll raises the difficulty for the next roll by 5, and the player who made the failed roll gets to narrate why their failure makes things more difficult. If the whole group makes one roll each and doesn't accrue three successes then the guards have spotted the diamond and a fight ensues.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

The fight only occurs if the adventurers fail to pass the skill challenge listed above. You can use any mix of the two guard types here, but aim for a mix with at least one veteran guard.

Number of PCs	Guards
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
7	8

YOUNG IMPERIAL GUARD

2nd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Stout club +9 vs AC—5 damage

AC 18

PD 17 HP 34

MD 11

VETERAN GUARD

2nd level wrecker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Nightstick +7 vs. AC—7 damage

Natural 16+: The *veteran guard* can make a *savage beating* attack against the target or another creature engaged with it as a free action.

[Special trigger] **Savage beating +7 vs. AC—5 damage**, and the *veteran guard* can make a *kick 'em when they're down* attack against the target as a standard action during its next turn if it's engaged with that target.

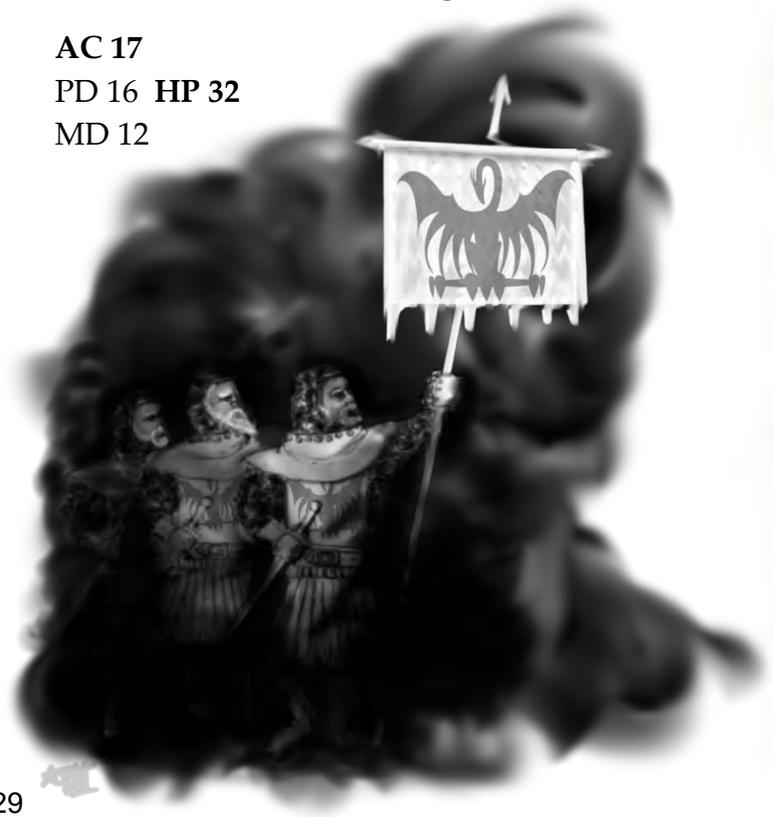
[Special trigger] **Kick 'em when they're down +9 vs. AC (3 attacks)—5 damage**

R: Crossbow +6 vs. AC—5 damage

AC 17

PD 16 HP 32

MD 12



MURDER ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Nothing worth doing is simple, and in this case doubly so. There is another group of adventurers waiting downstairs in the Crown and Gown, here to take the gem and deliver it to the Prince of Shadows—why should they do the work when they can just steal the glory.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers triggered the 'Spotted' event earlier then there are two extra hired thugs and one extra thief present who are hoping to return the gem for a reward. If the adventurers triggered the 'Rivals' event earlier then there are two extra hired thugs and one extra thief also present, hoping to steal the gem for themselves.

Number of PCs	Thief	Hired Thugs
3	4	5
4	5	5
5	6	5
6	7	5
7	8	5

Hired Thug

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Jagged knife +7 vs. AC—5 cold damage

AC 17

PD 15 HP 9 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one hired thug mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

Thief

2nd level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +7

Fist +7 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Automatic crossbow +7 vs. AC (1d3 attacks against up to 3 nearby enemies)—4 damage

AC 19

PD 17 HP 45

MD 12

The Payoff

With their enemies and rivals disposed of or chased away, the adventurers lug the diamond to the private suite of the person they are supposed to be meeting.

A tiefling by the name of Shez-a-kah unlocks the door for them and lets them into her private suite upstairs at the Crown and Gown. She thanks them for a job well done, asks for the Darkskye Diamond, and hands them their payment in a sealed envelope.

The black wax seal on the envelope has the Prince of Shadow's mark upon it; inside the envelope is a key and a note. The key is to a private suite at the Crown and Gown, and is in their name... *from now on they can drink here at the Crown and Gown for free!* The note contains instructions to go a drinking establishment called the Crimson Goddess to meet a Gnome woman named Brita Halfhand in one week's time.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

If the party decides to fight the tiefling or not hand over the Darkskye Diamond use the fight below, in which she will summon shadow creatures. As soon as the tiefling is staggered she'll teleport away with the gem.

Number of PCs	Shez-a-kah	Shadowling
3	1	1
4	1	2
5	1	3
6	1	4
7	1	5

SHEZ-A-KAH

The former dragon-hunter is still in good shape. She looks amused at the situation.

4th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Silverfang +10 vs. AC—15 fire damage

Natural even miss: Target takes 5 damage.

Hellish hooves +8 vs. AC—10 damage and the target is dazed (easy save ends).

R: Knife +9 vs. AC—8 damage

AC 20

PD 14 HP 54 (when she is reduced to half hit-points or less she teleports away with the gem.)

MD 18

SHADOWLING

These shadowy creatures each have one huge yellow eye in their heads. They obey their summoned... usually.

1st level troop [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +3

Dark fire +7 vs. AC—5 negative energy damage

Natural 16+: 5 ongoing fire damage.

AC 17

PD 11 HP 30

MD 15



THE KRAKEN

OVERVIEW

Three tasks for *The Prince of Shadows* have been completed. Three more yet remain before debts have been paid. This part of the adventure involves breaking somebody out of a prison.

SULTRY SHADOW PORT NIGHTS

Start the session with a montage scene. This is where the players tell you what happened to them after their last heist up to the point where they're contacted about their next debt-clearing task and allows for new characters to be introduced and included in the narrative. If the players get stuck prompt them with questions.

- *What corrupt officials did you have to bribe or blackmail and why?*
- *What criminal organization conflict did you see firsthand recently?*
- *Are there any interesting new rumors floating around the streets?*
- *Have there been any stories, true or otherwise, about your recent actions?*
- *Are there any people looking for you after your last tasks for the Prince?*

After each player has told the tale of what their character has been up to, turn to the player on their left and ask them what the wider repercussions of the first character's actions were in Shadow Port.

THE CRIMSON GODDESS

The Crimson Goddess is an inn which used to be a temple, but was refurbished in the last 50 years to be a place of business.

There are rumors of divine retribution and curses laid upon those who drink in the former temple, though no evidence of either exist. The red stone statue of a goddess tends to generate the worst of the rumors, it is said to be the avatar of a goddess herself. Magical pranksters occasionally animate the statue or cast an illusion to make it appear to move, further fueling the reputation of the tavern. Those who drink too much and regret it refer to it as the "Crimson Goddess' curse".

Even though it hasn't been a consecrated area for decades many people feel the need to act like they're in a temple while they're inside the Crimson Goddess tavern. The tavern tends to be almost unnaturally subdued inside with few fights, uncommon arguments, and little singing beyond whatever minstrel or storyteller might be in for the night. It's not a particularly luxurious establishment

either in terms of food and drink, but it's quiet and relatively safe which are both highly prized qualities in Shadow Port; it is a place for those who want to drink and eat and don't care to be interrupted.

The adventurers have come to the Crimson Goddess come to meet a Gnome woman named Brita Halfhand, a notorious thief and wizard who had apparently retired from a life of crime years ago after one last big job. Despite her retirement, she still commands respect in the Shadow Port underworld. The fact that such a notorious figure is running what amounts to an errand for the Prince of Shadows might be viewed ominously as a herald of how much trouble the players are in or as a light-hearted jaunt by a powerful figure looking to have fun.

DEWIZENS OF THE CRIMSON GODDESS

Should you need other NPCs to flesh out the environment or give players some roleplaying opportunities use some of the following:

Tailin Briarlance— An elven bard who sings upbeat and happy songs about depressing things like death and destruction. The other regulars keep their distance, thinking he's a bit... off.

Brownstone— A minotaur bouncer who is surprisingly polite, well spoken, and educated. He can still break someone in half and throw them out the front door, but he's quite apologetic about it.

Asuna Ragehammer— The dwarven bartender, known for switching from a bright and cheerful personality to a berserker rage in a heartbeat (and vice versa). Patrons fear her far far more than any of the bouncers.

Norman the Red— Norman was killed in a nasty fight the very first night the Crimson Goddess was open. His ghost still lurks about the place and is happy to talk about his life and subsequent afterlife. Norman is good friends with both Asuna and Brownstone.

Dworguld Goldstone— A dwarven cleric of Vo ("*May the inky tentacles of Vo bring you knowledge*").

Sam Bitterfoot— A half-elf-half-halfling sailor, looking for a quiet drink and a game of cards.

Alv Longleaf— An elven book-binder, reading a book and enjoying a glass of wine.

Sark Millman— A human mercenary, returned from Forge after fighting off an orc incursion.

Henry Brownbough— A half-elf mercenary, returned from Forge after fighting off an orc incursion.

Edgar Foley— A human mercenary, returned from Anvil after fighting off an orc incursion.

Zublona The Enigma— A human enchantress, returned from Anvil after fighting off an orc incursion.

THE JOB

Brita Halfhand brings news to the adventurers of their next target—this time it is not an object but a person. For years the half-orc Jont Urner was known as the Golden Blade. Jont was a master of gladiatorial combat, even fighting before The Emperor himself on several occasions. Several years ago Jont disappeared, leaving fans and enemies alike to believe that he'd either been killed by jealous opponents or was escaping his increasing fame. However, Jont Urner has been found in Shadow Port, languishing in the floating prison barge called The Kraken. The Prince wants him free, but has given no reason for this 'request'. Jont has a curious tattoo on his back—perhaps it is something to do with that?

The Kraken is a floating prison for two types of people: the first are criminals so bad and so distasteful that the various criminal organizations in Shadow Port (and even the rest of the Dragon Empire) have no objection to their incarceration, the second type of prisoner is someone who has managed to upset or anger somebody powerful. There are numerous tales of innocent people thrown into The Kraken for causing offence to the wrong person. The Kraken is guarded by golem-like constructs and only docks once per week to take on supplies for the prisoners and the few living crew, then it sails out to sea to make escape difficult.

BRANCHING ADVENTURE PATHS

There are several directions the adventurers could take, several branches to the story.

There are a number of different things the players can do to make their prison break go more smoothly and they can do them in any order, leading up to *The Kraken* section. Players shouldn't have to guess at what to do next, feel free to tell them that these options are obvious to their characters.

- If the adventurers decide to gather intelligence about the Kraken, use the: *Know your enemy* section.
- If the adventurers decide to find control words for the guardian constructs that guard the Kraken go to the *Construct password* section.
- If the adventurers want to create a distraction to make their escape easier, use the *Shuffle and scarper* section.

After they are done preparing, it is time for the adventurers to perform the prison break in *The Kraken* section.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Although there are plenty of rumors and supposed facts about The Kraken to be heard every night in the taverns of Shadow Port, the characters might want to get something more concrete than word of mouth. That means hitting the streets to buy rounds of ale, lean on snitches, and call in favors owed.

Go around the table and ask each player to describe a situation or problem the group runs into while collecting information and have them make a DC 15 skill check with an appropriate background to get through the situation and continue on their hunt for more information; if they fail, hit one of the characters with one of the following hazards:

MINOR BAR ROOM BRAWL	"A ROUND OF DRAGON ALE PLEASE BARKEEP!"	GANG OF MUGGERS OR CITY GUARD BRUTALITY
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> A good ruck +15 vs PD— 1d12 damage <i>(it is not really a 'fight' fight and not worth rolling initiative for).</i></p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Strong drink, weak stomach +10 vs PD—2d8 poison damage and the targets are weakened at the start of their next battle (easy save ends).</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Knife in a dark alley +15 vs AC—2d8 damage <i>(it is not really a 'fight' fight and not worth rolling initiative for).</i></p>

IF AT LEAST HALF OF THE ADVENTURERS SUCCEED AT THEIR TASKS

If the adventurers succeed then they've gleaned all the reliable information that they can about The Kraken. The living guards of the Kraken will not be looking for a raid and will be caught completely by surprise. The adventurers will get to add +2 to their Initiative when fighting their way onto the Kraken, and the Escalation Die will start at 1 instead of 0.

IF TWO THIRDS OF THE ADVENTURERS FAIL AT THEIR TASKS

If at least two thirds or more of the adventurers fail their rolls that means that word gets out about someone making a run on The Kraken, so there will be more guards and they will be more watchful; enemies will get a +4 bonus to Initiative.

CONSTRUCT PASSWORD

Everybody knows that the dwarven magewright Bella the Mad created the constructs that guard some of the vital city areas.

There have long been rumors that Bella had a coded book full of magical commands that would allow her to retake control over her constructs at any time. Nobody has ever found this code book but given that her constructs make up the majority of guards for the Kraken, it wouldn't hurt to look. Her tower workshop was abandoned and is now inhabited by several poor families, but that doesn't mean that nothing there is worth looking at. In fact a search of the building shows a false wall behind which is a set of stairs leading down to a hidden room in the basement. The wall was previously better hidden before the new residents remodeled.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Bella's secret laboratory contains: a glass vat with a glowing green liquid in the bottom of it (1d6+2 doses of healing potion), several partial bronze skeletons, a large casket full of odds and ends (stuffed giant rats, old rope, acid-stained white robes, a box of bent cutlery, a burlap sack of mostly broken glassware, half-melted tongs, screws, etc), a hovering jade chest (containing 2235 & 1/2 copper pieces), three ever-burning lanterns, a stone sarcophagus with notes and books upon it (and three magic items inside it), three jet-black pillars with strange 9th age carvings, a section of floor that looks like a trap that is stuck, wooden stairs with shelves of tools and jars of oddments underneath it, an interesting red stain, an air of impending doom, and a door that automatically locks adventurers inside. Oh, and a plethora of construct traps armed and waiting!

FIGHT!

Normally we'd just set traps as minor inconveniences, but this trapped room is a mechanical monster all by itself. Treat each part of the room as a separate monster. Everybody in the room is engaged with all traps.

Number of PCs	Scythes and Spikes	Spinning Pillars	Bolt Turret
3	1	2	1
4	1	2	2
5	2	2	2
6	2	3	2
7	2	3	3

It is a standard action and a DC 20 check (DC 15 for rogues) to 'daze' a trap until the end of its next turn, if all parts get dazed at once the room is disarmed.

SCYTHES AND SPIKES

Scythes, spikes, and other cutting and impaling instruments lash out from every wall, ceiling, floor, and decorative element of the room. Thankfully, they're made to do damage, not take it.

2nd level troop [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +10

Slash and stab +7 vs. AC—6 damage

Natural 16+ hit: Make a second slash and stab attack.

AC 16

PD 15 HP 40

MD 22

GROTESQUE STATUES

These statues pop out of hexagonal hatches in the floor to spray burning acid on intruders.

2nd level caster [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +8

Gout of Acid +6 vs. AC—5 damage

C: Acid Splash +6 vs. PD—8 acid damage, and until the end of the statues next turn, the target is vulnerable.

AC 17

PD 12 HP 34

MD 22

BOLT TURRET

These crossbows pop out from hatches in the ceiling. Not all of them work and some are unloaded... but enough of them firing at intruders at once gets the job done.

2nd level leader [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +3

C: Rusty bolts +6 vs. AC (1d3 nearby enemies)—3

damage and the target suffers a -2 penalty to their next attack

Natural 16+ hit: Target is dazed until the end of their next turn.

AC 18

PD 12 HP 36

MD 22

THE CODEBOOK

The real treasure here for the adventurers, at least as far as completing their task, is the codebook that Bella the Mad left behind. The problem is reading it. Go around the table and ask each player what their character does to help decipher the code book and learning its secrets, then have them roll on the appropriate background against a DC 20. If players are having some troubles thinking of ideas here are some prompts.

- The character may be able to dispel a subtle magical confusion effect on the book.
- The character may know some bit of history about Bella the Mad that gives them an insight.
- The character may recognize the obscure language the code book is written in.

If at least half of the adventurers succeed they gain an understanding of how one of the guardian golems on the Kraken work and may briefly subvert them and order them to attack their comrades (an adventurer may use a quick action to make one construct confused, easy save ends). If the party fails, they still gain some knowledge, but it's only enough to cause a construct to become dazed instead of confused. Normally non-organic constructs can't be dazed or confused, but this magical 'back door' as built into these guard constructs.

LOOT!

Use icon relationship rolls to determine the exact items to be found, using the location-specific items below. In addition there are three ever-burning lanterns (worth 200 GP each), a hovering jade chest (worth 500 GP), 1d6+2 adventurer tier healing potions, and 2235 & ½ copper pieces.

The abandoned laboratory of the mage-machinist still holds some treasures.

ALCHEMIST'S ROD

This wand contains compartments full of glowing liquids.

[Wand]

+1 to hit and damage with arcane spells and attacks (champion tier: +2).

(Recharge 18+): As a quick action you may transform briefly into an ooze-like humanoid. In this ooze-form you may move without provoking, slip under a door or through a similar tight space, and perform a reach trick. The transformation lasts until the start of your next turn.

Quirk: Keen experimenter.

DWARF-FORGED SHIELD

This shield is made of interlocking cogs and faintly glowing crystals. In combat the cogs turn, restoring life to the wielder.

Increase maximum hit points by +4 (champion: +10; epic: +25).

(Recharge 11+): When you make a basic melee attack, you may heal using a recovery.

Quirk: Craves the sound of ticking clockwork.

ORB OF FAR-SENDING

This dark orb warps the light that passes near it.

[Implement]

Bonus to attacks and damage with spells: +1 (adventurer); +2 (champion); +3 (epic, only when mounted on a staff).

Recharge 16+: Make an attack against a faraway target that you could normally only make against an engaged or nearby target. If dual-wielding orbs this becomes recharge 11+ (orbs like being with other orbs, though their bonuses do not stack).

Quirk: Voyeurism.

SHUFFLE AND SCARPER

Sometimes getting away clean is the hardest part of a caper. The adventurers can attempt to set up one or more distractions or contingencies ahead of time that will help ensure that they get away with the Golden Blade.

GMs: This is an opportunity for you to encourage player creativity at the table. One group might plan an escape across the rooftops while another group might hire a group of smugglers to be waiting with boats. Let the players plan and enable their ideas. Ask players to bring their Backgrounds and their One Unique Thing into play. When they start to throw solutions and thoughts around answer with positive answers: if the players start digging for a sneaky solution it will be a

sneaky solution that is best, if they move towards a social solution of some sort then move things in that direction. Unless the players' solutions are completely illogical or ridiculous, let the plan happen without any dice rolls so long as they have appropriate Backgrounds or One Unique Things.

If the players get stuck, here are some ideas for what their adventurers might do to distract pursuit or avoid attention...

- Hire smugglers to be ready ferry them away by boat.
- Set something on the nearby docks on fire as a distraction.
- Bribe a watch captain to look the other way and take his time responding.

If the players come up with entertaining ideas then they gain a +2 bonus on all background checks in the *On the run* section and you as GM should try to incorporate their plan into the story of their escape.

THE KRAKEN

The Kraken awaits, docked at one of the secluded piers often used for smuggling. The Kraken is taking on supplies late at night to avoid exactly the kind of caper that the characters are attempting to carry out.

FIGHTING START

Attacking the guards on the way in is an option. The fight will be noisy, but at least the adventurers will not have to deal with them on the way out.

FIGHT!

If the players completely succeeded in the previous encounter revolving around passwords then as a quick action they may give one construct an order to attack its comrades. This construct then takes 3d6 damage and may not again be ordered to attack its allies again in this battle. If the players did not completely succeed, they instead cause one construct to be dazed for until the end of its next turn.

GMs: Remind players that their characters do not have to kill if they don't want to. Personally I don't mind killing guards, but Rob objects. When monsters drop to 0 hp, it usually means they've been slain, unless the characters' intent is to keep the monster alive and the attack seems like a potentially humane blow that could knock the monster unconscious instead. Some attacks, particularly when gruesomely narrated, don't feel like attacks that can leave the target unconscious, but we leave that mostly up to you and your group's sensibilities.

Number of PCs	Prison Guards	Bruiser Construct	Guardian Construct
3	2	1	1
4	2	1	2
5	2	2	2
6	3	2	2
7	3	2	3

PRISON GUARD

These guards are little more than thugs in uniform and they really enjoy their jobs

1st level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Truncheon: +6 vs AC—5 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The prison guard does 9 damage on the next successful hit.

Prison beating: When an attack against a prison guard is a natural 1, the Prison Guard may make two truncheon attacks against each enemy it is engaged with.

AC 17

PD 15 HP 27

MD 11

BRUISER CONSTRUCT

This hulking mass of steel and stone will keep peace in this prison, even if it means the peace of the grave.

3rd level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +4

Steel fist: +8 vs AC—10 damage. Any dazed enemy struck by a Steel Fist attack is stunned (save ends).

One More: When the escalation die is even, make 2 steel fist attacks that round.

Counterstrike: Any enemy who hits the Bruiser Construct with a melee attack takes 8 damage.

Immunity: These constructs can not be confused, dazed, or stunned.

AC 19

PD 18 HP 45

MD 11

GUARDIAN CONSTRUCT

This humanoid construct crackles with electricity and stinks of ozone. It keeps unruly prisoners and intruders alike subdued.

2nd level caster [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative +6

Lightning punch: +7 vs AC—6 lightning damage

Natural even hit or miss: The construct may pop free.

R: Shockwave: +7 vs PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—3 thunder damage

Natural 16+ hit: Target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Immunity: These constructs can not be confused, dazed, or stunned.

AC 18

PD 17 HP 38

MD 11

SNEAKING ABOARD

It is a DC 20 task to sneak past the guards on the way in, but anybody sneaking aboard will find that the guards had almost finished loading supplies and are casting off—fighting the guards on the way out is the only way back off the ship.

If the party has broken Jont Urner out when they confront the guards, he'll be more than happy to help out with the fight. However, his long years of imprisonment have sapped his strength and stamina, so he limits himself to assisting the characters instead of attacking directly. Once per round Jont may grant one ally a +2 bonus to a roll and grant a different ally a reroll on a failed roll with -2 to the reroll. Any other freed prisoners will be too weak from poor food and lack of exercise to aid in a fight, or will simply dive into the water or run out onto the dock to escape.

ON THE RUN

There are three parts to any good heist; the adventurers have accomplished the first two by getting in and getting what they came for, but now they need to get away from the Kraken and duck into the shadows before taking Jont Urner aka 'the Golden Blade' back to the Crimson Goddess.

Go around the table, starting with the player to your left. Ask that player to describe how the guards or other rival interests attempt to capture the escaped prisoner.

Then go to the player on their right and ask them what their character does to get them past these pursuers, then they roll a skill check using an appropriate background against a DC 20 difficulty.

GMs: Remind the players of the +2 bonus from the Shuffle and scarper section if they did that task.

Repeat this until all the players have had a chance to both describe a problem and attempt to resolve one. If a player fails their Background roll, present the player with two of the following consequences and let them choose one.

- The character loses two recoveries as they fall through a rotten bridge, roof, or floor.
- Each party member must make a save (11+) or take 1d12 damage as they barrel through a game of dice with some rough customers in an alley.
- The character loses an important piece of equipment in their haste to climb over a wall.
- The character takes 1d8 damage as they run headlong into a fruit or vegetable cart and send produce everywhere, or dive through a glass window, or similar.
- Each party member must make a save (11+) or take 1d6 damage as they run loudly through a building and have all manner of unpleasant and painful things thrown at them by some of the residents.

IF AT LEAST HALF OF THE ADVENTURERS SUCCEED AT THEIR TASKS

If at least half the adventurers succeed rather than fail, the party gets away clean and arrives at the Crimson Goddess untouched and with nobody following them.

IF AT LEAST HALF OF THE ADVENTURERS FAIL AT THEIR TASKS

If the adventurers fail more than they succeed, they're cornered by a group of people (guards, thugs, slavers) who want to take the Golden Blade for themselves and the players are going to have to fight to defend him and escape.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Only use this fight if more than half the adventurers fail the skill check above.

Number of PCs	Thief Catcher	Rogue Guard	Goon
3	1	2	10
4	2	2	10
5	2	3	10
6	3	3	10
7	4	3	10

THIEF CATCHER

Dead, alive, peacefully, or in pieces, they always bring in their target.

2nd level spoiler [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Sword breaker +6 vs AC—7 damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to their next melee attack

R: Bolo strike +6 vs PD (1 nearby enemy)—6 damage and the target is stuck (save ends).

Surprise: If attacking a target that is engaged, add +3 to the damage done by bolo strike.

Sneaky: The Thief Catcher gains a +5 bonus to disengage checks.

AC 17

PD 17 HP 32

MD 13

GOON

They may not be tough, strong, or smart, but there are an awful lot of them.

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative +2

Savage swing +6 vs AC—3 damage

Coordinated beat-down: Goons gain a +1 to attack rolls for each goon engaged with the target, up to a maximum bonus of +4.

AC 17

PD 14 HP 7 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one goon mook for every 7 damage dealt to the mob.

ROGUE GUARD

Go ahead, make his day

2nd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Furious beat-down +6 vs AC—8 damage

Natural even hit: 4 damage each other enemy the guard is engaged with.

Oversized hand crossbow +7 vs AC—5 damage

Feeling lucky?: When staggered the Rogue Guard rolls 2d20 for attacks and may take the best roll.

AC 18

PD 17 HP 38

MD 10

THE HAND OFF

Regardless of whether the players have to fight their way there or not, Brita Halfhand is waiting at the Crimson Goddess for their arrival. She quickly whisks the Golden Blade away to a more secure location with a smile and a nod, but not before telling the characters that their debt has been erased by one more mark. Only a few jobs to go and they are clear of their obligation to the Prince of Shadows.



THE BIG JOB

OVERVIEW

The adventurers have just two favors to go before they are out from under. The Prince of Shadows has a desire to own a flying barge...

THE DRAKE AND DUCATTO

The adventurers are taking their ease at a tavern in the Tilgate Heights district of Shadow Port, in a tavern known as the Drake and Ducatto.

The Drake and Ducatto is famous in Shadowport for its overpriced drinks and proximity to a place known as the Cloud-Shrouded Tower. The empire maintains a fleet of sky barges, as does the elven Court of Stars—it is at the Cloud-Shrouded Tower that these barges dock in Shadow Port.

This night the sky barge Pride of Opals is docked at the tower, and the elves have disembarked to stretch their legs and seek refreshments at the busy Drake and Ducatto. Not only are the elves from the Pride of Opals here trying to order expensive wines, but the dwarven workers at the tower have just got paid and are monopolizing the dart board.

GMs: Go around the group and ask each player to give you a name and description of a nefarious Shadow Port low-life who happens to be at the Drake and Ducatto, then go on to the next player and ask them what crime the low-life has recently committed in another part of the empire and is now laying low from. This is not just a montage but also an opportunity for role-play as the adventurers get a chance to interact with the ne'er-do-wells that they have just peopled the world with.

Just as the adventurers are settling in for a well-deserved night of carousing and revelry the bar steward sends them over a free round of drinks. Tucked under one of the tankards is a letter from the Prince of Shadows (it is unmistakably his mark on the letter), the bar steward, naturally, denies any knowledge if pressed on the subject. The letter gives very specific instructions: Steal the Pride of Opals, land it in a very specific place in the Bitterwood, and hand it over to one of his agents who will be waiting there.

THE CLOUD-SHROUDED TOWER

The first step in stealing the Pride of Opals is going to be getting to it. It is moored high above the city at the top of the Cloud-Shrouded Tower. Thankfully the tower guards got paid early and are off drinking in the Drake and Ducatto (the adventurers probably have the Prince to

thank for that, or maybe it is just good luck). There are only a few guards left at the tower, but it does have other defenses. This is a skill challenge. Each adventurer must make one of the below skill checks. If they fail the check there is a consequence, if they succeed then the path to the sky barge will be that much easier.

Challenge	Success	Failure
<p>Challenge (Only one shot at passing each one, one roll for success or failure. Give everybody a shot at making a roll.)</p>		
<p>1. Get past the remaining tower guards Bribe the door guards = DC 15 and 20 gp Create a distraction = DC 20 Sneak past = DC 25 Intimidate the guards = DC 30</p>	Proceed to the next challenge	Fight the guards (see the <i>Tower Guards</i> fight)
<p>2. Pass the magical wards An adventurer has already bribed the off-duty guards for information about the wards = DC 15 and 10 gp An adventurer has already located and bought drinks for the wizard who set the wards in the first place = DC 20</p>	Proceed to the next challenge	Potentially set off the traps (see 'Magical Wards')
<p>3. Get past the heavy locked door Pick the lock = DC 15</p>	Proceed to the next challenge	Bashing the door down alerts the elves still on the ship and

Climb out the window and up one floor = DC 20 Kick it in quietly = DC 25		they come to investigate. (see <i>The Pride of Opals</i> fight)
4. Navigate the interior of the tower Use a dimmed lantern = DC 15 An adventurer has found the granddaughter of the woman who built the tower = DC 20 Fumble around in the dark = DC 20 or 25 (GMs call)	Proceed to the next challenge	Potentially set off the traps (see 'Tower Traps')
5. There is a gryphon nesting up here, it is on the path of the chosen sneaky route Sneak past = DC 20 Actually the adventurers noticed the tell-tale signs of claw marks on a high-up windowsill while casing the joint and bought some meat to throw to the gryphon = DC 25	Proceed to the next challenge	Fight the gryphon (see the <i>Young Gryphon</i>)
6. Some elves are wandering back from the tavern... Hide from the elves = DC 15 Knock them out = DC 20 Bluff "Tower inspectors, here to ..."	Proceed to the next challenge	The returning elves alert the elves still on the ship to the intruders. (see <i>The Pride of Opals</i> fight)

<i>inspect tower!" = DC 25</i>		
7. Sneak aboard the Pride of Opals Use magic to get on board = DC 15 Sneak past the guards = DC 20 Create distraction = DC 25	Proceed to the <i>Getting Under Way</i> section	The party's bumbling alerts the elves still on the ship. (see <i>The Pride of Opals</i> fight)

YOUNG GRYPHON

The adventurers have disturbed a nesting gryphon...

YOUNG GRYPHON

Large 5th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +9

Claw, claw, bite +10 vs AC—20 damage

Natural even hit or miss: Make a claw, claw, bite attack as a free action, as many times a round as it likes until it rolls an even or a 1.

Flight: Gryphons can fly, though not in tight enclosed spaces such as most rooms or among close standing trees.

AC 21

PD 19 HP 146

MD 14



FIGHTS! (OPTIONAL)

If fights occur here use the below fight. The guards from the tower can only fight the party once (after they have been killed or subdued and tied up they can't turn up again). Of course potentially the adventurers can sneak or bluff their way up the tower without any combat at all.

GMs: Remind players that their characters do not have to kill if they don't want to. Personally I don't mind killing dwarves, but Rob objects. When monsters drop to 0 hp, it usually means they've been slain, unless the characters' intent is to keep the monster alive and the attack seems like a potentially humane blow that could knock the monster unconscious instead. Some attacks, particularly when gruesomely narrated, don't feel like attacks that can leave the target unconscious, but we leave that mostly up to you and your group's sensibilities.

Number of PCs	Angry Dwarf	Surly Dwarf	Tower Guard
3	1	1	2
4	1	1	5
5	1	2	4
6	2	2	2
7	2	2	5

DWARF TOWER GUARD

"Come an 'ave a go if you fink yer 'ard enuff!"

3rd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Club +8 vs AC—6 damage

Dwarven toughness: Dwarves take half damage when the escalation die is odd.

AC 20

PD 16 HP 6 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one dwarf guard mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

ANGRY DWARF GUARD

"Oi! You! Stand still and fight!"

3rd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Axe +8 vs AC—10 damage

Natural even hit: If the escalation die is even its value lowered by 1.

Dwarven toughness: Dwarves take half damage when the escalation die is odd.

AC 20

PD 16 HP 45

MD 11

SURLY DWARF GUARD

"You are going nowhere, intruder!"

3rd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Hammer +8 vs AC—10 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The target cannot move away without provoking two hammer attacks, even if it pops free.

Dwarven toughness: Dwarves take half damage when the escalation die is odd.

AC 20

PD 16 HP 45

MD 11



MAGICAL WARDS

Screaming Eye	Lightning Barrier	Pain Orbs
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Mind-screech +10 vs MD—2d8 psychic damage and the target is weakened at the start of their next battle (easy save ends).</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Zap +15 vs PD—2d8 lightning damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Racked with pain +15 vs PD against each adventurer—Target loses a recovery</p>

TOWER TRAPS

Deadfall	Guillotine Stairs	Dart Trap
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Rocks from above +10 vs AC—2d8 damage.</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Ankle-slicing blade +15 vs AC against each adventurer—2d6 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Suddenly... darts! +15 vs AC—1d12 damage</p>

THE PRIDE OF OPALS

The sky barge is a simple ship, with the amazing ability to fly; it is a treasure of the elven Court of Stars. In past ages such things were much more common than they are now, so the elves are not going to leave their ship unguarded.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers have got this far without alerting the guards by starting a fight elsewhere start the escalation die at 2. You can use any mix of the two elves here, both Elven Guards and Elven Mages.

Number of PCs	Elves
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
7	8

ELVEN GUARD

"For the Queen!"

2nd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Longsword +6 vs AC—7 damage

R: Bow +8 vs AC—7 damage

AC 18

PD 16 HP 36

MD 12

ELVEN MAGE

"By the hidden light I curse thee!"

2nd level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

C: Caustic ray +10 vs PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—7 acid damage

Miss: The mage teleports and one other elf can disengage or move for free.

AC 18

PD 15 HP 25

MD 13

GETTING UNDERWAY

The adventurers are aboard the ship, having either snuck past the guards or fought their way past them. Nobody is aboard the Pride of Opals—the ship is tethered by ropes, and cutting them and floating away from the tower takes just moments.

As the ship floats off and the tower recedes into the distance the adventurers see more guards rush the roof, but far too late to stop them. With the guards are impressive looking storm witches, and they fly and teleport aboard in order to try to prevent the theft.

FIGHT!

You can use a mix of the two witch types in this fight. GMs: Remind players that their characters do not have to kill if they don't want to. Personally I don't mind killing elves, but Rob objects. When monsters drop to 0 hp, it usually means they've been slain, unless the characters' intent is to keep the monster alive and the attack seems like a potentially humane blow that could knock the monster unconscious instead. Some attacks, particularly when gruesomely narrated, don't feel like attacks that can leave the target unconscious, but we leave that mostly up to you and your group's sensibilities.

Number of PCs	Storm Witches*	Rain Elementals
3	1	10
4	2	15
5	3	20
6	4	25
7	5	30

STORM WITCH (THUNDER)

3rd level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Thunder fist +8 vs. PD—8 thunder damage

Natural even hit: an extra 4 lightning damage.

C: Spray of hail +8 vs. AC (1d3 nearby enemies)—6 damage and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn

Skywalk: The storm witch can fly in the form of a dark cloud. This movement cannot be intercepted.

Storm shield: Instead of moving, a storm witch can use a move-equivalent action to shield another storm witch until the end of the round. The shielded witch gains +2 AC and pops free if she is hit.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 45

MD 12

STORM WITCH (LIGHTNING)

3rd level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Copper staff +8 vs. AC—10 lightning damage

Natural even hit: the target teleports to another nearby part of the ship of the witch's choosing.

Natural odd hit: the witch may teleport to any point nearby or far away.

R: Lightning strike +8 vs. AC—5 ongoing lightning damage, and the character's hair stands up on end as sparks fly from anything metal near them.

Raging storm: Instead of attacking, the storm witch can summon a powerful localized storm as a standard action. Adventurers who attempt to disengage or who move during the storm become vulnerable to all damage until the start of their next turn.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 45

MD 12

RAIN ELEMENTAL

2nd level mook [ELEMENTAL]

Initiative: +7

Chill touch +7 vs. PD—5 cold damage

AC 18

PD 16 HP 9 (mook)

MD 12

Mook: Kill one rain elemental mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

BEATING WINGS

The flying ship is hard to control, but thankfully the Bitterwood is a hard target to miss: just keep heading north from Shadow Port and you'll get there.

Just as all seems to be going rather too well the sky is blotted out by a dark shadow. A flight of elven eagle-riders are heading in from the eastern sky to recapture the ship. The adventurers have a chance to shake them off their trail them by flying through cloud, but can they do it? Each player must narrate how their character helps, and make a DC 20 roll using an appropriate background.

Every success eliminates one eagle-rider from the upcoming battle.

FIGHT!

You may mix the types of eagle-rider as you like. Eagle riders who are defeated fall off their mounts into the Midland Sea, with a scream that fades as they drop from sight—the riderless bird will swoop after its rider and leave the fight.

GMs: Remind players that their characters do not have to kill if they don't want to. Personally I don't mind killing elves, but Rob objects. When monsters drop to 0 hp, it usually means they've been slain, unless the characters' intent is to keep the monster alive and the attack seems like a potentially humane blow that could knock the monster unconscious instead. Some attacks, particularly when gruesomely narrated, don't feel like attacks that can leave the target unconscious, but we leave that mostly up to you and your group's sensibilities.

Number of PCs	Eagle Riders*
3	5
4	6
5	7
6	8
7	9

EAGLE-RIDER LANCER

3rd level Troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Lance +7 vs AC—10 damage

Natural odd hit: The eagle's claws do 5 damage as it swoops past.

Flight: Flies like an angry eagle.

AC 23

PD 16 HP 32

MD 11

EAGLE-RIDER ARCHER

3rd level Archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

R: Short-bow +8 vs AC (1d3 enemies)—5 damage

Flight: Flies like an angry eagle.

AC 18

PD 18 HP 40

MD 10

EAGLE-RIDER SKIRMISHER

3rd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Twin short swords +7 vs AC (1d3 nearby enemies)—5 damage

Natural odd hit: The eagle's claws do 5 damage as it swoops past.

Flight: Flies like an angry eagle.

AC 19

PD 16 HP 50

MD 11

THE HONOR OF THIEVES

Grasping the control wheel the adventurers steer the sky barge towards the Bitterwood. As they get close they realize that the Pride of Opals is starting to become sluggish in its responses, though it will be hard to say why without careful examination (on the ground). At this point even if the adventurers attempted to steal it for themselves they wouldn't get far.

Down below in the Bitterwood several pyres are burning, beacons lighting the ship's way towards a clearing... which is fortunate as the sky barge is rapidly descending toward the dark forest.

After an ungentle landing the adventurers are met by a dark cloaked figure, it walks forward and speaks to them in a whisper that carries on the night wind.

"My master the Prince of Shadows thanks you for your service. The Prince graciously gifts you this large bag of emeralds."

The Prince's messenger tosses the bag to the party and disappears with a swirl of its cloak. The emeralds scatter on the ground (there are 10d20x10 gp worth of emeralds).

As the adventurers move toward the emeralds, kobolds begin to swarm out of the woods...

ESCAPE TO DARKSKYE

OVERVIEW

When last we saw them the adventurers were facing kobolds, having landed a flying ship in the woods.

KOBOLD ATTACK

Most of the kobolds move over to the grounded flying ship and start fighting among themselves as to who should get to fly it. However, a few of the bolder and greedier kobolds look at the adventurers and attack the party!

FIGHT!

When the escalation die reaches 2 the shadowy figure from last session joins the party.

Rather than track the shadowy stranger's part of the fight whenever an adventurer kills a non-mook kobold, the stranger also kills a kobold.

Number of PCs	Kobold Warrior	Kobold Archer
3	3	10
4	4	10
5	6	10
6	7	10
7	9	10

After the fight the stranger urges the adventurers to flee with them into the woods away from the kobold encampment.

KOBOLD WARRIOR

1st level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Spear +8 vs. AC—4 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The kobold warrior can pop free from the target.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Not brave: Kobold warriors with single-digit hit-points will run away the first chance they get.

AC 18

PD 15 HP 22

MD 12

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

THE BITTERWOOD

The shadowy stranger runs with the party into the woods, as the kobolds swarming over the flying ship notice that the party has defeated those sent to deal with them.

The stranger whispers to the adventurers that they will try to lead the kobolds away while the party circles back to the flying ship.

This is now a skill challenge. Each player in turn must narrate how they help to throw off pursuit while circling back around to the Pride of Opals and make an appropriate skill check using an appropriate background, with a DC as determined by the below chart. When a player succeeds move one place upwards on the chart, but a failure moves the group one place down. Start where the chart says 'Start...'

End Getaway!	The adventurers have got away clean and are at the flying ship (see the <i>burning pages</i> section).
DC 20	Take 1d6 damage from skids, slips, and pulled muscles.
Start DC 15	Take 2d6 damage from running into trees in the dark.
DC 20	Take 3d6 damage from a barbed kobold spear flung at the party.
End Cornered!	Fight the kobolds (see <i>kobold pursuers</i>).

Each position on the chart has a listed consequence. When you move up or down on the chart the adventurer

who made the roll takes the consequence listed in the new position on the chart. The chase ends when the player characters are cornered by the pursuing guards, or when they make good on their getaway.

KOBOLD PURSUERS

If the adventurers successfully evaded the kobolds skip this section.

The party has run right into the kobolds that the shadowy stranger was leading away from the Pride of Opals, or have failed to keep ahead of the kobolds chasing them in the dark.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers successfully evaded the kobolds skip this fight. There are a lot of mooks in this fight (20), so don't be afraid to use them in waves.

Number of PCs	Kobold Archer	Kobold Hero	Kobold Grand Wizard
3	10	1	10
4	10	2	10
5	10	3	10
6	10	4	10
7	10	5	10

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

KOBOLD HERO

2nd level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Shortsword +7 vs. AC—6 damage, and each nearby non-leader kobold deals +3 damage with its next attack this battle that hits

Natural even miss: 3 damage.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 34

MD 12

KOBOLD GRAND-WIZARD

"Beware my mighty power! Mighty power!"

0th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Static jolt +5 vs. AC—2 lightning damage

R: Painful liver inversion hex +7 vs. PD—4 poison damage, or 6 poison damage against dwarves

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 15

PD 13 HP 5 (mook)

MD 9

Mook: Kill one kobold grand-wizard mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

THE STRANGER EXPLAINS ALL

After the party has evaded pursuit or has killed the kobolds chasing them they meet up with the shadowy stranger.

WHO IS THIS SHADOWY FIGURE?

I've left the figure free of description, because this is an ideal opportunity for a new player character to join the party. However, if you don't have a new player character starting at this point then the shadowy mysterious character is a heavily scarred human woman in her 50s.

The shadowy stranger explains that the Prince of Shadows has been betrayed by one of his lieutenants called Shez-a-kah. Shez-a-kah has taken the Darkskye

diamond for herself and has taken it to a flying island of the same name.

Darkskye prison is a flying island that has been used for generations to imprison the empire's most dangerous criminals. The Darkskye Diamond originally came from a mine in the flying island, a mine that produces magical gems.

It was originally the Prince of Shadow's plan to use the Pride of Opals to transport the diamond to the prison and use it to control the flying island, capturing it as a base. However, Shez-a-kah has already taken the diamond there somehow, though she probably lacks the ability to control the flying island. The best that Shez-a-kah could do, so says the cloaked figure, is point the flying island at something and crash it. Shez-a-kah has a weapon to use against any city or icon that she chooses to attack.

Shez-a-kah is in league with kobolds, who she has sent to destroy the flying ship the Pride of Opals to stop the Prince of Shadows coming after her.

The shadowy stranger can get the Pride of Opals up and running, at least long enough to get the party close enough to the Darkskye Prison flying island for them to sneak onto it.

The shadowy stranger commands (*or threatens or begs, whichever will work to manipulate the party into doing the Prince's bidding*) the party to stop the traitor Shez-a-kah and bring the Darkskye Diamond back to the Prince of Shadows.

ESCAPE TO DARKSKYE

The shadowy stranger completes a ritual, and pilots the flying ship into the sky, heading toward a dark shape on the horizon that could only be a flying island.

GMs: Obviously the next part of the adventure relies upon the adventurers agreeing to go to the Darkskye Prison with the shadowy stranger. Of course if the party refuses you could always run a session where the party is captured and put on trial for their crimes... and of course they will be sent to the Darkskye Prison.



CHAPTER 3: WILD WOOD WOES

This section of the adventure is designed for 3rd level characters. 2nd level characters won't find the fights too taxing though, and with careful teamwork will be able to win the day.

Chapter 3 is split into three parts: the first part deals with the crash of the flying island, the second part deals with the adventurers trying to reach civilization, and the third is a good old fashioned hex crawl.

RECAP (THE STORY SO FAR)

The adventurers owe a debt to the Prince of Shadows. In order to repay their debt they performed crimes for him, one of which was stealing the Darkskye Diamond.

The Darkskye Diamond was in turn stolen from the Prince of Shadows, who asks that the adventurers steal it back.

The Darkskye Diamond has the power to control flying islands, and was originally mined from a flying island called Darkskye—an island that serves as a prison for the Dragon Empire's worst criminals. The person who stole the diamond from the Prince has taken the diamond to the flying Darkskye Prison.

The adventurers have used a stolen flying ship to get aboard the flying island and steal back the diamond...

DARKSKYE CRASHDOWN

OVERVIEW

The adventurers have infiltrated a flying island prison, attempting to locate a stolen magical diamond.

In this part of the adventure the party must contend with the flying island speeding out of control and crashing.

HERE ARE SOME FACTS ABOUT DARKSKYE...

- The flying island has a lake and several internal reservoirs of water, a small village atop it, and the prison cells built inside the mine itself.
- The crystals mined there used to be a source of mighty power, but nowadays they hardly glow at all. In recent generations Darkskye is also used to keep dangerous prisoners. The famed Darkskye Diamond came from the mines here (the very diamond that the adventurers are looking for).
- Dust from the crystals in the mine is a valuable substance, backstreet alchemists in Shadow Port pay well for it.

- Travel to and from the island is usually via a teleportation circle that shuts down in emergencies, but flying ships land here sometimes too.

STOWAWAYS

The adventurers have crept aboard Darkskye, the flying island prison, in the dead of night. They have abandoned their flying boat the Pride of Opals after it ran out of magical energy.

What do the characters do next? Do they stay hidden? Do they find somebody in charge? Do they look for a means of escape come daylight?

Go around the group and ask each player in turn what they do, and then turn to the player to their left and ask them the outcome of that. Anything can happen, the only proviso is that no character can get hurt, get off the island, or change its course. If a player suggests an outcome that involves one of the above three things narrate how the outcome doesn't quite come to pass, and ask the player whose outcome you modified to suggest ways that the modified outcome affects the guards and prisoners on the island.

THE CRASH

The adventurers notice that the island is speeding up and changing course. If the players cooperatively created NPCs during the montage then these characters will notice and comment on the unusual speed and course change.

With a loud bang the whole flying island shudders and begins to spin crazily!

As the flying island lurches out of the sky the ground tilts and whirls far below. Cracks appear in internal corridors. The magical barriers holding prisoners sparkle then explode. Pure magic is radiating outwards from the heart of the island.

Go around the table and ask each player to describe a danger that their character must dodge or avoid, and have them make a DC 15 skill check appropriate to avoiding the danger. If they fail throw one of the following at that player *and* the player to their right.

SUDDEN CHASM	FALLING MASONRY	BURST OF WILD MAGIC
<p>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</p> <p>Sudden drop, painful stop +5 vs PD—2d6 damage</p>	<p>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</p> <p>Bricks +10 vs AC—3d6 damage</p>	<p>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</p> <p>Wild magic +10 vs MD—1d10 psychic damage</p>

Here are some things the characters might witness as they try to find safety...

- A beam of magic hits a running figure at the end of the corridor. They see the figure explode, and fiery worms emerge from its body.
- A prisoner is trapped beneath a fallen block of stone. Before they can react the prisoner, the block, and the room the prisoner is in fall off the island and go tumbling out of sight into the blue sky.
- The lake at the top of the island has burst its banks and rushes down corridors with force enough to tear doors off hinges and break through stone walls.
- A guard is on fire! As he staggers around the island lurches and he is impaled on a torch sconce.
- A corridor they are about to rush down is hit by a surge of magic. Crystals grow out of the walls, blocking their passage.
- The island tumbles end-over-end. Everybody is hurled about and most now navigate the island with it upside-down.
- The characters are near an outer window and can see the ground approaching, but the air blasting through is so extreme in force they cannot keep their feet or approach closer.

Eventually the characters end up in the mine deep in the island itself (they either fled there or the crumbling flying island collapsed in such a way as they end up in the mine). The island is shedding rock and falling apart still but it is no longer falling, though it occasionally shifts or rolls.

The walls of the mines glitter with green crystals, crystals which pulse with wild magic.

LOOT!

During the crash, either in this scene or another introduce locked chests or treasure rooms which have been busted open by the crash or by rioting prisoners. Inside the chest or room is a magic item. See the magic items section for possible magic items. Have players make icon relationship rolls to discover which icon the item is related to.

Be generous here. Everybody gets something, even if it is just a potion or a rune.

THE HALL OF CRYSTALS

GMs: Describe to the players how their characters find themselves together deep in the crystalline mines, battered and bruised. A breeze blows in through a crack in the wall, and as the remains of the island slowly rotate they can see the forest out of a crack in the wall. The magical barrier that stops prisoners from escaping is intact - crackling across the gap through which the Wild Wood can be seen.

Outside the island crystals and glowing chunks of rock are raining down from the sky, flattening the forest for miles around.

Let the players know that it is obvious to their characters that:

- The flying island is unsafe to remain on or in, or indeed near.
- The glowing crystals are unhealthy to be around. They need to get out of this place *now*.
- If they want to get out they need to find one of the mystic keys that will lower the barrier around the flying island.

From around a corner of the crystal-lined tunnel comes the sounds of hoots and howls. It is a group of prisoners and guards, wounded and with their clothes in tatters. They have oddly glowing eyes and are all carrying mining tools. They halt when they spot the party.

GMs: Describe the scene invoking a sense that you haven't used yet.

- *"You can taste grit in your mouth, and dust clogs your nostrils. The approaching figures are kicking up a cloud of crystalline dust as they walk. In fact it seems to accompany them."*
- *"You can hear the heartbeats of the former guards and prisoners, even from a distance. They are beating in unison."*

- “You feel something in your eyes. The crystal dust down here is thick in the air, giving everything a shimmering glow.”
- “You smell feverish sweat pouring from the former guards and prisoners. The smell of madness, sickness, and death.”

The guards and prisoners have been poisoned by the magical dust liberated from the mines by the ongoing disaster. For centuries the magic of the mines held the flying island aloft. Now that the island is falling the magic of the crystals is running rampant, burning brightly as it warps and destroys! The guards and prisoners share a coalescing group mind, slowly losing their individuality and becoming monstrous and violent towards those not part of their nascent gestalt.

There are several ways the players can approach this.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

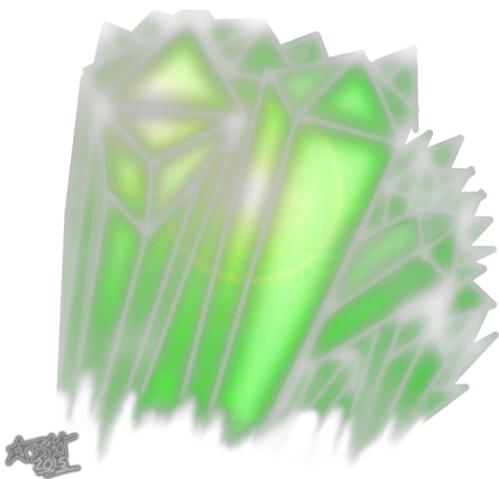
The adventurers have the option of avoiding the fight through cunning or guile (and some skill checks).

Fight: If the adventurers initiate the fight without warning it catches the guards and prisoners unawares—start the escalation die at 1.

Flight: If the adventurers run the prisoners and guards will chase them and a fight will ensue.

Diplomacy: If the group can make two DC 20 skill checks (using any applicable backgrounds) then the guards and prisoners will let the party past them. If not a fight will ensue.

Number of PCs	Infected Brute	Mutating Infected
3	2	3
4	3	2
5	3	5
6	3	8
7	4	7



INFECTED BRUTE

This lumbering monster was once just like you. Now it is infected with life-warping crystals.

3rd level wrecker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Big fists +8 vs. AC—12 damage

Miss: Half damage.

Frenzied attack +8 vs. AC (each enemy engaged with the brute)—5 damage, and the target pops free from the brute.

Quick use: This power only requires a quick action (once per round) instead of a standard action when the escalation die is even.

AC 19

PD 16 HP 40

MD 12

MUTATING INFECTED

The crystals under its skin glow, lighting its up from the inside. Its bones twist as you watch.

3rd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Rock hammer +8 vs. AC—6 damage

[special] At the end of any turn where a mutating infected dies all surviving mutating infected gain a random benefit. An infecting mutated can only have one benefit at a time.

1. Magically enhanced speed. All mutating infected may move as a quick action on their next turn.
2. Crystalline growths. All mutating infected do 3 miss damage on their next turn.
3. Crystal dust breath. The mooks breath out clouds of crystalline dust, obscuring them and granting them +2 to their defences until their next turn. This bonus is not cumulative with itself or other bonuses.
4. One mook out of the remaining mooks begins to shake and mutate and runs away from the battle (it pops free and flees, leaving the battle).

AC 18

PD 16 HP 10 (mook)

MD 12

Mook: Kill one mutating infected mook for every 10 damage you deal to the mob.

COMPLICATIONS!

During the fight feel free to make things tougher by throwing in complications like:

- The crystals flare with a light so bright that it hurts to look at it.
- The ground shifts unexpectedly, tiny rocks roll about on the ground.
- The tunnel starts to crumble and crack, dust filling the mine as the island continues to shake itself apart.

These complications give whichever adventurer acts first in the round a penalty. Roll a d4:

1. Hampered until the end of their turn.
2. Dazed until the end of their turn.
3. 3 damage.
4. 4 damage.

THE CRYSTALLINE GOLEM

Realizing that the flying island is going to be their tomb if they don't get out the adventurers must leap to the forest below.

After searching for a safe way out of the island the party spots a patch of green—a tree is sticking through a hole in the outside of the island. It won't be there for long, the wreck of the flying island prison is constantly shifting and turning and at any moment it might drift away leaving the party many hundreds of feet above solid ground.

The tree is entangled with a crystal outcropping. As the adventurers approach the tree the crystals in the room come to life!

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

If everybody fights:

Use the fight below as-is.

Everybody tries to escape at once:

If the whole party decides to rush around the living crystal monster and get into the tree-tops they will each take 3d10 damage as the crystal monster throws rocks at them and they fall/throw themselves into the treetops. This means that nobody is fighting the golem.

Some fight, while some escape:

Some of the party could climb out onto the tree if others stay to fight the golem. It takes one round for a single adventurer to climb out of danger, during which time the rest of the party still in the flying island must

face the crystal monster. Those who have climbed out are too far away to help fight the crystal golem.

Number of PCs	Crystalline Golem	Crystallings
3	1	0
4	1	10
5	1	20
6	1	30
7	1	40

CRYSTALLINE GOLEM

It rises out of the living rock, a quick-moving conger of amethyst.

6th level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerability: thunder

Amethyst hammer fists +11 vs. AC (2 attacks) —8 damage

First natural even hit or miss each turn: Roll another amethyst hammer fists attack.

Crystalline Storm +11 vs. PD (2d3 nearby enemies) —10 damage

Miss: Half damage.

[recharge] Crystalline storm can only be used when the escalation die is odd.

AC 21

PD 20 HP 90

MD 16

CRYSTALLING

This monster is hardly more than a sketch of a humanoid figure made of fragile floating crystals. The crystals are sharp though, flesh-flaying sharp.

0th level mook [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +3

Vulnerability: thunder

Amethyst shards +5 vs. AC —3 damage

AC 16

PD 09 HP 5 (mook)

MD 14

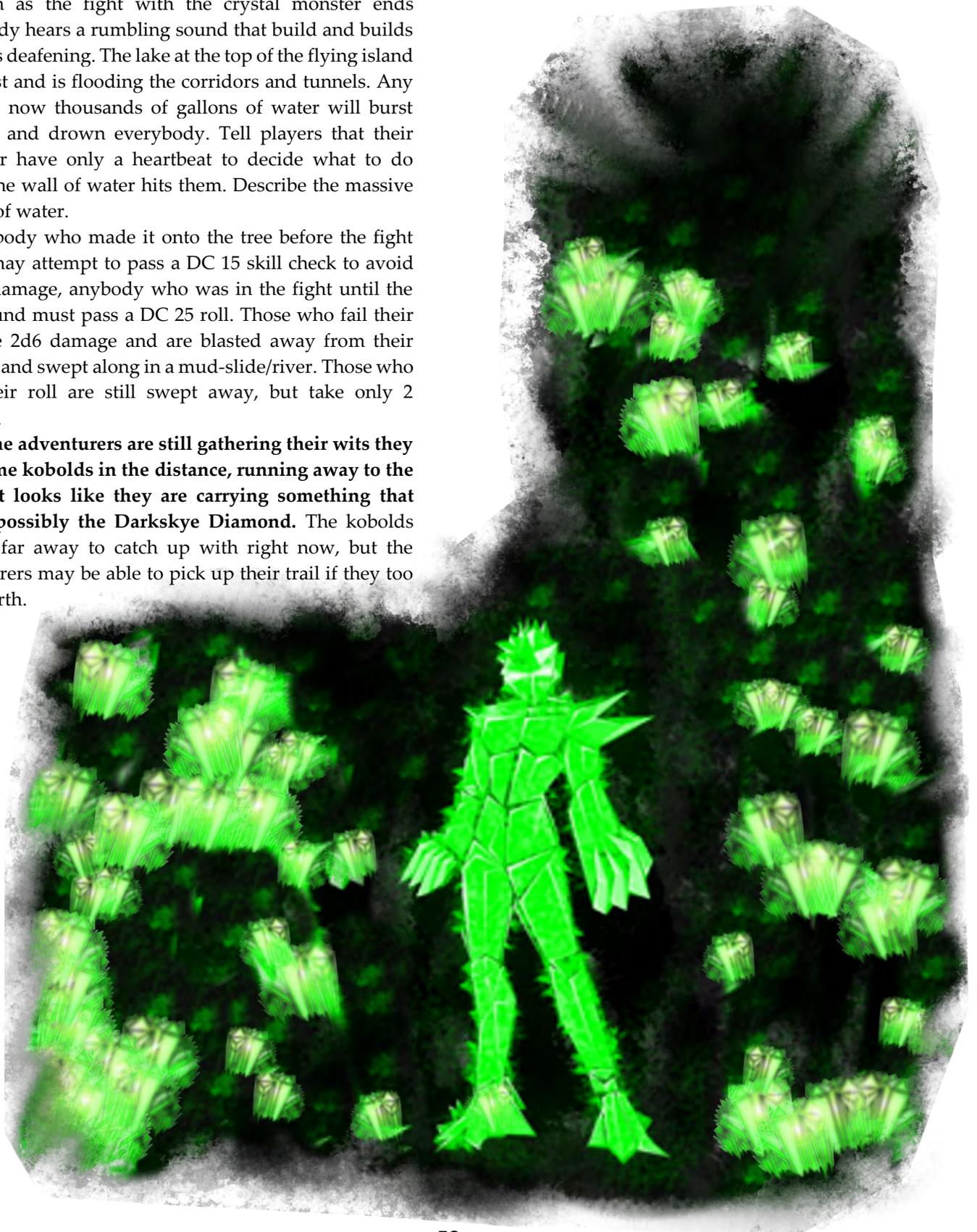
Mook: Kill one crystallizing mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

WATERFALL

As soon as the fight with the crystal monster ends everybody hears a rumbling sound that build and builds until it is deafening. The lake at the top of the flying island has burst and is flooding the corridors and tunnels. Any moment now thousands of gallons of water will burst through and drown everybody. Tell players that their character have only a heartbeat to decide what to do before the wall of water hits them. Describe the massive onrush of water.

Anybody who made it onto the tree before the fight ended may attempt to pass a DC 15 skill check to avoid taking damage, anybody who was in the fight until the final round must pass a DC 25 roll. Those who fail their roll take 2d6 damage and are blasted away from their location and swept along in a mud-slide/river. Those who pass their roll are still swept away, but take only 2 damage.

As the adventurers are still gathering their wits they spot some kobolds in the distance, running away to the north. It looks like they are carrying something that glows, possibly the Darkskye Diamond. The kobolds are too far away to catch up with right now, but the adventurers may be able to pick up their trail if they too head north.



DEATH MARCH

OVERVIEW

Escaping a flying island that crashed into the Wild Wood, the party must now navigate the increasingly dangerous realm of the High Druid.

THE JOURNEY

The adventurers are blasted away from the flying island by a rush of water. They party is in the Wild Wood, and the flying island has dumped a lot of glowing crystals into the forest. The glowing crystals seem to be dangerous, waves of energy emanating from them.

The flying island itself is very dangerous to be near. Explosions rock it, and glowing crystals shoot out from it on a regular basis. The island is falling apart! The adventurers did the right thing in getting out of and away from it.

GMs: let the players know that the adventurers struggle out of the tangle of mud and branches and they see that they are far from the crashed flying island, from which a sickly green radiance is emanating. The flying island is drifting about in circles, chunks of it exploding and sending crystals and rock arcing over the forest to crush ancient trees.

There are some nearby villages, the nearest is several hours walk from where the flying island is hovering.

GMs: This is a montage scene, where the players tell you what happened to them between the fall and their eventual arrival near the village.

As each player in turn to narrate a problem that the party faced, and then turn to the player to their left and ask them to narrate how their character overcame that challenge. There is no need for dice rolls, this is purely narrative.

If the players get stuck prompt them with questions.

- What wild animals are there?
- What dangers normally haunt the Wild Wood?
- What natural barriers might there be?
- Do druids set up traps or wards?

ONKAFIELD

This assumes that the characters decide to stop at the a village. If they decide to simply keep walking skip ahead to the *tanglewood* section.

The village that the characters find themselves in is called Onkafield, and serves as a focal point for local hunters who trade pelts with the outside world. It is a long way to civilization and quite a trek, and those locals who usually travel to the outside world are currently away trading or hunting.

Onkafield isn't a village like the characters might be used to. Onkafield has one large longhall-like house that serves as a tavern, meeting place, and town hall. The rest of the buildings in the settlement are simple huts tucked into the tangled roots of the massive trees of the Wild Wood. Pelt-drying racks and other signs of local industry can be seen here. Everybody wears clothing made of animal pelts or woven grasses.

TRADE?

Various NPCs can be available at this point, bartering their wares not for gold, but either for items or favors that can be accomplished within a short time span. Most villagers will be afraid of the strange rocks that fell from the sky and the strange fires that they started, but some recognize that the adventurers have useful items to trade.

Okonkwo Nasiche

She can craft two healing poultices if the party will agree to stay overnight in the village and make sure it is safe. Treat these poultices like healing potions, but the max hp of healing is 20, not 30.

Kalu Kadokechi

Kalu is a magician, though his magic is weak and not on a similar power level to real adventurers. He needs help extracting some sap from trees for the village, trees now surrounded by the glowing rocks. As a reward he will give each party member enough magical oil for one use.

Akiki

A elf villager named Akiki knows the way out of the Wild Wood, and will help the party get going in the right direction if they gain her trust (a DC 15 skill challenge). The first adventurer to attempt to gain her trust must roll a 15+ on a background of their choosing; if they succeed their player narrates how they impress Akiki, if they fail they narrate how they made it harder for the party to gain their trust. The one who failed the roll then nominates the next person to get to attempt the roll, and the DC rises by 5. The

If the party does gain Akiki's trust she'll accompany them out of the village, and as far as the land claimed by the halfling tribe that live over the hill (the *plague hospital ruins* section marks the start of their territory).

If the party fails to gain the elf's trust she'll tell them of the road that lies a week's travel to the north, and point them in the right direction.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

If the party really messes up badly Akiki may even attack the party trying to force them out of town, though the party will likely defeat Akiki quickly. If a fight occurs here use the NPC below.

OKONJO AKIKI THE WILD ELF GUIDE

Akiki is very fast, and knows the forest like the back of her hand.

Triple strength 3rd level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Daggers +8 vs. AC (two attacks) — 15 damage

If both attacks hit the same target: Okonjo Akiki pops free and may move as a quick action.

R: Long Bow +8 vs. AC — 36 damage

Miss: gain an extra longbow attack next round.

If Akiki is fighting alongside the adventurers this is what she'll probably do...

Aid Ally: If Okonjo Akiki does nothing but harry the enemy (makes no attack rolls) then she may grant one ally acting before Akiki's next turn +2 to a roll and grant a different ally a reroll on a failed roll with -2 to the reroll.

AC 19

PD 16 HP 120

MD 12

THE TANGLEWOOD

Even if the party skipped the village of Onkafield they will still need to get past the rapidly growing tanglewood to journey anywhere. If the party gained the trust of Akiki the elf she can show them the way through the tanglewood (a +2 to skill checks to get through the thornwood).

One of the reasons this village is ordinarily safe from the predations of the monsters that live in the Wild Wood is that it is surrounded by a grove of tanglewood trees. These massive plants lock their roots and branches together, presenting an almost impassable barrier unless you know the true path through. Unfortunately the falling glowing rocks have caused the tanglewood to go into a period of rapid growth and almost animal-like movement.

Each adventurer must make a DC 15 skill check against an appropriate background to pass through the thorny tangle of wood; if they fail their roll offer them a choice between two of the consequences listed below and ask them to pick a consequence:

- The character loses an important piece of equipment in the darkness.
- The party gets lost in the gloom and all rolls for this challenge are DC 20 from now on.
- The character loses two recoveries from blundering into thorns and grasping roots.
- Each party member must save (11+) or lose a recovery from bruises and scratches).
- Character takes 2d6 poison damage from whipping thornvines.
- Each party member must save (11+) or take 2d6 fire damage from glowing rocks that are shaken loose from above as they push through the tanglewood.
- If the player characters have Akiki with them helping them they gain +2 on their rolls, and Akiki herself has no trouble moving through the tanglewood.

If anybody comes up with a very clever way to bypass the tanglewood (magic for example) then lower the difficulty by 5. The tanglewood is both fast-growing and hard to burn or cut through.

If anybody rolls a 25+ on their skill check offer them one of the following benefits to choose from:

- All subsequent rolls have their DC reduced by 5.
- The characters find a pouch of the potions lost in the tanglewood, and if somebody else gets the same benefit then it will be a single vial of potion on the ground that fell from the pouch.

THE WILD THINGS

Once they are through the tanglewood and have had a brief chance to rest the party will find itself faced with the long arduous trek through the Wild Wood. The kobolds who possibly have the Darkskye Diamond went north, so the adventurers need to head that way too.

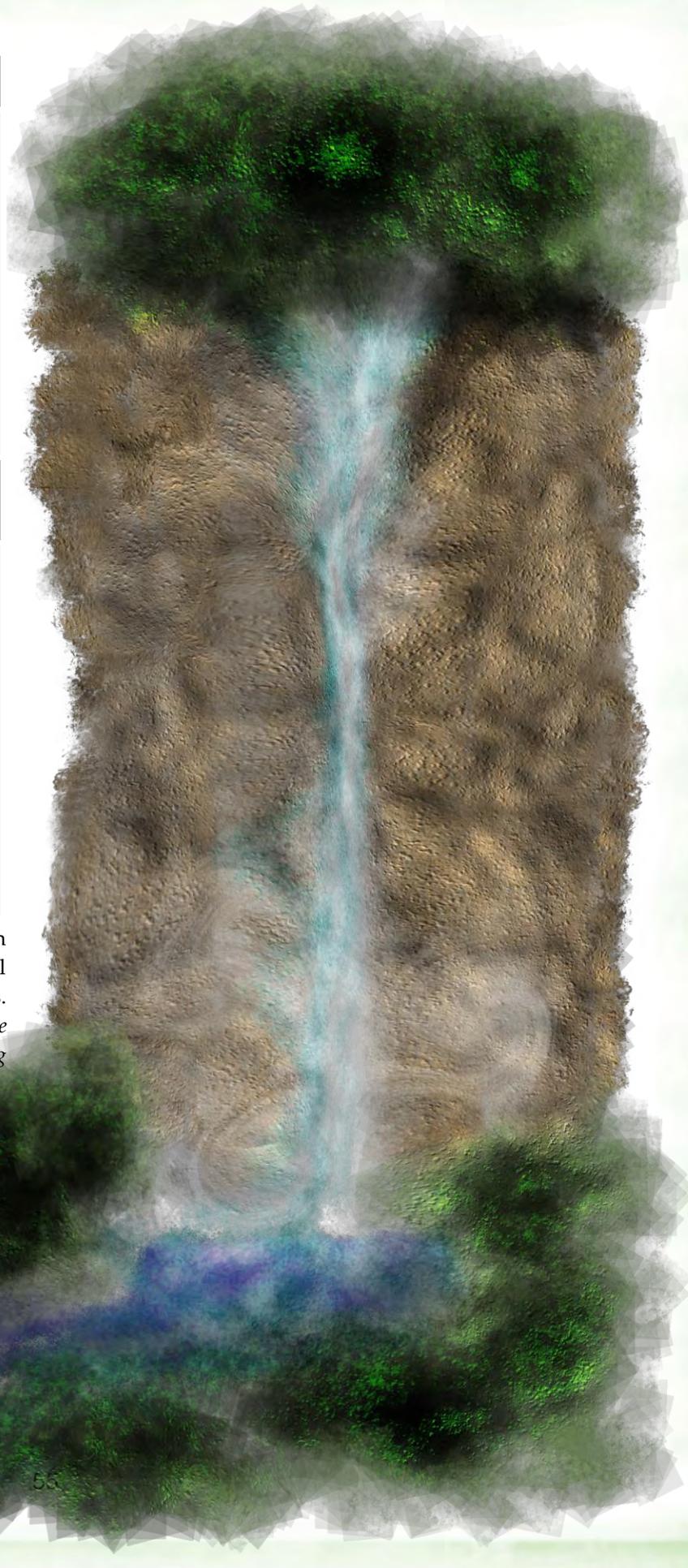
GMs: Describe the dense vegetation that surrounds the adventurers for leagues around, and narrate how they (and their guide if Akiki is with them) traverse the forest.

Throw the following obstacles at them as they progress through the forest. Each adventurer faces at least one hazard:

CLIFF	VEGETATION	ROCKSLIDE
<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Sudden drop +5 vs PD—2d6 damage	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Entangling Vines +10 vs AC—3d6 damage OR Noxious Fungi +10 vs PD—3d6 poison damage	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Rocks fall +10 vs AC against each party member—1d12 damage
INSECT BITES	ITCHBANE WEED	THE WILDERNESS
<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Death by 1000 needles +15 vs PD against every party member—1d12 damage	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Itchy itchy +15 vs MD—Target loses one recovery from scratching themselves.	<i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Exposure +15 vs AC against every party member—2d8 damage and the target is weakened at the start of their next battle (easy save ends).

Occasionally the party will pass a glowing pebble with grasses that sway towards it, or will spot a dire animal running with magenta ichor from its sores and mutations.

GMs: This is a good opportunity to highlight not just the wildness of the Wild Wood but also the sense that something isn't right here.



PLAGUE HOSPITAL RUINS

As the sun begins to set the party crests a rise and spots a field of graves surrounding an old structure long-since abandoned to the ravages of time and the ministrations of the Wild Wood.

If Akiki is travelling with the party she refuses to go any further, saying that the place is evil and cursed and points to the glowing stones that have recently fallen here. Payment by party members might convince her to stick around for a bit longer, but she also claims that a cannibalistic halfling tribe claims this area so will definitely turn back after this section unless the party can find a really good reason for her to stay with them.

Investigating the area shows that this is a 12th Age ruin - a massive plague hospital. Most of the hospital is so ruined that the party didn't even recognize that they were climbing over its outer walls as they travelled – what they took to be a rise was the ruins of a massive wall.

...as the sun sets the magically awakened dead begin to rise from their graves.

FIGHT!

Spending a 6 with the Lich King or the Diabolist gives the party enough warning to leave from the area and avoid the fight.

Number of PCs	Decrepit Skeleton	Wraith	Skeleton Warrior
3	3	1	0
4	4	1	1
5	5	1	2
6	6	1	3
7	7	1	4

DECREPIT SKELETON

1st level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +6

Vulnerability: holy

Sword +6 vs. AC—3 damage

AC 16

PD 14 HP 7 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one decrepit skeleton mook for every 7 damage you deal to the mob.

WRAITH

5th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +10

Ice-cold ghost blade +10 vs. PD—14 negative energy damage (+1d4 - see 'Loot')

Natural 16+: The target is also weakened (save ends)

C: Spiraling assault +10 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—10 negative energy damage, and after the attack the wraith teleports to and engages with one target it hit.

Limited use: The wraith can use spiraling assault only when the escalation die is even.

Flight: The wraith hovers and zooms about.

Ghostly: This creature has resist damage 16+ to all damage (yes, even holy damage) except force damage, which damages it normally. A wraith can move through solid objects, but can't end its movement inside them.

AC 19

PD 14 HP 66

MD 17

SKELETON WARRIOR

2nd level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +8

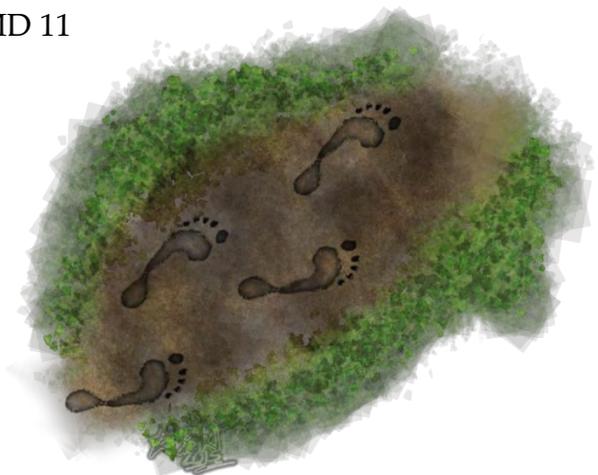
Vulnerable: holy

Spear +8 vs. AC—6 damage.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 26

MD 11



FREE LUNCH

During the night the adventurers hear whoops and hollers throughout the forest. It is obvious that these are savage halflings.

GMs: If Akiki is still with the party they'll have to really work to keep her from running away back to Onkafield!

This is where the adventurers encounter a tribe of cannibals that would LOVE to have them for dinner. The adventurers can choose to sneak around or through them during the night, or they can fight their way through, or if there's a linguist in the party they might even be able to speak with them.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

The halflings really want to kill and eat the party, so the adventurers will have to work at it to avoid fighting the tiny savages. It is a DC 20 skill check per adventurer to sneak past the savages, ad a DC 25 skill check to use some fast-talking diplomacy.

Number of PCs	Feral Halfling	Halfling Madmind
3	15	1
4	15	2
5	15	3
6	15	4
7	15	5

FERAL HALFLING

It is said that centuries ago, a family of halflings got lost while traversing in the Wild Wood, and had learned to survive the wild by becoming wild themselves.

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Human bone dagger +7 vs. AC—5 damage

Natural Odd: The target is dazed for its next attack against any feral halfling.

Poison-tipped blow dart +7 vs. AC—5 damage and the target is weakened (save ends).

First failed save: Target is now unconscious (save ends, 10+ damage also ends).

AC 17

PD 17 HP 9 (mook)

MD 12

Mook: Kill one feral halfling mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

HALFLING MADMIND

Considered to be holy by other feral halflings, they are far smarter and deadlier than their companions.

2nd level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Barbed spear +7 vs. AC—7 damage.

Mind blast +7 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—9 psychic damage.

Natural 16+: Target is now confused (save ends).

Limited use: The halfling madmind can only use this attack while the escalation die is even.

Telekinesis +7 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—5 damage and the target pops free from engagement.

Evasive: Once per battle, force an enemy that hits you with an attack to reroll the attack with a -2 penalty.

AC 17

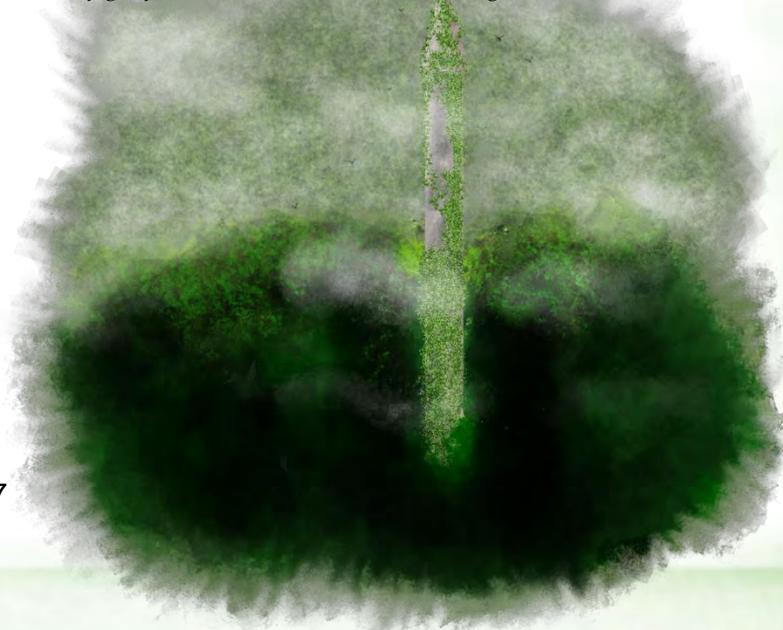
PD 14 HP 36

MD 15

A SIGN OF CIVILIZATION

Once day breaks the party can see a tower in the distance, at last a sign of civilization. Though far from the edge of the Wild Wood whoever lives in the tower may be able to help them.

GMs: If Akiki is still with the party she will leave them at first light, pointing them in the direction to go (towards the tower in the far distance) and returning to her village. Akiki thinks the tower belongs to a wizard called Alam, though nobody has heard from him in a while and there hasn't been trade from that direction in a while. If the party convinces Akiki to stay on their journey with them add a few more monsters to each fight from here on out to balance things out.



SUDDEN SAVAGERY

The party faces a days long trek through the Wild Wood. As the party marches ever onwards they see signs of wildlife horrifically mutated by the glowing crystals that the crash of Darkskye and the subsequent explosions caused to rain from the sky.

GMs: have the players describe to you how their characters take on the task of hiking through the Wild Wood. Do they walk single file? Do some scout ahead of the rest of the party? How do they arrange their camp at night? As the adventurers describe their alertness plans and who is scouting ahead, ask that "point" person to make a DC 20 skill check to detect a danger; if the adventurer succeeds then they notice a slight rumble before an owlbear lunges at the party (roll initiative as normal)—but if the skill check is failed the owlbear suddenly leaps out and catches the party by surprise (select one adventurer at random, the owlbear gets one free Rip and Peck attack on that adventurer before rolling initiative).

FIGHT!

A 6 with the High Druid could be used to scare the owlbear off, or to pacify it with some of the party's rations.

RAVENOUS OWLBEAR

This owlbear is particularly ravenous. It has successfully chased off any nearby meals, and is desperate for sustenance. It is weakened by hunger, but this desperation makes it very dangerous.

Large 4th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +8

Rip and peck +9 vs. AC—15 damage, and until the end of the owlbear's next turn, the target is hampered (makes only basic attacks) while engaged with the owlbear

Vicious hybrid: If the escalation die is even, make another rip and peck attack.

Feed itself: An owlbear that scores a critical hit against a hampered enemy tears a piece of the creature off (GM chooses a limb) and will subsequently attempt to retreat with the prize to feed its cubs. The torn-up enemy is stunned until the end of its next turn.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 108

MD 13

During the fight, any adventurer with a wilderness background will notice the owlbear's emaciated state. Clever adventurers might find an alternate source of food for it, but it will need quite a bit not to eventually go after the party!

This fight has the potential to be brutal. Play up the owlbear's viciousness, thus welcoming the party to the depths of the Wild Woods! For a group of 6 or more players, add another owlbear to the mix.

PROTECTED RUINS

Further in their journey, the characters come across ruins. It is unclear what originally was there or what age these ruins are from, but you can use relationship rolls here to see which icons might have left an interesting mark on the landscape. Involve at least one icon here, or more if possible.

GMs: Ask the players to help shape the encounter by supplying the answers to the following questions:

- *What do you find of interest here, and how is it dangerous?*
- *Are there any clues of the civilization that left this behind, and how does this change things?*
- *Who does it look like has been here recently, and why do you fear them?*
- *What did you find that is still useful, and why are you hesitant to take it?*

If the players introduce a danger in the ruins through their description then in the coming fight if an adventurer rolls a natural 1 they take 3d6 damage from that danger.

Loot!

Hey - is there a magic item in these ruins? Yes. Use the player's icon rolls to help you determine what is found here.

During the investigation, the ruins come alive. Circles of power activate, glowing with ancient energy. The air itself ripples and shimmers. The shadows swirl into the form of the aegis—the aegis is the protector of this space, a shadowy figure that shimmers with a nimbus of energy. It does not speak before it attacks.

If players defeat the aegis, don't let them rest too long in the ruins. The ruins begin to glow again, this time with even more power. If the adventurers don't leave soon the ruin guardians will reappear.

FIGHT!

Explain to the players that this is obvious to their characters that provided they stay near the ruins more monsters will keep showing up.

Number of PCs	<i>The Aegis</i>	<i>Lesser Aegides</i>
3	1	10
4	1	15
5	1	20
6	1	25
7	1	30

THE AEGIS

An unknowable being who does not speak or think or want. It only protects.

Large 2nd Level caster [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +6

When the escalation die is 0 or even...

R: Ancient magic +7 vs PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—5 damage, target suffers -2 on its next attack.

When the escalation die is odd...

R: Searing light +7 vs PD, (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—5 damage and 5 ongoing fire damage (save ends).

Hard to catch: The Aegis automatically disengages when it moves.

AC 20

PD 16 HP 40

MD 16

LESSER AEGIDES

1st level mook [SPIRIT]

Initiative: see Linked Initiative

Refocused Energy +6 vs PD—4 damage or 6 damage if target has been struck by the Aegis this round.

Linked initiative: Lesser aegides always act immediately after the aegis. If the Aegis is defeated, the lesser aegides take their turns on its initiative and fade away two turns after the aegis was defeated.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 5 (mook)

MD 13

Mook: Kill one lesser aegides mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

THE CHASM

After leaving the ruins, the adventurers come to the next obstacle of the Wild Wood: a chasm hundreds of feet across. To climb down over and up would take extra days that the adventurers can't afford. They need some way to cross the chasm directly.

GMs: This is an opportunity for you to encourage player creativity at the table. One group might engineer a vine bridge to cross, while another group uses a cleric ritual to create a bridge powered by belief for the adventurers to cross.

Present the problems to the players and let them start to plan. Ask players to bring their backgrounds and their One Unique Thing into play. Let them start to throw solutions and thoughts around, and answer their thoughts with positive, affirming answers. If the players start digging for a magical solution, it will be a magical solution that is needed—if they move towards a physical solution of some sort, then move things in that direction.

This area of the Wild Wood is dangerous, but also full of mystery and wonder. Push your table to come up with its own unique solution to this problem, and be lenient; unless adventurers try something exceptionally illogical or inept, let it happen without any rolls provided they have appropriate backgrounds and one unique things.

If you are looking for more inspiration, you can roll to see what element is the key.

1-2	An Icon related to the characters (but not the prince of shadows)
3	An item for the Ruins (they may have to go back for it)
4	A character's one unique thing
5	A character's background
6	A bargain with the Prince of Shadows

If the players get stuck here are some ideas of what adventurers could do to cross the chasm:

- Make primitive hang-gliders and coast over the chasm on wind drafts.
- Construct a rope bridge and get an archer to shoot arrows across with vines attached.
- Create a makeshift catapult to launch the adventurers across.
- Use a ritual to create a way across with magic.
- Lasso passing giant eagles and fly across the chasm.

- Find a bits of the flying island in the Wild Wood and create floating stepping stones.

THE SWAMP OF FLAME SPURTS

On the day after the adventurers cross the chasm they come to a swamp within the forest. It has many dangers, including fire spurts and lightning sand. In the swamp lives otyugh, lurking just beneath the surface of the brackish water.

As the adventurers make their way through the swamp throw obstacles at them, one per adventurer.

FLAME SPURTS	SURPRISE PYTHON	LIGHTNING SAND
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 15</i> Pft! Woosh! +5 vs PD—2d6 fire damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Snake! +10 vs AC—3d6 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Drowning in sand +10 vs AC against each party member—1d12 damage</p>
SERPENT BITES	UNUSUALLY LARGE VERMIN	NOXIOUS RAZOR GRASS
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Venomous bite +15 vs PD against every party member—1d12 poison damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 20</i> Rodent attack +10 vs AC against all nearby party members—1d12 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Ankle-height cuts+15 vs AC against every party member—2d8 poison damage and the target is weakened at the start of their next battle (easy save ends).</p>

After each adventurer has had a chance to experience danger have the adventurer who is taking point make a DC 15 check to spot the otyugh. If the check fails, the otyugh ambush the party.

FIGHT!

See page 164 of the core rules for ambushes if the otyugh ambushes the party. After the fight the adventurers have a short time to rest before they hear the sound of wolves...

Number of PCs	Otyugh
3	2
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	3

OTYUGH

This is an unpleasant creature to be stuck in the mud with. All teeth and tentacles, someone is going to get hurt...probably you.
 Large 3rd level blocker [ABERRATION]
 Initiative: +5

Grasping tentacles +8 vs. PD (2 attacks)—5 damage

Natural even hit: The otyugh can grab the target.

Natural 18+: The otyugh can grab the target and make a big toothy maw attack against it as a free action.

Big toothy maw +12 vs. AC (one enemy it's grabbing; includes +4 grab bonus)—16 damage

Big mud defense: The otyugh gains a +2 bonus to all defenses while fighting in the mud.

Tentacle flail: Once per round, an otyugh can make a grasping tentacles attack as a free action against a moving nearby creature it is not engaged with; on a natural even hit, the target is grabbed and its movement stops.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 84

MD 13

LOOT!

After the fight the adventurers will find a cache of potions in the muck, left behind by long ago victims of the otyugh. There are 1d6+1 adventurer-tier potions of healing (*Recovery +1d8 hp of healing, maximum 30 HP regained*) in a rucksack, along with other ruined junk.

RACE TO SAFETY

At the edge of the swamp the adventurers regain sight of the tower that they have been using as a landmark, but they are not yet out of danger: before they can get to their destination, they spot that they are being surrounded by a pack of wolves.

The wolves see prey and little else: they make no attempt to sneak up on the adventurers. The wolves stalk and circle the party for almost a mile before making their first attacks. When the wolves burst out of the cover of the trees to attack it comes as a surprise that the wolves are made of living wood!

FIGHT!

As soon as an adventurer uses fire on one of these wolves their vulnerability becomes obvious.

Number of PCs	Timber Wolf
3	20
4	25
5	30
6	35
7	40

TIMBER WOLF

These wooden wolves you aren't even hungry... they just want you to die.

2nd level mook [BEAST]

Initiative +6

Vulnerable: fire

Vicious bite +7 vs AC—5 damage

Worse bark: Whenever a timber wolf drops an enemy to 0 hp or below, all other timber wolves add 2 damage to their attacks until the end of their next turn.

AC 17

PD 16 **HP 8 (mook)**

MD 10

Mook: Kill one timber wolf mook for every 8 damage you deal to the mob.

THE VIEW AHEAD

As the party escapes from the wolves they discover that they are at the edge of a rift valley. To the north, beyond the valley, is the road to civilization that they saw long ago from the air. In the valley below is a very tall tower, the tower that they saw earlier.



HEX CRAWL

OVERVIEW

The adventurers arrive in a broad valley. If they can cross the valley they will be able to make it to the road out of the Wild Wood. First, however, they must contend with some of the destruction and mutation that the crashing of the flying island of Darkskye caused. While the area around the crash itself is ruined, the largest chunks of magical crystals were ejected in enormous explosions that sent them many leagues away from the crash site.

SANDBOX

This part of the adventure is a 'sandbox style' journey, focusing on exploration, also sometimes known as a hex-crawl—it is split between locations of interest that the adventurers can visit, random encounters, and set pieces.

THROUGH THE WILD WOOD

Start the session with a scene of the adventurers huddling in a cave while torrential rain comes down outside, trying not to freeze to death. To keep their spirits up they are telling each other what they are going to do when they get back to civilization. Think 'Ice Cold In Alex' (an old black and white movie, if you haven't seen it you really should). Maybe it is the thought of a loved one that is keeping them going, or maybe they are just longing for a cold drink by a warm fire.

Go around the players and ask them to role-play their character saying what they miss most about civilization, or what they intend to do when they get home. Then turn to the player to their right and ask that player what their character thinks of that, and then ask them to role-play their character saying what they intend to do first when they get out of the Wild Wood. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance for a short monologue and a chance to react to somebody else's monologue.

THE VALLEY

This part of the adventure focuses on exploration, as the party tries to find a route out of the enormous rift valley that they are in.

LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

The adventurers are in a broad valley, and can see from their vantage point three locations of interest. Exactly where to go from here is down to the adventurers, and if they choose they can bypass all the locations and set out into the wild.

Alam Tower—This imposing wizard's tower looks abandoned, even from a distance.

Alameda Village—This settlement has a high wooden wall around it, and from the wisps of smoke rising from the chimneys it looks like somebody is home.

Now and again, and again—A strange glow in the forest. Is it a camp fire, a crashed fragment of Darkskye, or perhaps even the Darkskye diamond itself? Only by investigating will the adventurers discover its secret.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The adventurers might encounter the following situations, either as they head towards or away from a location. If the players decide that their characters are bypassing anything of interest and just heading straight across the valley use more of these random encounters.

If you want the encounters to be truly random roll a d8 a three or four times, ignoring any duplicates.

Against the elements—An encounter with enraged forest spirits who seek to punish the adventurers due to the lingering magical taint of Darkskye upon them.

Broken Caravan—An encounter with owlbears.

Nyett Bannbur—A forest spirit.

Owlbear Trail—An encounter with owlbears.

Rats!—An encounter with the wildlife of the Wild Wood.

Sylvian Friends—An encounter with an dying elf (leads into *The Green Shadows* later).

The Thorn Wall—The party meets resistance from a rapidly-growing plant (leads into *The Green Shadows* later).

The Green Shadows—Elven rangers working for the High Druid, they are trying to minimize the damage done by Darkskye's crash.

SET PIECES

You should definitely include at least one of the following encounters (if not both) as well as the *Kobolds!* encounter.

Horror of the Green Realm—The adventurers face the mutated creatures of the Wild Wood, horrors created by a chunk of magical crystal from Darkskye.

Taking a stand—The party are attacked by walking trees, and must decide if they will fight them out in the open or retreat to a battlefield of their choosing.

Kobolds!—The adventurers face the mutated creatures of the Wild Wood, horrors created by chunk of magical crystal from Darkskye. This encounter provides vital information for the rest of the adventure.

ENDING

After the players have had their fun exploring the valley trying to find a way out, use the following encounter:

Out of the Woods—The adventurers arrive at a village that is close to the road that gets them north out of the Wild Wood.

ALAMEDE VILLAGE (LOCATION)

Alamede is a walled village in the Wild Wood, within sight of a distant wizard's tower.

This settlement has a high wooden wall around it, and from the wisps of smoke rising from the chimneys it looks like somebody is home.

THE ARRIVAL

As the party makes its way towards the village of Alamede several of the village's residents notice the party's arrival and come out to meet the strangers. After short introductions, the villagers invite the party to come into the settlement for a hot meal and a rest. If the party hesitates or declines, the villagers explain that the offer comes free of charge. The community values hospitality as a virtue. (NPC names if you get stuck for who has run out to meet the party: *Capicer, Callatch, Sool, Elenri, Lymer*)

It is obvious that the villagers mean no harm and that their offer of aid is genuine. The villagers are also curious about the large explosion they heard some days ago and the purplish glow that they can see at night on the horizon (from the direction of the crashed flying island).

BACKSTORIES

It's unlikely that any of the characters' backstories will include Alamede, but possible. A character who rolled a 5 or 6 on their relationship with the High Druid or Archmage might know some secondhand knowledge. Ask any player(s) who feel justified in sharing what they know about Alamede to do so now and build on their descriptions. Otherwise just read the following aloud and go from there.

"As you continue to approach the village, you notice that it is composed completely of homes in a radial pattern. There are no shops or non-residential buildings to be seen save one large communal structure in the middle that has a roof, but no walls. Fruit vines grow around wooden posts and arches throughout the village, serving as both food source and decoration. Berry bushes and long boxes of herbs border the lanes where people walk about. Here and there are the tools of trade, open for use - a well, a large furnace and bellows with an anvil, clay pots and the like. Surrounding the village is a large wooden wall with a gate in it"

EXPLORING

Adventurers who wish to fully explore the village do so in a montage. Ask the player immediately to your left:

"The village is very busy today, with all kinds of people doing different tasks. Please tell me the name of one person who lives in this village and what he or she is doing."

Then turn to the next player in order and ask:

"You bonded with this person over his/her task. What do you have in common with him/her?"

Players don't need to roll for this—they just tell you a piece of information about their NPC. Repeat this around the table until everybody has had a chance to come up with some little tidbit of backstory. As players tell you their anecdotes, narrate each one back to them and expand using more details. Keep your expansions shorter than the original player anecdotes.

NPCs

The characters who live in Alamede are more than ready to share information with the adventurers. Here are some characters to add to any created during an exploration montage:

Elien Bowekittle—Friendly dark-eyed Elie needs repairs done on her house, and is willing to let the adventurers rest there if they don't mind the holes in the wall through which the wind blows.

Witeva Brasher—Witeva wears a straw hat and could use a hunting partner, as a strange animated tree scared away his tame half-wolf.

Oxwald Kibel—Gap-toothed Oxwald is weeding the herb boxes and wants to chat with the adventurers to get out of the chore.

Warvan Goffe—The sweating Warven is repairing some hand tools in the smithy.

Lankmew Helmer—The short Lankmew is preparing the next communal meal, and wants to know what the adventurers like to eat.

Alice Leder—The short-sighted Alice is spinning clay for bowls, and eagerly gives one of the finished decorated clay bowls to the party as a gift.

INFORMATION

The friendly villagers are more than willing to talk openly with the adventurers. They impart the following information in among less significant gossip:

- **The tower:** Alamede (short for Alam Meadow) grew up near a wizard tower that still stands today southwest of the village. Alam abandoned his tower a long time ago. The villagers avoid the area, partly

out of superstition and partly because they simply have no reason to go there.

- **The old wizard (Alam):** The wizard who used to live in the tower that can be seen in the distance came here to research magically-animated trees as a way to raise soldiers on short notice, the results were disastrous and prompted the village to forswear all violence. A few people still hunt small game and there is some contention in the village about that.
- **Defenses/elves/dangers:** The villagers of Alameda have made a deal with a band of local wood elves. In return for food and finished goods, the elves see to it that Alameda remains safe from the creatures and magic of the Wild Wood. A dozen or so stags came into the village a few nights ago and became extremely aggressive. No one was hurt, but some buildings were damaged. The elves came and dealt with them. The stags looked 'odd'. The wooden palisade wall around town has not been repaired for many years, and won't stand up to assault, a fact that worries some villagers.
- **The road:** There is a road on the far side of the valley that leads north to the civilized lands of the empire. The road is little more than a dirt track, but further north it becomes a gravel road. The road is doubtlessly the best way to return to the civilized lands of the Empire.

LOOT?

The villagers don't believe in money (where would they spend it?), but won't just give up precious possessions for nothing. Sure the village will be able to feed them, repair tears in their clothing, and give them a place to sleep for the night—but that is about it.

However, the adventurers might be able to trade their services in exchange for things that they need. Maybe the party is willing to help repair tools or go hunting or fix the palisade wall. The villagers can trade for some of the following things:

- **Adventurer-tier healing potion**—This could be as a proper potion, an herb poultice or a medicated bandage.
- **Fresh trail rations**—During a rest the party can eat these rations and spend recoveries as though they all had the Strong Recovery feat.
- **Minor blessing**—The character has +1 to all defenses during their next combat encounter.

- **Training**—An NPC is willing to share their skills or experience. The player character gains the next incremental advance immediately *instead* of at the end of the session.
- **Local guide**—An NPC can accompany the party at least part-way on their journey. Mechanically this gives the party +2 to a skill check, then the NPC must return to the village.

ALAM TOWER (LOCATION)

An abandoned wizard's tower.

The tower is exceptionally tall, forming a landmark that can be seen from miles away—when the view is not blocked by the trees. The closer the adventurers get to the tower the wilder the Wild Wood becomes.

EXTERIOR

As the party staggers out of the dense undergrowth they see the tower clearly for the first time.

GMs: When the party decides to investigate the abandoned wizard's tower, ask players what they know about wizard's towers. No one needs to roll for this. Use their description of tower layout to inform this next section, otherwise use the information below.

The tower stands tall and decrepit, as if some powerful architectural magic were holding the building together against its will and against the best attempts of nature to tear it down. The sides of the tower are pock-marked with holes about the size of a human's head, allowing the forest's green light to stream in.

Any party members who succeed at a DC 20 skill check involving observing the tower from the outside will see an object block one of the holes at the top of the tower for just a moment and then disappear.

INTERIOR

Inside the tower things are in disarray: The furniture is broken, equipment shattered, books scorched and anything organic rotten or shriveled. The lowermost floor of the tower is covered in mulched magical tomes overgrown with moss and grasses.

GMs: Describe various rooms and what might be in them - apprentices' quarters, a shattered greenhouse, cages for domesticated or experimental animals, a pantry, a kitchen, a lecture hall, etc. If a player asks about a room that you think a wizard's tower might have, let them find that.

SCOUR THE TOWER, ROOT FOR LOOT!

The party will probably leave no chair, alembic, bowl, or moth-eaten garment unturned in their quest for loot. If that is the case have everybody makes an appropriate

background check to see what they find while looting the tower.

- **Natural 20:** The character finds a secret room with two magic items in it.
- **DC 20+:** The character finds a true magic item near a corpse overgrown with flowers (doesn't stack with rolling a natural 20).
- **DC 15:** An adventurer-tier rune glows from within a book OR two healing potions are found at the back of a cupboard of mold-encrusted jars.
- **DC 10:** Assorted spell components worth +2 to any single ritual check can be scrounged from a ruined laboratory.
- **DC 9 and lower:** Danger!

If any character rolls less than DC 15 they encounter danger. Pick what they encounter from the table below.

EXPLOSIVE RUNES	COLLAPSING FLOOR	ANGRY ANIMATED POT PLANT
Difficulty to avoid: DC 15 Blam! +5 vs. PD—2d6 force damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 20 Collapse (auto-hit)—3d6 damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 25 Thrashing fronds +15 vs. AC—3d6 damage

Everybody looting the tower gets to roll once, if anybody wants to roll a second time they have to face potential danger first (moving over an unsteady floor, moving through a greenhouse of potted plants, inching up a stair that has runes on the steps).

ANIMATED TREE

After each party member has had a chance to loot the tower (or if the party declines to loot the tower) and the party is back together in a group, they will hear movement from the top of the tower. Climbing down the outside of the tower is an animated tree monstrosity—it breaches the outer wall and attacks. As the tree monster attacks several potted plants and innocuous-looking vines that had been biding their time spring into action.

FIGHT!

The animated tree was previously growing out of the top of the tower, so the party has a few moments to prepare before the attack.

Number of PCs	Arboreal Guardians	Animated Plant
3	1	2
4	1	3
5	1	5
6	2	3
7	2	5

ARBOREAL GUARDIAN

Left over from the wizard's experiments, something has recently awakened this plant being to life.

3rd level large wrecker [PLANT]

Initiative: +3

Oaken Fists +8 vs. PD—21 damage

Natural odd hit: The target is vulnerable until the end of its next turn.

Natural even hit: The target is grabbed.

Special: If the arboreal guardian has an enemy grabbed while using this attack, it wields the enemy as a weapon, dealing an additional 3 damage to the grabbed enemy, hit or miss.

AC 19

PD 16 HP 85

MD 12

ANIMATED PLANT

1st level troop [PLANT]

Initiative: +4

Lashing Fronds +6 vs. AC—4 damage

AC 16

PD 13 HP 26

MD 8

Once the tree attacks and is defeated let the players know that it is obvious to the adventurers that the tower holds no further secrets. The tower might make a good place to rest or to retreat to while exploring the valley, but there are no further secret rooms to find.

Loot!

Once the animated tree is dead if less than three adventurers found true magic items in the tower then the party discovers up to three magic items embedded in the tree's trunk—it grew around them.

When the wizard Alam disappeared he left behind his tools. The villagers left the tower alone, so while the wizard's notes have long since rotted away there are still some choice items to be looted.

BRACHIATING BRACERS

These silk armguards have an embroidered motif of branches and leaves. They subtly bend wood and vines to their wearer, making it easier to climb and swing through the trees.

Add +5 to checks involving climbing.

Gain the ability to traverse heavily forested areas as though flying while not in combat.

Quirk: Always seeks something higher than ground level to stand upon.

PRISMATIC ROD

A long pyramidal clear crystal serves as the handle to this wand. The end is tipped with obsidian, from which constantly emanates a faint rainbow aura.

[Wand]

+1 to hit and damage with arcane spells and attacks (champion tier: +2).

Once per day cast *color spray* at your level, as a quick action.

Quirk: Insists on speaking each letter of a word distinctly.

ORB OF WILD GROWTH

This green crystal orb shines with an inner light, and flowers blossom near it.

[Implement]

Bonus to attacks and damage with spells: +1 (adventurer); +2 (champion); +3 (epic, only when mounted on a staff).

Recharge 16+: Spend a recovery as a quick action and heal half the rolled recovery amount, and one nearby ally also heals the same amount. If dual-wielding orbs this becomes recharge 11+ (orbs like being with other orbs, though their bonuses do not stack).

Quirk: Voyeurism.

POW AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN (LOCATION)

A shard of crystal from Darkskye is warping time and space.

Finally the adventurers are on the road.

A STRANGENESS!

Wait, how did that happen? The last thing the adventurers remembered was pushing through the undergrowth heading towards the location of something glowing.

THE ROAD

The road the adventurers are on curves and wends around the many hills and chasms of the Wild Wood, but clearly leads towards north towards New Port and Santa Cora. There they will be able to rest, receive healing, and finally put their recent troubles behind them (or continue to search for the Darkskye Diamond).

THE CRYSTAL

As the party marches along they discover a huge chunk of pulsing crystal embedded in the road. A crack runs along its length, magic pulsing out from it. It physically hurts to go near it, and nearby the plants are dead. Dust skitters in a circle around the crystal, gravel rolls in an orbit.

If the adventurers keep walking soon enough they'll reach ... the crystal. Again. And again. And again. *They are trapped in a loop of space and time.* Even if they decide to head back they will come upon the same scene again.

If the party leaves the road hoping to escape they catch glimpses of other versions of themselves doing the same, overhear snippets of their own past conversations on the road, and eventually discover their own desiccated and mummified corpses from the far future! (Yes, the adventurers can loot their own bodies, though only the 'current' versions have magic items).

GMs: Explain to the players that it is obvious to the adventurers that the only way to escape is to deal with the crystal.

Dealing with the crystal is a DC 60 skill check! Each failed check kills the party in some terrifyingly horrific and inescapable way

GMs: When the party dies encourage players to tell you just how they die horribly - are they atomized, turned inside out, drained of all life, half-shunted into a ghostly dimension, aged a million years in an instant, turned to crystal?.

Each time the party dies another potential version of the party walks up the road in time to see their potential-past/future-selves die. This lets the party learn from their

past selves' mistakes and the DC to fix the problem is lowered by 5 each time (60, 55, 50, etc). If the party is smart they'll attempt communication with other past/future/potential thems—reward clever thinking with a +d6 bonus on the next roll after they die (they can pass information onto the next set of thems to arrive). Very clever adventurers might even try to survive the magical explosions or implosions and join another version of the party, though ultimately only one version of each character can survive the encounter.

Here are some ideas on how the party could fix the crystal, but I'm sure your players will come up with even better ideas:

- Casting the mending cantrip as a ritual.
- Use burning hands as a ritual to weld shards of the crystal back into place.
- Characters with animal companions can send them off to recruit forest animals to help gather smaller shards of crystal and slot them into the crack in the big crystal.
- Destroying the crystal by hitting it with everything they've got repeatedly.
- Casting bless as a ritual.
- Carrying the crystal down the road so that it lops back and encounters its own past self.

Once the crystal is fixed a wave of magic will implode into the crystal which shall then fly upwards into the sky out of sight. Any duplicate adventurers will merge with themselves, but corpses and non-magical equipment will remain.

Unfortunately once the party fixes the crystal they find themselves back in the rift valley, deep in the Wild Wood.

RATS! (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

When wildlife attacks...

As the party moves through the forest they stumble onto one of the many scenes of everyday life and death in the Wild Wood. A pack of unusually sized rodents has attacked and injured a wildcat. The rats are startled by the adventurers and the wildcat runs, looking for somewhere to hide. Denied their meal the rats turn their ferocity on the party.

FIGHT!

Feel free to go nuts with the rat impressions. Gnash your teeth, squeal, flail your hands, whatever. Have a grand old time with it. Your players will have fun watching you.

Number of PCs	Dire Rats
3	22
4	28
5	34
6	40
7	46

DIRE RAT

From age to age, dire rats vary in size. In this age, they're only half as big as they sometimes get, but they're also twice as vicious.

1st level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +2

Infected bite +5 vs. AC—4 ongoing damage

Squealing pack attack: This creature gains a +1 attack bonus per other dire rat engaged with the target it's attacking (up to a maximum of a +3 bonus).

AC 15

PD 15 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one dire rat mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

THE WILDCAT

Wildcats are normally brave and adventurous. This one might settle for a quiet ball of yarn after what it's just experienced.

0th level troop [BEAST]

Initiative: +7

Claw +5 vs. AC—4 damage

Injured: The wildcat will simply move from place to place, avoiding combat to the best of its ability. It will fight back if a party member attacks it, but is not in good shape. At full health it has 30 HP and is no longer injured... it is only injured when it starts the fight at half hit points.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 15 (30 HP if uninjured)

MD 10

SYLVAN FRIENDS (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

The party might stumble upon this encounter, or might have set out from Alamede to deliberately search for the village's elven allies.

A dying elf bursts out from the undergrowth, followed by several mutated elf-things. Without hesitation the elf-things attack the party.

FIGHT!

After a round of combat it becomes obvious to the party that the elf is a mutant, warped by the magic of Darksbye.

Number of PCs	Elf Things	Dread Hawks
3	1	1
4	1	2
5	1	3
6	2	1
7	2	2

ELF-THING

Glittering green dust is in the saliva of this frothing mutant.

6th level spoiler [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +11

Venomous fangs +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—5 damage, and 5 ongoing poison damage

Natural 18+: The target becomes confused (save ends).

R: Poisoned arrow +11 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—7 damage, and 5 ongoing poison damage

Natural 20: The target becomes confused (save ends).

AC 22

PD 16 HP 75

MD 20



DREAD HAWK

Wood elves sometimes hunt with hawks - this hawk is twisted, it flies in a menacingly erratic pattern.

1st level troop [BEAST]

Initiative: +6

Twisted Talons +6 vs. AC—5 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The dread hawk pops free and may move as a quick action.

Flight: The dread hawk can fly, swooping in and out of the battle.

AC 17

PD 15 HP 25

MD 11

After the battle ends the party can still hear fighting. Soon the sounds of combat end and some beaten and wounded elves come down the track. The half-dozen elves who approach are the very last of their tribe. Their names are *Quiatris Treefriend*, *Bellamin*, *Marlamin Woodsoul*, *Elgold Taletreader*, *Eilmorel Darksbane*, and *Quentis*.

Several days ago the elves heard a loud explosion and strange rocks began falling from the sky. The plant-life here began acting strangely and growing in unnatural ways. Fearing that the wizard Alam had returned from exile to continue his experiments the elf tribe set out to stop him. Instead they found a crater with a glowing rock in it. The plants and animals nearby attacked them savagely. They discovered today that some sort of infected tree-man army is on the march. They were on their way to warn the citizens of Alamede when several of their number went mad and turned into the elf-things.

The elves impart to the party some useful facts:

- The way to the New Road is blocked by an army of plant monsters.
- If the party needs to find a defensible location to survive, Alamede is as good a location as any. The elves are headed there right now.
- The village of Alamede is in trouble: if the plant things come into the village then the villagers won't be able to survive alone, and the elves are now in no shape to help the villagers.
- There is a group of rangers known as the Green Shadows who patrol this valley and the area around it. The Green Shadows are loyal to the High Druid.

THE THORN WALL (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

The adventurers encounter wild growth, and an elf.

As they cut their way through the ever-thicker undergrowth the plants begin sprouting thorns and cutting at the adventurers. Further into the tangle strange plant-animal hybrids can be glimpsed. Hissing toxins drip from the thorns.

At the center of the undergrowth can be seen a glowing hunk of crystal. As the adventurers approach they witness plants mutating, growing mouths and whipping tendrils, the contagion spreading ever-wider. It is obvious that the way to safety is blocked and the adventurers must divert around the wall of thorns—the wall grows too quickly to be cut through.

As the adventurers walk around the wall of living thorns, they perceive a shape moving quietly around them.

GMs: read the following—“A figure is stalking you. It is dressed entirely in dark green leather and is wearing a mottled brown and green cloak. It is hard to see, at first you thought it was just a shadow. It moves like an elf.”

If anybody has a relationship with the High Druid add:

“You notice a wooden broach on the cloak, the symbol of the High Druid. These must be her fabled Green Shadows. They are rangers and protectors of the forest.”

The Green Shadow is aware that he has been spotted and rises from behind the tangled roots he was crouched behind. The figure straightens, rising from behind the tangled roots it was hidden behind. He has a bow slung on his back and you see the bulges of weapons under his cloak, but his hands are empty. He pushes back his hood to reveal his face. He is a drow, wearing a dappled green bandanna.

The drow ranger's name is Dermak. He specializes in killing abominations and has been tracking and killing the strange new things that have been emerging from the forest from the direction of the crashed flying island.

GMs: read the following—“The ranger visually inspects you, moving closer. His eyes keep flicking in the direction of the unnatural wall of thorns and when the strange animal noises come from within the wall you see his hands twitch closer to his weapons. After a long pause he seems satisfied that your party are not what he is looking for, and he relaxes slightly. He whistles and several huge spiders that you had not noticed shake themselves free of the leaf litter where they were hidden poised to strike and scuttle to his side.”

Dermak explains that he is a member of the Green Shadows, and is a slayer of abominations. The Green Shadows would normally remain hidden from outsiders but Dermak needs help and information. He asks the adventurers where they come from and what they know of the source of the abominations and the strangely glowing rocks. Of course the adventurers know that the source of the problems is the crash of Darkskye and the glowing crystals that its explosion spread throughout the forest.

GMs: Encourage the PCs to ask any questions they may have of Dermak. As they do Dermak will mention The Green Realm. If anybody has a background relating to magic, religion, the High Druid, or similar explain what the Green Realm is. If no player character has a suitable background then Dermak could stop to explain when he sees that they are puzzled at his mentions of the Green Realm.

“The Green Realm is another universe, where there is no death, only life. It may even be the source of all life. However, without the presence of death to temper it, the Green Realm is a chaos of unrestrained growth, mutation of form and purpose, and constant pain. Nothing intelligent can survive there long. Something has caused a magical imbalance and the unrestrained life energy is leaking into the Wild Wood, mutating it away from the balance of nature.”

Dermak is due to report back to the rest of his group who have travelled here from the north beyond the valley. The Green Shadow camp lies not far away and Dermak offers to take them there, though he says that the forest is changing rapidly and getting more dangerous every minute so he cannot be responsible for their safety if they travel with him (and he also points out that he is not responsible for what may happen if they do not travel with him).

Dermak also reports that he has seen a band of furtive looking kobolds headed north.

GMs: Remind the players that the adventurers are looking for the kobolds that are in league with Shez-a-kah and who have stolen the Darkskye Diamond.

If the adventurers decide to travel with Dermak give each player an extra 1d4 that they can add to one skill roll or one attack roll to represent the help he can give both in and out of battle.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Some groups may choose to attack the Green Shadow elf. Larger groups will discover Dermak has friends lurking in the trees, his spider allies.

Number of PCs	Green Shadows	Spiders
3	1	0
4	1	4
5	2	4
6	2	8
7	3	8

GREEN SHADOW

5th level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Longsword +15 vs. AC—10 damage

R: Pinning Shot +15 vs. PD (3 nearby or far away enemies)—6 damage

Natural even hit: The target is stuck (save ends).

Extreme Maneuverability: green shadows add the escalation die to all disengage checks and on any save that would increase maneuverability.

AC 18

PD 15 HP 60

MD 18

GREEN SPIDER

These trained spiders are striped with green dye.

1st level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +5

Needle-like fangs +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Wall-crawler: A spider hatchling can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground.

AC 14

PD 13 HP 8 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one green spider mook for every 8 damage you deal to the mob.



OWLBEAR TRAIL (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

More wildlife...

As the adventurers continue through the Wild Wood, they see signs of wild growth everywhere.

If any character has an background applicable to spotting owlbears they may make a DC 15 check (with a -5 penalty to the roll if they are listening, see the owlbear's monster entry for more details on that); on a success they hear a snuffling grunt that alerts them to the owlbears in the bushes, if they fail they still know it is owlbears but discover this by stepping into owlbear dung!

FIGHT!

Build suspense by describing the glimpses of the owlbears as they circle the party, obscured by the forest itself.

- A limb twisted and gaunt from hunger.
- Deep brown fur deep in the gloom of the forest.
- Gray and brown feathers speckled with blood.
- Wings that end in great talons.
- Giant reflective eyes.

If none of the adventurers have a background related to spotting owlbears, then the owlbears get to ambush the party (see page 164 of the core rules).

Number of PCs	Weaker Owlbears (70 HP)	Stronger Owlbears (101 HP)
3	1	0
4	0	1
5	2	0
6	0	2
7	3	0

OWLBEAR

Some wilderness tribes have an abnormal fear of both owls and bears, a testament to the savagery of this preposterous hybrid.

Large 4th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +8

Rip and Peck +9 vs. AC – 15 damage, and until the end of the owlbear's next turn, the target is hampered (makes only basic attacks) while engaged with the owlbear

Vicious hybrid: If the escalation die is even, make another rip and peck attack.

Feed the cubs: An owlbear that scores a critical hit against a hampered enemy tears a piece of the creature off (GM chooses a limb) and will subsequently attempt to retreat with the prize to feed its cubs. The torn-up enemy is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Silent hunter: Owlbears are nearly silent until they strike. Checks to hear them approaching take a –5 penalty.

AC 19

PD 17 HP see above

MD 13



THE GREEN SHADOWS (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

The adventurers meet some elves. This encounter works best after *Sylvian Friends* or *The Thorn Wall* but can take place before those encounters or without them.

The adventurers enter a clearing containing a camp. The inhabitants of the camp are a group of elven rangers who have been sent into the rift valley to deal with the destruction caused by the crystal shards raining down from the sky. The Green Shadows are accompanied by halfling allies, the Forest Lookouts.

JUDGEMENT

The Green Shadows know the locals, and know that the adventurers are strangers. They have met escaped prisoners from Darkskye as well as mutated monsters, so strongly suspect that the adventurers are more of the same.

The rangers might react to the party in one of several ways:

- **Attack**—The rangers blame the party for the disaster, or have evidence that the party have somehow been damaging the Wild Wood. If the party met and killed Dermak (in *The Thorn Wall* section) then the rangers know of that and attack the party.
- **Reward**—If the party dealt with some of the crystal (in the *Now and Again, and Again* or the *Horrors of the Green Realm* sections) and can prove that the elves decide that the adventurers are heroes and siblings-in-arms and gift to the party a magic item. If the party can bluff the elves that they are heroes who have been fixing the damage to the forest (even if they are not) and succeed at a DC 20 skill check then the elves will reward them as well.
- **Aid**—The rangers are too busy to help the party, but the halflings can help the party by pointing them north and sharing some of their provisions with the adventurers.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Looting the bodies afterwards provides useful things for the party—food, boots, lanterns, etc.

Number of PCs	Green Shadows	Forest Lookouts
3	1	2
4	1	4
5	2	4
6	2	8
7	3	8

GREEN SHADOW

5th level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Longsword +15 vs. AC—10 damage

R: Pinning Shot +15 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—6 damage

Natural even hit: The target is stuck (save ends).

Extreme Maneuverability: Green Shadows add the escalation die to all disengage checks and on any save that would increase maneuverability.

AC 18

PD 15 HP 60

MD 18

FOREST LOOKOUT

1 level mook [humanoid]

Initiative: +5

Dagger +6 vs. AC—4 damage

AC 17

PD 12 HP 7 (mook)

MD 14

Mook: Kill one forest lookout mook for every 7 damage you deal to the mob.

NYSETT BANNBUR (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

The party meets a tree sprite.

The party hobbles along, weary and wounded. As they push onwards the adventurers encounters a tree sprite by the name of Nysett Bannbur. Nysett has been trying to avoid any contact with his fellow tree sprites that have become angered by the crystals that have fallen from the sky.

The tiny winged creature flits in and out of the forest trees, darting about in apparent confusion. Nysett suddenly finds himself face to face with one of the adventurers. A look of horror is obvious and the little creature quickly attempts to flee, but instead crashes head first into another character and knocks himself unconscious.

GMs: Anyone who knows anything about the Wild Wood (a DC 15 skill check, an automatic success if anybody has a background directly related to the Wild Wood) knows that tree

sprites are secretive creatures that tend to the forest. They work tirelessly, using their magic to maintain the health of the Wild Wood and the balance of nature. They are quite unlike their cousins, the dreaded Murder Pixies.

While Nysett is unconscious it babbles fitfully. It is a DC 15 skill check to make out what it is saying. Anyone who passes the check discovers one of the following pieces of information:

- A giant shard of a dark green crystal is the source of the foul magic that has infected the local forest.
- His fellow tree sprites are angered and are tearing up the New Road, making it impassable.
- The New Road is besieged by earth elementals called forth by the sprites.
- There are owlbeats on the loose, driven from their nests deep in caves by the emanations of the crystal.

If all the adventurers fail their check they just discover this:

- Something fell from the sky that caused a catastrophic explosion that sent shockwaves throughout the entire Wild Wood. A corrupt magic accompanied that shockwave and has affected a great many of the inhabitants of the wood.

Once it has been roused from unconsciousness Nysett is very much interested in helping his tree sprite friends get free of the influence of the crystal, and will tell them that the shard lies embedded in the ground several miles north (if the party have not yet encountered the *Horrors of the Green Realm* or the *Now and Again, and Again* sections this is a good lead-in to one of them).

You might have your own picture of what a tree sprite is like and you should go with that. If you are stuck we think they probably talk in rapid-fire chirping and nattering: *"I was minding my own business, tending to the trees, plants, and animals when the most terrible, awful, huge explosion shook the woods and there was a massive terrible wave of evil energy that started destroying and corrupting everything, animals, turning dark the true and faithful, scattering animals everywhere. It scared me. Did it scare you? Did you see it? Were you there? I was, were you? I'm so scared for my friends. I'm only one small sprite and not very powerful, but maybe I can help, I don't know. Do you think I can help? Will you help? I hope you can."*

AGAINST THE ELEMENTS (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

A fight against maddened elementals and spirits. This encounter has ties to the Nysett Bannbur encounter.

As the party walks along they hear a sound of ripping and thumping and tearing. Clods of earth the size of horses are being thrown around. Above the trees rise the hunched rounded shoulders of earth elementals. They are destroying the Wild Wood!

Ahead is a chasm with a roaring white river blocks their path. An ancient stone bridge spans the chasm, but the elementals will soon get to the bridge and wreck it.

The adventurers can't really go around the chasm, and it is too large to jump across (or even for a high elf to teleport themselves across), and is far too dangerous to try to climb down and across. The bridge is the only way across.

As soon as the adventurers step out of the undergrowth they'll be spotted by the many hostile sprites who are directing the earth elementals to wreck everything.

There are only two real options are attempt to sneak past (a DC 25 skill check from each adventurer) or try to fight through to the bridge. Maybe, just maybe, diplomacy will work. Probably not though.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

If the party keeps pushing forwards during the battle they will reach the bridge once the escalation die reaches 6. It is up to you as a GM if the monsters try to chase them after that point.

Number of PCs	Earth Elemental	Angered Tree Sprites
3	1	10
4	2	15
5	3	20
6	4	25
7	5	30

EARTH ELEMENTAL

The earth elemental erupts from the ground, crumbling and reforming as it strides towards you.

3rd level blocker [ELEMENTAL]

Initiative: +3

Rock Fist +8 vs. PD—8 damage

Natural even hit: 12 damage

C: Gravel Spray +8 vs. AC (1d3 nearby enemies)—6

damage and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn

Earthwalk: Instead of walking, an earth elemental merely sinks back into the ground and re-emerges somewhere else nearby. This movement cannot be intercepted.

Reinforce: Instead of attacking, an earth elemental can use a standard action to physically merge with another of its kind until the start of its next turn. The reinforced elemental gains +2 AC and any damage is split between the two component elementals.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 45

MD 12

ANGERED TREE SPRITE

Black, sooty skin and glowing red eyes reveal the nature of these foul critters.

2nd level mook [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +7

Vile Touch +7 vs. PD—5 negative energy damage

AC 18

PD 16 HP 9 (mook)

MD 12

Mook: Kill one angered tree sprite mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

BROKEN CARAVAN (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

The party encounters the remnants of a recent trade caravan on a dirt track running through the valley.

The party has found a poorly maintained dirt road through the valley, with recent wagon-tracks on it.

ENCOUNTERING THE BROKEN CARAVAN

After following the track for a while the adventurers hear sounds up ahead.

Two large cargo wagons are broken and overturned on the side of the track. Dozens of crates, bags, and loose items are strewn about the ground. At least half a dozen dead bodies are scattered amongst the debris. Three men are sifting through the wreckage and cargo, one of them has an open scroll in his hands.

It is obvious that this caravan was attacked.

The caravan is hauling finished goods and the sort of things that an isolated forest community can't easily make for itself (bolts of cloth, sturdy winter clothing, lanterns, wine, saw blades, etc).

THE SURVIVORS

The trio of surviving caravan members asks the party for help in delivering the goods to the nearby community of Alameda, travelling together for safety.

The survivors explain that the caravan was attacked by earth elementals and timber wolves (the survivors will be keen to point out "*Wolves MADE OF timber!*")

The three survivors identify themselves as Borack, Timuren, and Gareth. Borack is the one holding the scroll while the others are sifting through the cargo.

GMs: In reality, the merchants are really escaped prisoners from the crashed island who have taken the identities of caravan members that they have slain.

If the party approaches openly, Borack notices them and calls out to them in the friendliest tone that he can muster, but attempting to maintain the impression that he is grieving. Borack and his companions are not skilled fighters or adventurers and are not capable of challenging the adventurers. Borack has decided that he can strike a deal with the adventurers to his benefit.

"Hello, friends. We have come under attack and our people are slain and our commission threatened. Can you offer us any assistance? We would be in your debt."

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

The reality of the situation is that a small merchant caravan was headed to Alameda when the island prison of Darkskye crashed in the Wild Wood. A large chunk of the island hit the ground and the shockwave of magical energy rippled along the road, overturning one wagon, disengaging two horses, and causing damage to both vehicles.

As the merchants were attempting to make repairs to the wagons, they came under siege by a pack of hungry

wolves. Two of the merchants managed to scare off the wolves with fire, but not before their comrades were slain.

The three escaped prisoners came upon the scene as the wolves were retreating into the deep woods. They took advantage of the situation, surprising the beleaguered and grieving merchants, and killed them.

The adventurers have a chance to recognize the three ‘survivors’ for what they really are (a DC 25 skill check, whoever is taking the lead in talking to the ‘survivors’ should roll the skill check). Failing forwards means that the person talking to the ‘survivors’ instead notices one of the following facts:

- None of the slain individuals had weapons of any kind in their hands, they were caught by surprise.
- Most of the dead bodies died by numerous vicious bites. Some of the bite marks seem to be infected with a purplish substance oozing from the wound.
- Two corpses suffered fatal blows to the back of the head, probably from a large rock or heavy weapon.

If the prisoners are discovered for who they really are and are threatened by adventurers who were guards, they might attempt to run away or might start a fight hoping to overpower the adventurers by surprise.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)	
Fighting or threatening the prisoners leads to the following combat...	
Number of PCs	Escaped Prisoners
3	3
4	3
5	3
6	3
7	3

ESCAPED PRISONER

Fugitives from the imperial law, these humans are desperate and dangerous.

1st level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Club +5 vs. AC—4 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The thug deals +6 damage with its next attack this battle. (GM, be sure to let the PCs know this is coming, it’s not a secret.)

AC 17

PD 14 HP 27

MD 12

FIXING THE CARAVAN

If the adventurers and the ‘survivors’ agree to work together to get the caravan to the village of Alameda they’ll need to fix its wheels and haul it through the Wild Wood. The adventurers and NPCs need to work together to cobble together parts from one cargo wagon to repair the other cargo wagon, re-pack all the inventory, and get underway—during this time the adventurers have the chance to again discover what really happened (a DC 25 skill check). Go around the table and have the players describe their individual efforts.

Optionally, the adventurers can simply scavenge the cargo for their own uses and ignore the ‘survivors’ request to travel to Alameda. In that case the ‘survivors’ might want to tag along with the party for a bit if it is obvious that the party are heading out of the valley.

THE SCROLL

The scroll in Borack’s possession is a crude map of the valley, but marked with a lot of useful notes like ‘strong vines grow here’ and ‘clean water here’ and ‘avoid the yellow berries’. Taking the scroll gives the party +1 on any skill until they are out of the rift valley.

THE DEAD RISE

The slain caravan guards and merchants have green stuff oozing from their wounds; the creatures that attacked the caravan were infected by the magic of Darskye, and that same magic is about to (temporarily) revive the corpses.

GMs: Burning the bodies after discovering the green ooze infection prevents the corpses from rising.

If the party sticks around the some of the slain individuals rise up as undead and attack the party.

Needless to say the escaped prisoners will not join in the fight—instead they feign wounds, or run off. The trio of murderers are content to let the undead and the adventurers fight it out. Hey, they might get lucky and an adventurer will die and they can loot the body.

If the adventurers leave the trio on the road and continue along it they will hear screams in the distance as the dead rise and slaughter the trio.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

The corpses are angry at being killed. Spending a 6 with the Priestess might allow an adventurer to convince the corpses not to attack.

Number of PCs	Angry Corpse
3	4
4	5
5	6
6	7
7	8

ANGRY CORPSE

"Ven...gence... shall...be...ours."

2nd level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +1

Vulnerability: holy

Grab and bite +7 vs. AC—6 damage

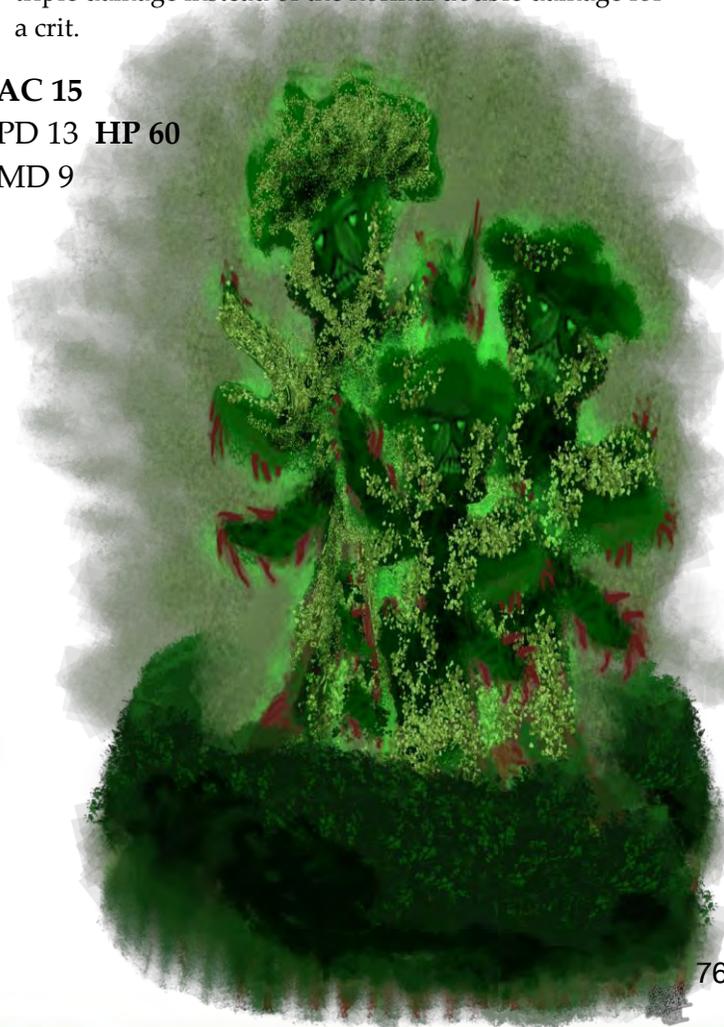
Natural 16+: The target is grabbed.

Headshot: A critical hit against an angry corpse deals triple damage instead of the normal double damage for a crit.

AC 15

PD 13 HP 60

MD 9



HORRORS OF THE GREEN REALM (SET PIECE)

The adventurers encounter some terrifying things, and encounter a huge chunk of crystal from Darkskye.

As the adventurers walk through the forest they are see the twisted horrors of unrestrained life-force.

GMs: Ask each PC to describe one unnerving thing they saw as they come closer to the source of the high weirdness. If they do not have any ideas, here are some descriptions to jump start their creativity:

- A spider made of vines and skinless muscle.
- A tree with mouths, mouths that constantly scream.
- A snake made entirely of emerald hands.

THE CLEARING

After everybody has had a chance to describe something creepy the PCs enter a clearing. Here is what we imagine the clearing to look like, but based on your player's creepy descriptions of the forest you might have a better idea, if so run with that.

"You enter what could generously be called a clearing. The trees here are covered in pulsing veins and arteries and you see spurts of thick emerald blood where the vessels don't quite join the bark. Overhead you see a spiderly canopy made of sinew that quakes with pulses of ichor. Peer further in, you see masses of green leafy muscle among the sinew. The masses vibrate, crack and spit forth a horror of blood, branch, and barbed tentacles. The things stand to a height taller than a horse and move toward your group as smaller growths fall of the monster."

FIGHT!

If the party flees this fight they run through some spore-bearing plants that make them slightly dopey — it will have an effect on their next fight.

Number of PCs	Green Horror	Wild Growth (see 'spawning')
3	1	10
4	2	5
5	2	10
6	3	5
7	3	10

SPAWNING

The area is alive with raw life energy. Any character that does not move on their turn has a wild growth sprout from their body or from the pulsating forest floor at the end of their turn. This wild growth is in addition to the ones already involved in the battle.

The good news is that healing in this area always gains a character the maximum possible HP.

WILD GROWTH

2nd level mook [PLANT]

Initiative: +5

C: Sap explosion +10 vs. AC (1d3 nearby enemies)—5 damage and if the 1d3 result was 3 remove the wild growth from the battle because it is dead.

Nastier Special:

When the wild growth is killed, immediately make the following attack:

R: Bloody explosion +5 vs. PD (against the nearest enemy)—5 damage. Do not trigger this power if the wild growth was removed from play by sap explosion

AC 16

PD 14 HP 5 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one wild growth mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

GREEN HORROR

4th level troop [PLANT]

Initiative: +8

Toxic cloud +9 vs. AC—14 poison damage

C: Verdant tentacles +9 vs. AC—10 damage
Natural 16+: Ongoing 5 acid damage and weakened (save ends both).

AC 20

PD 15 HP 60

MD 15

THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM.

As the last of the green horrors die the clearing itself withers and dies, revealing a crystal (...or as the party runs away they stumble through a wall of fleshy vines and come upon a crystal that pulses with amethyst and green light).

The crystal bears the same strange hue as those from the crashed flying island of Darkskye. Roots wrap about the crystal, and the crystal is partially covered in a squamous and pulsing fleshy ball of veins and eyes. The crystal/flesh/plant mass leaks a green ichor that seeps into the forest soil.

GMs: Let the players know that the adventurers see that this is obviously the heart of the problems in this part of the Wild Wood.

As the party observes the scene trees and other fibrous tissues rush from behind them and up from the earth, sealing off their escape. Barbed roots ending in mouths emerge from the ground and move to attack the party.

FIGHT!

If the party fled from the last fight then the escalation die stays at 0 until the first adventurer becomes staggered.

Number of PCs	Forest Heart HP
3	90
4	120
5	150
6	180
7	210

FOREST HEART

5th level spoiler [PLANT]

Initiative: +10

Feet-piercing roots +10 vs. AC—18 damage and target is stuck (save ends)

C: Phasing tentacles +10 vs. PD (1d3 enemies)—8 damage

Natural 16+ hit: The target is confused (save ends).

R: Eyes of insanity (1d2 enemies) +10 vs MD—10 damage and the target is confused (easy save ends)

Action surge: When the escalation die is even, add it to all attacks that round.

AC 20

PD 15 HP See Above

MD 17

FIXING OR BREAKING?

When the last blow hits the horrible heart of the contagion, most of the twisted forest remains fall off the crystal. The forest around the party still pulses with the light from the crystal, but now they can clearly see it.

GMs: As this is the heart of the problems facing the area, fixing this may lead to a reward from the Druid's Green Shadows, and the High Druid herself. Leaving this crystal here will harm the High Druid by throwing the balance of nature

out of alignment. Let the players know that the adventurers realize that this crystal holds great power, perhaps it can be harnessed?

This is the choice that the players have to make...

- Do they fix the problem, but potentially endanger themselves?
- Do they hate the High Druid and try to make the problem worse?
- Do they try to seize the power of the crystal for themselves, risky as it is?
- Do they just walk away, content or even glad to let the High Druid's realm fall apart?

Walking away is easy—the party just walks away from the crystal, allowing it to continue tainting the Wild Wood.

Walking Away—“As you turn your back on the crystal, you hear rustling among the leaves. Looking back you see new roots growing into the crystal. The creature is still too weak to attack, so if you leave now you will make the clearing's edge before it can attack again.”

If the party tries to fix the problem posed by the crystal each adventurer must make a DC 15 skill check and their player describe what it is they are doing to contribute to messing with the crystal. On a failed check the adventurer fails forwards and their player must choose one of the following:

- Somehow the character fouled up and the DCs for all subsequent skill checks is 5 higher.
- Each party member present takes 1d10 negative energy damage as they get sudden painful growths throughout their body.
- The adventurer loses a recovery as they suddenly undergo strange growth spurts.

If anybody rolls a natural 1 the character failed so badly that the party must start over again.

Once everybody has made a skill check and succeeded or failed forward (and nobody rolled a natural 1) the party gets one of the following outcomes depending on their intentions and actions.

Shutting down the crystal—“With a loud crash, the crystal shoots out a burst of light and shatters. As you begin to regain your vision you see the strange growths of the forest wither.”

Making it worse—“With a strange hum, the crystal's light shifts from clear to green. You are bathed in the uncanny amethyst light. The plants around you twist and thicken, moan and bleed. The strange guardian of the crystal starts to regrow. You must run before you are consumed by the burst of unnatural life.”

Seize power—“The crystal cracks and becomes black. You feel power fill you, though you can tell it is only temporary.” (Each player chooses one benefit: gain +1 to all attacks for the next battle, add twice the escalation die to the adventurer's miss damage in their next battle, hovering flight 3 foot above the ground for the whole of the next battle, teleport as a move action during their next battle).

TAKING A STAND (SET PIECE)

The adventurers meet walking trees.

As the adventurers are travelling along, or as they are leaving a location, they notice that the Wild Wood itself is moving. A veritable army of walking trees is marching through the forest in a long line.

GMs: This is either the High Druid taking drastic action to root out the infection caused by Darkskye crashing, or is a direct result of Darkskye's magic. You decide which it is.

The trees are tearing other trees out of the ground, tearing apart animals, throwing boulders, and generally wrecking the place. As the army walks along more trees awaken to life and join them. The line of walking trees is several ranks deep and stretches to the left and right as far as the adventurers can see.

GMs: The party must either stand and fight, or run to a defensible location. Give them both options, and then ask if they have a third option they'd like to suggest (fight here/fight elsewhere/something else). Let the players know that diplomacy or bluffing the trees is not really possible.

STAND AND FIGHT

If the adventurers just rush the trees skip ahead to the fight, but all the adventurers start the fight dazed (normal save ends, 11+) due to the flying debris that the walking trees that they are not directly fighting are throwing about.

RUN AND FIGHT ELSEWHERE

The most sensible option is for the adventurers to head to some place defensible like the Village of Alameda or Alam's Tower and fight there.

Running ahead of the oncoming army gives the adventurers time to prepare some defenses against the oncoming onslaught. Each party member preparing makes a skill check against an appropriate background, with the difficulty of each task as follows:

Rally villagers (DC 25)—The villagers of Alameda agree to take up arms and defend their homes in an organized way. The villagers have only farming implements and hunting bows, and can only really harry and distract the walking trees. The distraction that the villagers 'fighting'

creates grants the adventurer who passed this skill check a +1 attack throughout the coming battle with the walking trees.

Brew potions (DC 20)—The villagers of Alameda can brew potions for the party. The adventurer gains one healing potion for passing this skill check.

Build/repair defenses (DC 15)—The adventurer can build barricades, create alchemist’s fire, perform ritual magic, etc. Though the tower is easier to repair than the village’s palisade walls there are villagers at Alameda who can help the adventurer so the DC for either task is 15.

Scout (DC 15)—Forewarned is forearmed, and succeeding at this task starts the escalation die at 1.

THE FIGHT

Eventually the trees will reach where the adventurers are, even if all the adventurers are doing is running directly away. The adventurers are faster, but have to rest eventually and the walking trees are implacable.

FIGHT!

Well-prepared and quick-thinking adventurers could possibly lure the animated plants into a trap, giving them an advantage against their foes. If you as GM feel that the party deserves a break due to their luring their leafy enemies into a trap start the escalation die at 2.

Number of PCs	Hunter Vine Saplings	Hive Plant Thralls
3	2	5
4	3	5
5	3	10
6	4	10
7	5	10

HUNTER VINE SAPLING

The shapeless network of vines stalks across high branches with the speed and strength of a jaguar. When it drops from its perch the vine creature encompasses and ensnares its prey, slowly digesting it until nothing but bare bones remain.

2nd level troop [PLANT]
Initiative: +7

Vine smack +7 vs. AC—7 damage

Constricting attack +6 vs. PD—5 damage and the hunter vine grabs the target. While grabbed by the vine, the target takes 5 ongoing damage. The hunter vine can have any number of creatures grabbed.

AC 18
PD 16 HP 36
MD 12

HIVE PLANT THRALL

A hive plant thrall looks and acts like the creature it used to be, but behind its eyes a plant intelligence controls its thoughts and actions, luring more prey to the hive plant’s horrible maw.

2nd level mook [PLANT]
Initiative: +2

Smashing fist +7 vs. AC—5 damage

Spore-infested: When a hive plant thrall is reduced to 0 hit points from an attack, it uses the spore burst attack as a free action before it dies.

[Special trigger] **C: Spore burst +7 vs. PD (all enemies engaging the thrall)**—5 damage and the target makes a normal save. If the target fails, it is confused (easy save (6+) ends).

AC 18
PD 16 HP 9 (mook)
MD 12

Mook: Kill one hive plant thrall for every 9 points of damage that you deal to the mob.

KOBOLDS! (SET PIECE)

The adventurers meet some kobolds, and spot the Darkskye Diamond!

The party is marching through the Wild Wood when they come across a group of kobolds digging crystals out of the ground. The crystals are those from the flying island of darkskye. Nearby there is a large chunk of Darkskye's rock hovering in the air.

SOME KOBOLDS FIGHT, OTHERS RUN

As soon as the party spots the kobolds two things happen simultaneously. The first is that the kobolds spot the adventurers and rush to defend their prizes. The second is that a kobold yells out "I've got it!" and holds aloft the Darkskye Diamond.

GMs: The kobold with the Darkskye Diamond is too far away for the party to reach or stop, and runs off immediately. The adventurers can track that kobold down, but that will happen in chapter 4. The kobold is out of bowshot range, too far away for magic, and runs into the undergrowth before the adventurers can properly react.

FIGHT!

As soon as half of the kobolds are dead the other half will run away carrying as many of the crystal fragments as they can.

Number of PCs	Kobold Archer	Kobold Warrior
3	15	5
4	15	7
5	15	9
6	15	11
7	15	13

KOBOLD WARRIOR

1st level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Spear +8 vs. AC—4 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The kobold warrior can pop free from the target.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Not brave: Kobold warriors with single-digit hit-points will run away the first chance they get.

AC 18

PD 15 HP 22

MD 12

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

INFORMATION GATHERING

After the fight the adventurers might want to check out the bodies or otherwise look for clues.

The kobolds have no useful items on them, at least not from an adventurer's viewpoint. Most of their kobold weaponry is inferior, they have crude tools, and their packs of food leave much to be desired.

Most of the kobolds are carrying scraps of paper with drawings of the Darkskye Diamond on them. A fair few of them are also carrying crudely made books of religious writing that promises the kobolds an ascent to power if they can revive a certain dragon said to slumber deep within the isle of Omen. The kobolds are all wearing leather from dust-dune snakes, a type of creature found only on the isle of Omen.

GMs: Even if the adventurers do not search the bodies they will still notice the dust-dune snake leather and make the connection with the isle of Omen.

OUT OF THE WOODS (ENDING)

The adventurers finally reach the road out of the Wild Wood.

After a days of travel the party arrives at a wood elf community at the edge of the rift valley. Beyond the village is a road that leads north.

The wood elf village is known as Crow's Leigh, and is sheltered among the roots of ancient trees. Half a day's travel to the north is a human community known as Tilgate, and then from there are the rolling fields of tilth that stretch on towards Fullcatch Bay.

THE KOBOLDS

The adventurers notice that several kobold corpses have been gruesomely displayed at the outskirts of town. Other kobolds are in cages slung from trees. The wood elf villagers caught the kobolds running out of the deep Wild Wood carrying crystals with them.

The villagers mention to the party that they saw one bunch of kobolds carrying a glowing diamond headed north, but they got away.

The villagers tell the party that these kobolds come from Omen, worship a dragon, and have with them the Darksye Diamond. The kobolds in the cages will be only too happy to corroborate the story, with threats that once their dragon god rises on the isle of Omen that it will burn the world so the villagers had better let them go.

GMs: If the party didn't meet the kobolds in the forest then this is a chance to have that encounter happen here: run the combat from that section as the kobolds break free from their cages, then have a couple of kobold corpses for the adventurers to investigate.

PRAISE OR PUNISHMENT?

If the party acted in the High Druid's best interests throughout this adventure then they are welcomed by the elves. The elves feed them, and the owner of the local tavern (the tavern is called The Green King) refuses payment. This encounter becomes a reward where they are praised for their actions, and admirers present them with gifts.

BUT... if the party deliberately tried to harm the Wild Wood the elves seem welcoming at first, but once the party is inside The Green King tavern the High Druid aligned wood elves will lock the doors and attack the party. A fight ensues.

If the party turns up with the 'survivors' from the broken caravan then the elves realize that the trio killed the traders and assign blame equally to the adventurers. The elves are familiar with the dead traders believe that the adventurers are murderous escaped convicts.



FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Whether the fight occurs or not will depend on if the party are travelling with the murderers from the *Broken Caravan* encounter or refused to 'fix' a problem with the crystal in the *Horrors of the Green Realm* section.

Number of PCs	Elven Archers	Elven Fighters	Woodland Creatures
3	1	1	5
4	2	2	5
5	2	3	10
6	3	4	10
7	3	5	15

WOODLAND CREATURES (AND MAYBE SECRETLY DRUIDS)

Dogs, foxes, deer, falcons, rabbits. Rather tougher and smarter than normal.

1st level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +5

Teeth and Talons +6 vs. AC—5 damage

Leaping! Jumping! Flying!: Woodland creatures are able to leap, climb or fly around most physical obstructions.

AC 15

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one woodland creature mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

ELVEN ARCHER

Elven archery is a thing of beauty until you're on the end receiving end of it.

2nd level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

R: Longbow +7 vs. AC—8 damage

Even miss: Reroll the attack with a -2 penalty.

Short-sword +7 vs. AC—6 damage

Natural 14+: The elven archer pops free.

AC 17

PD 14 HP 36

MD 14

ELVEN FIGHTER

The only thing faster than their feet are their blades.

2nd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Elven Sabre +7 vs. AC—7 damage and the fighter gets a +2 to its next attack

Natural 16+: The target makes a Quickstep Strike (below) as a free action.

Quickstep Strike +6 vs. PD—3 damage, and the target becomes engaged with a different nearby ally.

Special: This attack is only used when triggered by Elven Sabre.

Two-weapon warrior: Elven fighters reroll the first natural 2 of each attack.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 38

MD 12

ONWARDS TO TILGATE

Tilgate is a human town, and a good place to give the party a full heal up and maybe a couple of day's rest and a chance to resupply.

The people of Tilgate tell the party that a great number of kobolds set out into the Wild Wood shortly before a flying island exploded, and then later came out with a lot of crystals and a giant glowing diamond.

The older and wiser citizens of Tilgate tell the party that they think that the kobolds came from a magic circle of stones a couple of days travel to the north.

GMs: It's possible that the party may avoid the wood elf community altogether and head directly out of the Wild Wood to Tilgate. That is fine. If the kobolds encounter didn't happen in the forest and the party bypassed Crow's Leigh then have the kobold encounter happen on their way to Tilgate and have the party meet the kobolds in cages in Tilgate itself

CHAPTER 4: DIAMOND CHASE

This section of the adventure is designed for 4th level characters. Some of the fights are easy, but have hazards that GMs can throw at adventurers mid-fight to ramp up the difficulty.

Chapter 4 is split into three parts: the first two are fairly short, the third section is a dungeon crawl. Kobolds feature prominently in this adventure, and it spotlights the varied and often deadly kobolds of 13th Age.

Unlike other chapters this one is fairly linear: chase the kobolds and the Darkskye Diamond—the whole chapter is one giant extended chase scene. However, once the adventurers reach the kobold's dungeon lair in the third part of the chapter there is an element of exploration involved. That said there is plenty of room for GMs to add their own twists: have kobold NPCs attempt to bribe the adventurers to leave them alone, have an encounter with a living dungeon breaching the surface of the Desert of Broken Statues - go nuts!

RECAP (THE STORY SO FAR)

The adventurers owe a debt to the Prince of Shadows. In order to repay their debt they performed crimes for him, one of which was stealing the Darkskye Diamond.

The Darkskye Diamond was in turn stolen from the Prince of Shadows, who asks that the adventurers steal it back.

The Darkskye Diamond has the power to control flying islands, and was originally mined from a flying island called Darkskye—an island that serves as a prison for the Dragon Empire's worst criminals. The person who stole the diamond from the Prince has taken the diamond to the flying Darkskye Prison.

The adventurers used a stolen flying ship to get aboard the flying island and steal back the diamond, but the prison crashed out of the sky into the Wild Wood.

The adventurers made their way out of the Wild Wood and tracked down the Darkskye Diamond to a group of kobolds, and are now hot on their trail...

THE WILD WOOD

OVERVIEW

The adventurers follow the trail of the kobolds from chapter 3.

THE SPARKLING TRAIL

The adventurers have left the village of Tilgate (from chapter 3) far behind them and have set out to find the magic circle that the villagers described to them. The villagers believed that the kobolds came from the magic circle.

Following the kobolds is easy, they have dropped lots of crystals behind them as they fled with their prize, the Darkskye Diamond. Some of the kobolds have been turning into crystal along the way (a deadly side-effect of the broken magic of the Darkskye flying prison), and have left a sparkling trail as they have crumbled to death.

However, occasionally the trail ends suddenly, or the kobolds doubled back on themselves.

Go around the group and ask each player a problem or challenge the group had tracking down the kobolds to the Blood Wood. Move to the next player and ask them how their adventurer solved the problem, then work that into the narrative. Repeat this until each player has had a chance to tell of a challenge that the group encountered and of how their adventurer solved a different problem.

THE KOBOLD CAMP

The adventurers have finally caught up with some of the kobolds, the party has tracked the kobolds down to a circle of tents on a path through the forest. The path is cleared of vegetation and is rutted by many kobold tracks—a lot of kobolds have been passing through here over an extended period of time.

The Darkskye Diamond is obviously not here: it is too large for any of the kobolds to have hidden on their person, and it is reputed to glow very brightly—it would be visible even through the tents.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

The party could potentially avoid the fight as it is obvious that the diamond is not here. Sneaking around the kobold camp is a DC 25 skill check, or DC 15 if the party use a creative distraction.

Number of PCs	Kobold Archer	Kobold Dog Warrior
3	10	5
4	10	7
5	10	9
6	10	11
7	10	13

KOBOLD WARRIOR

1st level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Spear +8 vs. AC—4 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The kobold warrior can pop free from the target.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Not brave: Kobold warriors with single-digit hit-points will run away the first chance they get.

AC 18

PD 15 HP 22

MD 12

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

KOBOLD CAMP HAZARD CHART

If you want to make this fight more difficult (and I suggest that you do) throw some of these hazards into the mix mid-fight so that the adventurers must choose to spend a standard action to try to avoid a trap or spend it trying to hit a kobold and hope that the hazard doesn't harm them.

KOBOLD FOOT TRAPS	KOBOLD HIVE TRAP	LARGE SPIKED PIT TRAP
Difficulty to avoid: DC 15 Ankle breaker +5 vs AC —1d10 damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 20 Stinging insects +10 vs PD (all adventurers)—1d12 poison damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 25 Dung-covered spikes +10 vs AC (all adventurers)—2d8 poison damage
A BETTER MOUSETRAP	STINK POT	DEEP YET NARROW PIT
Difficulty to avoid: DC 15 Clang +5 vs AC —1d10 damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 20 Mobile latrine +10 vs PD —3d6 poison damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 25 Fall +15 vs AC —4d6 damage

TREACHEROUS CIRCLE

The Darkskye Diamond glows brightly, and through the trees the adventurers can certainly see a bright and clearly very magical glow. In a clearing in the thick forest is a stone circle, and a group of kobolds in red robes are stood at the center of it chanting and waving around the kind of draconic relics that the degenerate creatures prize so highly. This is a teleportation circle, and kobolds are queueing up to step into the portal of bright light at the center.

Just as the adventurers spot it, four kobolds straining under the weight of the huge Darkskye Diamond step into the portal of light and vanish. Unfortunately this happens far too quickly for the adventurers to do much about it, except to follow the diamond through the portal to wherever it may lead. There are a lot of kobolds about, together with the red-robed kobold wizards, so sneaking up to the portal isn't an option.

FIGHT!

Unless an adventurer does something to alert the kobolds first, the escalation die for the fight with the kobolds starts at 1. The kobolds will see the adventurers as soon as they get close enough to fight (bow range), but the adventurers will definitely have the momentum in the fight as the kobolds are all focused on the portal.

An adventurer who steps into the glowing portal before the fight is over has removed themselves from the fight, but a kobold hero will also flee either through the portal or into the forest when an adventurer does so.

Number of PCs	Kobold Archer	Kobold Hero	Kobold Grand Wizard
3	9	3	8
4	12	4	7
5	15	5	6
6	18	6	5
7	21	7	4

The grand-wizards do not really add much to the fight, but killing them will sure be satisfying.

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

KOBOLD HERO

2nd level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3

Shortsword +7 vs. AC—6 damage, and each nearby non-leader kobold deals +3 damage with its next attack this battle that hits

Natural even miss: 3 damage.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 34

MD 12

KOBOLD GRAND-WIZARD

"Beware my mighty power! Mighty power!"

0th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Static jolt +5 vs. AC—2 lightning damage

R: Painful liver inversion hex +7 vs. PD—4 poison damage, or 6 poison damage against dwarves

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 15

PD 13 HP 5 (mook)

MD 9

Mook: Kill one kobold grand-wizard mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

LOOT!

The dragon relics are mostly just carved bits of wood, but one or two of them are magic items.

None of the relics are weapons or implements or armor, instead these dragon-themed objects are things like magic rings or wondrous items.

GMs: If the adventurers dally too much then the portal closes, but it can be re-opened by the adventurers. If a wizard or other magic user is with the party they can re-open the portal, if the adventurers lack the ability to cast spells then they can use some of the dragon relics to open the portal.

THE ISLE OF OMEN

OVERVIEW

The adventurers have gone through a magic circle and ended up on the isle of Omen, chasing the kobolds who have the Darkskye Diamond.

THE DESERT OF BROKEN STATUES

The adventurers awake near a glowing blue portal. Obviously they passed out as they travelled from glowing portal to glowing portal, but it doesn't feel like they have been here for long, probably only moments. The portal has brought them all here at once, they seem to have caused a magical bottle-neck with the teleportation spell. The glowing portal is slowly fading away - they won't be able to return from wherever they are now.

The adventurers see that they are on a great plain of grey dust. Statues from past ages litter the landscape, and surrounding the desert like a ring of mountains is a series of living dungeons, their monster-haunted spires jutting up into the sky like claws. This unfriendly place is the Desert of Broken Statues on the isle of Omen.

In the extreme distance a glow can be seen retreating at speed - the Darkskye Diamond is headed north in the direction of a river that flows sluggishly through the lifeless desert.

As the adventurers attempt to get their bearings they are attacked by a band of kobolds.

FIGHT!

This is a good chance to introduce kobolds that may have escaped previous fights by running away. "Hey, the kobold facing you is the one that stole your dagger in the Wild Wood".

Number of PCs	Kobold Archer	Kobold Dog Rider
3	10	2
4	12	3
5	10	5
6	12	6
7	10	8

Trapster (roll d3)

1. Oil bladder explodes underfoot. Target takes double damage from fire for the rest of the fight.
2. Spring-loaded darts concealed under a statue. 1d4 + escalation die damage.
3. Blasting powder under a statue. 3 damage and target is dazed (-4 to attack) until the end of their next turn.

KOBOLD DOG-RIDER

Here comes the cavalry! Riding feral terriers, savage corgis, and dire-schnauzers! The tiny doggy armor is adorable, the flaming lances of the riders much less so.

3rd level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Flaming lance +8 vs. AC—6 damage, and 3 ongoing fire damage

Natural 16+: The kobold and its steed pop free from all enemies and can move as a free action.

R: Tiny crossbow +8 vs. AC—9 damage and the kobold and its steed can move as a free action.

Natural roll is above target's Wisdom (trapster): There is a line tied to the barbed dart, pulling/tripping the target into a trap. See Trapster.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Canine steed: The steed can't be targeted separately from the kobold. If the kobold dies the dog runs away.

AC 19

PD 16 HP 41

MD 12

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

The kobolds have left deep tracks in the powdery grey dust of the lifeless desert. The tracks turn to follow the river, as the sluggish water starts to pick up speed. Soon the sound of a waterfall can be heard from the direction of what look from a distance to be camp fires.

Approaching closer the smoke proves not to be camp fires but pock-marked holes in the ground. Volcanic vapors and thick dark smoke are coming from the holes, chimneys to an underground inferno.

GMs: Let the adventurers know that everybody knows that Omen is not volcanic, it is an accretion of living dungeons. What is going on here? Something magical.

The river thunders over the lip of a chasm into a dark void. Peering over the edge it is possible to see kobolds making their way around cracks in the ground that glow with molten magma. The chimneys through the rock here are so hot that they glow on the inside, and the air is thick with fumes that scorch the lungs. For a moment the pure white light of the Darkskye Diamond can be glimpsed as the kobolds carry it into a tunnel. The kobolds below are too far away to attack, and even a feather-fall spell would likely run out too soon to carry the adventurers down safely. It appears that they will have to climb. The kobold's superior knowledge of the terrain has allowed them to get far ahead of the party, but the adventurers are still in hot pursuit.

As the adventurers consider their options a rock skitters down into the chasm from the opposite side... it is more kobolds!

FIGHT!

Some of the kobolds with ranged attacks can stay on the opposite side of the chasm, close enough to shoot bows but too far to jump. The adventurers will be obligated to use ranged attacks on the far away kobolds. Don't put too many kobolds out of reach of melee fighters though.

Number of PCs	Kobold Engineer	Kobold Skyclaw
3	1	16
4	2	16
5	3	16
6	4	16
7	5	16

KOBOLD ENGINEER

Kobold engineers are part of the reason why kobolds thrive in almost any environment, although they are also adept at creating traps and undermining dwarven mine shafts.

3rd level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Wrench, pick, or shovel +8 vs. AC—8 damage

Natural 16+: The engineer's kobold allies gain a +2 attack bonus against the target until the start of the engineer's next turn.

R: Explosive flask +5 vs. PD—The target is vulnerable to non-magical attacks (easy save ends, 6+)

Natural roll is above target's Wisdom (trapster): The blast knocks the target into a trap. See Trapster.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 45

MD 13

Trapster (roll d6)

1. Patch of strategically placed slippery oil.
 2. Foot-sized spike-pit, hidden in the dust.
 3. A foot snare attaches bag of 1000 biting millipedes to adventurer's leg!
 4. Broken glass and a foot snare. Ouch!
 5. Explosive powder and a lit fuse... blam!
 6. Metal spikes coated in kobold dung.
- All these traps do 1d4 + escalation die damage.



KOBOLD SKYCLAW

The kobolds hurl themselves into battle wearing dragon-winged backpacks. Landing among the enemy they begin to hurl alchemical flasks about—those kobolds that don't explode on impact that is!

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Spike-toed boots +5 vs. AC—4 damage

C: Alchemical flask +6 vs. PD (one nearby enemy or one far away enemy at -2 to attack) Spike-toed boots +5 vs. AC—3 damage, and roll d4 for the effect of the flask's contents

1. Distilled ankheg spit: The target takes 3 ongoing acid damage.
2. Reconstituted remorhaz lymph: The target takes 3 ongoing fire damage.
3. Essence of giant spider web: The target is stuck (save ends).
4. Kobold blasting powder: There's a loud bang and the battlefield is obscured with thick smoke. Each non-kobold creature takes a -2 attack penalty during its next turn.

Natural 1: The kobold explodes (see mook).

Erratic flight: The kobold flings itself from a trebuchet or ignites an unstable alchemical propellant and lands among its enemies. Each time the kobold uses a move action to fly, roll a d20.

- 1: It crashes and explodes (see mook).
- 2-15: It lands safely,
- 16+: It stays aloft and can keep flying.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 7 (mook)

MD 13

Mook: Kill one kobold skyclaw mook for every 7 damage you deal to the mob. If an attack roll against a skyclaw is a natural 20 or a skyclaw rolls a natural 1 attack roll or flight roll, it triggers a chain reaction that ripples through all nearby skyclaws in the mob; each one makes an alchemical flask attack as a free action as it explodes and dies.

DESERT OF BROKEN STATUES HAZARD CHART

If you want to make this fight more difficult (and I suggest that you do) throw some of these hazards into the mix mid-fight so that the adventurers must choose to spend a standard action to try to avoid a hazard or spend it trying to hit a kobold and hope that the hazard doesn't harm them.

VOLCANIC OUTGASSING	HOT ROCKS	DUST EXPLOSION
Difficulty to avoid: DC 20 Woosh +10 vs PD (all adventurers)—1d12 poison damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 15 Burning feet +5 vs PD—1d10 fire damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 25 Blam +15 vs PD (all adventurers)—2d8 fire damage
UNCERTAIN FOOTING	TOXIC FUMES	KOBOLD CALTROPS
Difficulty to avoid: DC 15 Sudden drop +5 vs PD—1d8 damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 25 Choking hazard +15 vs PD (all adventurers)—2d8 poison damage	Difficulty to avoid: DC 20 Foot piercing spike +10 vs AC—3d6 damage



THE TUNNEL

Though there is no sign of the kobolds by the time the adventurers reach the floor of the steep-sided chasm, there is only one possible way they could have gone. To the west is cracked and broken rock, glowing with heat. Scalding fumes would cook any kobold (or adventurer) who tried to go that way. To the east the river flows, towards the tunnel that the adventurers saw the kobolds enter.

The tunnel is dark, and is hip deep in the ice-cold water from the river. The bottom of the river is thick with greyish mud, the fine choking dust of the Desert of Broken Statues has become a sucking sludge. A rumbling sound echoes out of the tunnel, and rocks fall from its ceiling.

Unfortunately for the adventurers this tunnel is the lair of a bulette. The kobolds know of the bulette and bought meat to distract it with as they ran past. The adventurers are not so well prepared.

FIGHT!

The bulette is just protecting its young from what it perceives as a threat.

Number of PCs	Bulette	Hatchling Bulettes
3	1	0
4	1	1
5	1	2
6	1	3
7	1	4

HATCHLING BULETTE

Newborns bulettes are hungry

3rd level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +6

Barbed claws +8 vs. AC—8 damage

Natural even hit: The target takes 4 damage each round until the hatchling is dead or they are no longer engaged with the hatchling.

Blood frenzy: The bulette's crit range expands to 16+ while the escalation die is 4+.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 45

MD 10

BULETTE

Certain specialists claim to be able to attract or repel bulettes by creating rhythmic sounds transmitted into the ground through metal poles. Judging by results, the most effective type of metal pole is a hollow prosthetic worn in place of a missing leg.

Large 5th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +7

Gigantic claws +12 vs. AC (2 attacks)—15 damage

Dual hit: If both claws hit during the same turn, the bulette can make a terrible bite attack during its next turn as a standard action.

[Special trigger] **Terrible bite +14 vs. AC—45 damage**

Miss: 22 damage.

Blood frenzy: The bulette's crit range expands to 16+ while the escalation die is 4+.

Serious burrower: A bulette can burrow incredibly quickly for short distances. They're renowned for the mounds of dirt and rock they push above them as they surge through the ground like land torpedoes.

AC 22

PD 19 HP 170

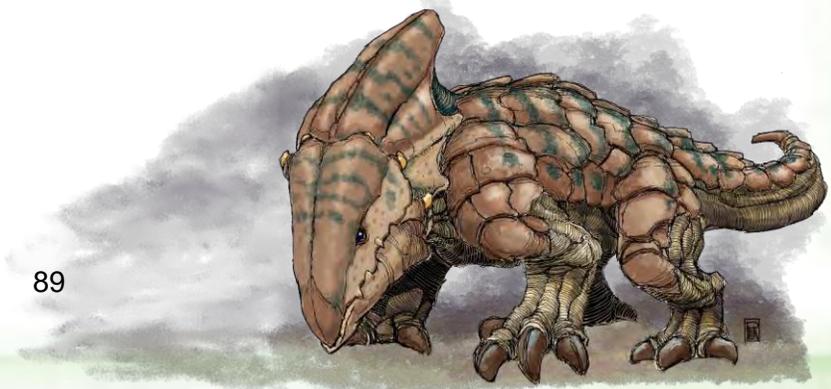
MD 14

If the adventurers want to rest the tunnel seems as good a place as any—the kobolds seem like they might live nearby so have probably not gone far.

LOOT!

Before the kobolds figured out that the bulette could be appeased with meat they sent their best warriors to kill it. Those warriors were eaten.

Fortunately for the adventurers the kobold warriors were carrying magic items, and 1d3+1 magic items can be found in the gullet of the bulette after it is dead.



THE DUNGEON OF DEATH

OVERVIEW

The adventurers have located the kobold's lair, but must brave its depths to retrieve the diamond that they seek.

DEAD DUNGEON

This part of the adventure allows for multiple routes through the dungeon.

DUNGEON ENTRANCES

Exiting the tunnel the adventurers are faced with a choice, proceed forwards towards what looks like a cave entrance, or keep following the river as it plunges into a dark cataract and disappears deep into the rock. It is obvious that the kobolds went into the cave, they have even tracked the river's grey mud towards the entrance.

There are two ways into the dungeon:

The Mouth of Fire—This area is a cave entrance with lots of magma and gouts of steam near it. The kobolds have set up a watch post outside. Going in this way leads to *The Caves of Fire*.

The Cataract—The river plunges down into a crack in the rock. It looks like descending into the steep and slippery hole will take the adventurers past the kobolds on guard out front. Going in this way leads to *The Green Dungeon*.

THE CAVES OF FIRE

These caves are a confusing network of lava tubes and cave spaces open to the sky. Feel free to have the adventurers explore as much as they like here. Eventually the party will reach the *Infinite Stair* section of the dungeon.

There are three main encounters in this area:

Kobold Tunnels—This area is clear of kobolds or other threats, unless you as the GM want to introduce some new treat—it is an ideal place for a random encounter.

Kobold Watch Post—The kobolds have set up a watch post to keep an eye out for intruders. With typical kobold cunning the tiny menaces have decided to wait near where they know undead might rise against intruders.

Tephra the Stone Burner—Tephra is a slumbering lava dragon, sleeping merged with the rocky floor of a cave. The adventurers presence wakes the mighty beast from its centuries-long nap.

THE GREEN DUNGEON

This living dungeon intersects with the kobolds' chosen home, though they tend to avoid going into it. The living

dungeon is reached via *The Cataract* and ends at *The Infinite Stair*.

The Great Hall—An 'empty' area of the dungeon, but a perfect place for some random encounters.

The Living Dungeon—A fight with slime monsters.

The Birthing Chamber—Hungry stars guard a series of chambers in which chuul body-parts bubble away in vats.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Omen is the island of living dungeons, and occasionally monsters wander into the kobold's lair from other dungeons. The kobolds know how to hide when these monsters come calling and have an early warning system set up—the adventurers are perhaps not so fortunate.

If you want the encounters to be truly random roll a d4.

Spiders—Monstrous spiders.

Undead—Undead kobolds!

Snakes—Giant snakes with a head on both ends.

Horrid Things—Half-formed monsters with too many mouths and tentacles.

ENDING

After the players have had their fun exploring the dungeon, use the following two encounters:

The Infinite Stair—A staircase that leads downwards into the darkness and into *Hot Water*.

Hot Water—The kobolds are conducting a ritual with the Darkskye Diamond, on an island surrounded by boiling water.



THE MOUTH OF FIRE (DUNGEON ENTRANCE)

Sneak past the kobolds, or fight?

At the entrance to a cave sit several kobolds, standing watch. The kobolds look bored.

It is a DC 20 skill check for each adventurer to sneak past the kobolds, if at least one adventure fails the skill check the kobolds spring up and fight.

The adventurers could try to talk their way past the kobolds, but the kobolds aren't stupid and some really good role-playing or really clever thinking will be needed to get past the kobolds by bluffing or diplomacy.

The Mouth of Fire leads into *The Caves of Fire* (Kobold Tunnels, Kobold Watch Post, Tephra the Stone Burner).

FIGHT!

Adventurers who passed their skill check to sneak past the kobolds get a +1 attack bonus with their first attack.

Number of PCs	Kobold Bravescale	Kobold Archer
3	2	10
4	3	10
5	4	10
6	5	10
7	6	10

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

KOBOLD BRAVESCALE

These iron-clad woad-painted kobolds don't run away from danger!

4th level blocker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Spear +9 vs. AC—13 damage

Natural roll is above target's Wisdom (trapster): The kobold pushes or trips the target into a trap. See Trapster.

Disciplined maneuver: If the escalation die is 3+ and this creature has at least two bravescale allies in the battle, whenever an enemy moves to engage the bravescale, it can make a spear porcupine attack against that enemy as a free action.

Spear porcupine +11 vs. AC—10 damage

Lock shields: For each other kobold bravescale next to the bravescale or engaged with a creature that this bravescale is engaged with, the bravescale gains a +2 bonus to AC (maximum of +4), and each enemy engaged with the bravescale takes a -2 penalty (maximum of -4) to disengage checks.

AC 20

PD 18 HP 55

MD 14

Trapster (roll d6)

1. Lava spills out of stone bucket up above. 1d4+escalation die fire damage.
2. Steam vent uncorked by tripwire. 1d4+escalation die fire damage.
3. Foot snare hidden under volcanic dust. Stuck (hard save ends).
4. Boiling oil flung from tiny catapult in shadows. 3 ongoing fire damage.
5. Suddenly caltrops! Caltrops everywhere! 1d8 ongoing damage.
6. Hallucinogenic dust from concealed billows. Confused (easy save ends).

THE CATARACT (DUNGEON ENTRANCE)

Into the depths via a subterranean waterfall.

The river plunges down through a hole in the rock. The rock is wet and slippery, with jagged edges. It is a DC 25 skill check to get down without taking damage: if they get 20-24 on their roll they take 2d6 damage, 15-19 they take 2d8 damage, anything less than 15 and that adventurer takes 2d12 damage.

The roaring water pushes the adventurers deeper into the rock. The roar of the water is deafening, adventurers tumble against the rocks, and there is no air. Just as their lungs are bursting and they are close to blacking out, disaster strikes. One of the adventurers ends up wedged upside-down in a narrow passage, blocking the flow of water. Everybody is stuck and the adventurers begin to drown. The pressure backs up and at the point of no return ... they pop free to rush further down into the terror-filled darkness.

It takes a minute for the gasping adventurers to realize that they can breathe. The water is still rushing around them but there is space enough to wiggle along on their backs and gasp air. Up ahead there is a light! It takes some pushing and a lot of scraped-off skin, but they exit the rushing water into a room. It is one of the living dungeons of Omen!

The Cataract leads into The Green Dungeon (The Living Dungeon, The Great Hall, The Birthing Chamber).



KOBOLD TUNNELS (THE CAVES OF FIRE)

Empty tunnels, or are they?

Though the adventurers are plunging unprepared into monster-infested darkness, the path ahead seems clear of danger.

GMs: This is a good place for a random encounter.

The kobolds have left paintings on the walls here, and following these paintings leads to more. Some paintings are maps and diagrams of the tunnels showing which ones are safe and which pose dangers, and some are crude pictograms of dragons.

One set of drawings show up over and over, a hexagonally-framed illustration of a diamond being used to resurrect five red dragons so that they may lay waste to the world. These dragons are legendary: the World Burners. In a past age the World Burners nearly extinguished all life in the lands surrounding the Midland Sea. Entire armies perished attempting to fight the beasts. The World Burners were powerful, commanding the power of volcanoes from their fortress in the Magma Keeps.

GMs: Explain to the players that it is obvious to the adventurers based on the paintings that the kobolds seem to believe that they have found the final resting place of the World Burners, and intend to raise their 'gods' to life once more!

KOBOLD WATCH POST (THE CAVES OF FIRE)

The kobolds have set up guard posts.

Kobolds are not stupid. Cautious to the point of cowardice sometimes, but never stupid.

Kobolds are *cunning*.

The kobolds of this clan know that somebody might try to stop them resurrecting their gods (*see Kobold Tunnels*), and have taken appropriate measures to destroy who or whatever tries to stop them; to that end they have set up a perimeter of watch posts in the dark caverns.

Either through skill or luck the adventurers have avoided the kobold watch posts so far, but this one cannot be avoided—the only way onwards is right through the watch post.

There doesn't appear to be any kobolds present. A fire is burning and their sleeping rolls are there, but no kobolds. Maybe they are out on patrol?

FIGHT!

The camp is a decoy for an ambush, and is set up on ground that the undead infest. It is a DC 25 skill check to spot the hiding kobolds, otherwise two kobolds get a free attack before initiative is rolled.

Number of PCs	Kobold Shadow-Warrior	Kobold Archer
3	10	10
4	15	10
5	20	10
6	25	10
7	30	10

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.



KOBOLD SHADOW-WARRIOR

Stealthy kobolds with color-changing skin, they climb the walls like lizards and strike from the shadows.

4th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

C: Throwing star +9 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—7 damage

C: Stinging dust +6 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group)—5 damage, and the target takes a -1 penalty to attacks until the end of its next turn

Elusive: If a shadow-warrior hasn't been attacked since the end of its last turn, it can spend all of its actions to disappear from sight (remove it from play as it gets into position). At the start of its next turn, it reappears (dropping down out of the ceiling or springing out of cover and re-entering play) and can make an elusive strike attack as a standard action.

C: Elusive strike +13 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—18 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Wall-crawler: A kobold shadow-warrior can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground.

AC 20

PD 13 HP 14 (mook)

MD 17

Mook: Kill one kobold shadow-warrior mook for every 14 damage you deal to the mob. Apply damage to shadow-warriors using the elusive ability last (or ignore that damage).

TEPHRA THE STONE BURNER (THE CAVES OF FIRE)

A sleeping dragon is roused to action.

The adventurers proceed further into the rock, passing by the ruins of living dungeons that were killed by the anomalous recent volcanic activity. Strange doorways and steps uncarved by any creature that has seen the sun beckon to dangers untold. Echoes of monstrous noises issue forth from cracks in the walls, and it is unclear if the sounds are volcanic or... something else.

GMs: The 'dead' dungeon entrances are mostly just dead ends sealed off by lava or fallen rocks, but if you want to take

the adventurers into *The Green Dungeon* or introduce a dungeon of your own this is an ideal place to do so.

As the party proceeds forwards a wall cracks open, and lava begins to pour out. As the lava lights up the cavern that adventurers realize that they are standing on a dragon! The lava awakens the dragon from her deathless slumber, and she attacks them.

GMs: This dragon is not one of the huge 'big five' World Burners the kobold tribe are trying to revive. No, they are much worse. This is Tephra, one of the World Burner's lesser children. She was hibernating in the rock.

FIGHT!

Tephra rears up out of the rock, sending dust everywhere. Adventurers who think quickly can hide from her (a DC 25 skill check) provided they do so immediately.

Number of PCs	Tephra	Living Lava
3	1	0
4	1	1
5	1	2
6	1	3
7	1	4

LIVING LAVA

Tephra's magic has animated the lava itself! Adventurers 'fighting' it are probably not striking directly at it but are instead knocking rocks in its path or trying to dig trenches to divert it.

Large 1st level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +0

Everything burns +6 vs. AC—10 fire damage

Lava immunity: The lava only takes half damage from all attacks, no damage at all from attacks involving fire damage, and attacks involving cold damage do triple damage to the lava.

Fighting lava: Whenever an enemy would do miss damage to lava, instead that enemy takes 5 fire damage from outgassing and heat.

AC 17

PD 17 HP 55

MD 30 (...a crit will still hit, but otherwise lava is very hard to affect at all with psychic powers, to mind-control, or to fool with illusions. Its lava.)

DRAGON! Run away! Run away!

While Tephra is only just awakened, it is still a tough fight. They might all die - let them know that going in. Remind the players that fleeing this battle is a valid option. If they do so they escape the lava and dragon, but get no treasure. There is no shame in running from a dragon.

TEPHRA THE STONE BURNER

The volcanic heat has re-awakened Tephra from her hibernation deep within the rock. She isn't happy at being disturbed.

Large 5th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +9

Tephra makes two or three attacks per round from the following list:

Stone-melting claws +10 vs. AC—12 fire damage

C: Pyroclastic breath +10 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—12 fire damage

R: Burning eyes +12 vs. MD (1d3 enemies)—Targets either take 4 ongoing fire damage or can chose to lose their next move action as they put out the flames.

If Tephra only makes two attacks in a round instead of three then both attacks roll 2 x d20 to hit and the dragon takes the higher attack roll for each attack.

Flight: Tephra can fly fast and well. If she uses her standard action to fly, then all engaged enemies pop free from her before she moves and they take 2d12 fire damage each.

Dragon fear: Enemies with 24 HP or fewer that are engaged with Tephra can not use the escalation die and are dazed (-4 to attack).

Escalator: Tephra adds the escalation die value to her attack rolls.

Fire heals me!: When Tephra takes fire damage from an enemy she heals hit points instead of losing them. This becomes obvious the first time she receives fire damage from an enemy.

AC 21

PD 19 HP 144

MD 15

Once the dragon is dead its corpse proves to be treasure! Tephra's corpse is a glittering mound of fire-hardened flesh and bone, some of which can be turned into magic items.

Loot!

Adventurers can form items from Tephra's corpse—the dragon doesn't have treasure, it *is* treasure! The dragon has slumbered for so long in the rock of a highly magical isle of Omen that its remains are magic items. There are enough intact bones for one magic item per adventurer.

DRAGONTOOTH NECKLACE

Nothing says 'bad-ass adventurer' like a dragon tooth necklace.

+1 to saves when you have 10 HP or fewer (adventurer); 25 Hp or fewer (champion); 50 HP or fewer (epic).

+5 bonus to death saves when fighting dragons.

Quirk: Likes meals very very over-cooked. Charred really.

ORB OF TEPHRA

Tephra's eyes are crystals.

[Implement]

Bonus to attacks and damage with spells: +1 (adventurer); +2 (champion); +3 (epic, only when mounted on a staff).

Recharge 16+: Detect all hidden treasure nearby. If dual-wielding orbs this becomes recharge 11+ (orbs like being with other orbs, though their bonuses do not stack).

Quirk: Covetousness.

TEPHRIC BLADE

One of the dragon's sharp claws has survived intact. Wrap some dragon-skin leather around the root to form a grip and you have a perfect weapon!

[Melee weapon, any bladed]

Bonus to attacks and damage: +1 (adventurer); +2 (champion); +3 (epic).

Recharge 16+: Deal your level in fire damage to each enemy you are engaged with.

Quirk: Only comfortable when sleeping on (or in) rock.

BAG OF DRAGON TEETH

The shattered teeth fragments hold power still.

[Wondrous item]

Summon up to thirteen strong skeletons to do your bidding! They cannot fight but they can dig, carry, lift, fetch, etc. This free unskilled labor lasts for one hour a day (after the hour they turn back into teeth). Sunrise (or sunset, or moonrise, or darkfall - whatever, it is only one use per day) restores the magic to the bag of teeth.

Quirk: Lazy when too warm.

DRAGONSCALE SHIELD

The chest scales of some dragons make excellent shields.

Increase your maximum hit points by +4 (adventurer); by +10 (champion); by +25 (epic).

Recharge 16+: Subtract your level from any fire damage that you take, until the end of the battle.

Quirk: Fascinated by flames.

DRAGONWING WEAPON

One of the long hollow wing-bones is perfect for a hafted weapon. So light and swift!

[Melee weapon, two-handed]

Bonus to attacks and damage: +1 (adventurer); +2 (champion); +3 (epic).

Recharge 16+: Fly (more like glide) for one round.

Quirk: Claustrophobia.

THE GREAT HALL (THE GREEN DUNGEON)

The adventurers explore a living dungeon.

The dungeon that the adventurers find themselves in is tiled with green hexagonal plates, and a sickly green luminance issues forth from the air itself—a glowing miasma that illuminates everything but gives no joyful light.

GMs: This is a good place for a random encounter.

The living dungeon consists of a series of interlinked halls, empty and echoing. Some of the halls have basins built into the floors, others have stairs that lead elsewhere, and many of them have shafts that lead downwards to deeper areas of the living dungeon.

GMs: Explain to the players that their characters feel the empty dungeon is uncanny and unsettling, an echoing place devoid of life or ornament but that also makes them feel as if they are being watched.

THE LIVING DUNGEON (THE GREEN DUNGEON)

An encounter with slime monsters.

The adventurers enter an area of the living dungeon where it is burrowing into the rock of Omen. The living dungeon is converting the bedrock (actually thousands of generations of living dungeons compressed together) into more of itself.

As the adventurers watch a section of rock falls off the wall; behind the rock is dressed green stone, regular hexagonal blocks that form a geometrically perfect wall. In the wall is a long passageway, down which can be seen a green glow.

DOWN THE TUNNEL

Exploring down the passageway reveals a series of empty rooms. Everything is tiled with green hexagons. Following the light reflected from the stone blocks leads the adventurers to the source of the illumination: slime.

A sluggishly moving slime fills carved troughs in the ground, giving off a bright green glow. In the floor is a deep shaft, from which blows the scent of jasmine and lavender. A metal grate in the shaft blocks off exploration in that direction, but it looks like it might be possible for the grate to be dislodged with enough force.

THE OOZE

The adventurers, regardless of if they went down the tunnel or not, will encounter slime monsters.

If the party went down the tunnel they will meet the slime monsters as they ooze up one of the shafts, otherwise the adventurers encounter the slime as it comes out of the tunnel.

FIGHT!

These undead creatures are animated by slime sticking to their bones. If a clever adventurer comes up with a way to de-slime the undead mid-fight let them do so and as a reward advance the escalation die by 1.

Number of PCs	Glowing Corpse	Glowing Phantasm
3	7	2
4	7	3
5	7	4
6	7	5
7	7	6

GLOWING CORPSE

Its silence is eerie.

1st level archer [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +6

C: Baleful glare +6 vs. MD (one nearby or far away enemy) —5 acid damage

Ethereal senses: Glowing corpses can see invisible or obscured characters (spells like blur will not work on them), can target characters who are shadow walking, and will not target characters possessed by glowing phantasms, dybbuks, or similar.

AC 17

PD 15 HP 24

MD 10

GLOWING PHANTASM

The phantasm floats around the room, phasing into victims.

4th level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +7

Phasing possession: Once per turn a glowing phantasm may enter an enemy. That enemy becomes possessed and glows. While possessed the phantasm controls where the enemy moves on the enemy's turn, and the enemy is confused. While possessing an enemy the phantasm may not be targeted by attacks against its AC or PD. The phantasm remains inside the enemy and possessing it until the enemy takes damage or succeeds on a DC 20 wisdom roll (a quick action).

Chilling aura: Once per turn as a full-round action the phantasm may de-escalate the escalation die, reducing its value by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

AC 20

PD 18 HP 54

MD 14

THE BIRTHING CHAMBER (THE GREEN DUNGEON)

Hungry stars and chuul body-parts!

The only way onwards is down a shaft set into the ground. A gurgling sound issues forth from the shaft, and the smell of jasmine and lavender wafts up from below.

Kicking the grate out and using ropes attached to its remains, it is possible to descend the smooth-sided shaft. At the bottom of the shaft are more green-tiled rooms, and the light is much brighter here. The scent is overpowering.

Everywhere tiny glowing worms squirm across the ceiling, occasionally one of them will fall and drop down the back of an adventurer's shirt, or into their hair. The only sound here is the echoing footsteps of the adventurers.

In a large room pools and oddly-shaped troughs of glowing liquid bubble away, the obvious source of the odor. The smell is now chokingly strong, an unpleasant smell. All adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 constitution check or get a nosebleed and be completely unable to smell for the rest of the chapter.

FIGHT!

It is up to you if the hungry stars come out of the vats or are guarding them or doing something involving them. Do hungry stars farm chuul? Are the two monsters allies? Is this a laboratory, a nursery, or something else entirely? Strange things wiggle in the vats...

Number of PCs	Hungry Stars
3	5
4	6
5	8
6	9
7	11



HUNGRY STAR

They're clearly deviant, malevolent, octopus-like flying monsters from a dimension where space obeys a different geometry. No one understands their language, but everyone can understand their squeals of glee when they kill and feed.

3rd level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

Ripping tentacles +8 vs. AC—10 damage

Natural even hit: If the target is taking ongoing psychic damage the attack deals +2d6 damage.

[Group ability] **R: Warp-pulse +8 vs. PD (1d3 enemies in a group)**—5 ongoing psychic damage

Natural 16-18: While the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, it is dazed (-4 attacks).

Natural 19-20: While the target is taking ongoing psychic damage, it is confused instead of dazed.

Group ability: For every two hungry stars in the battle (round up), one of them can use warp-pulse once per battle.

Limited flight: Hungry stars flap and glide and hover, always within about seven or eight feet of the ground. No one knows how that works.

AC 16

PD 12 HP 54

MD 15

LOOT!

The vats contain chuulish items, biological living weapons that graft to the bodies of humanoids. The 13TH AGE BESTIARY has a full write-up on chuuls and chuulish magic items.

BIRTHING CHAMBER TREASURES

In the breeding vats can be found magic items. Living (and disgustingly biological) magic items! They are made of bone, pulsing flesh, and black carapace. These are chuul symbiote magic items. There are enough wiggling things swimming in the vats for one item per adventurer.

See the 13TH AGE BESTIARY for more details on the horrid chuul and further chuulish items, together with some further details on the benefits (and potential dangers) that they offer adventurers.

Quirks: Chuul items weave their flesh into the flesh of those that attuned to them, becoming as one. This causes minor mutations, mutations that become obvious and impossible to disguise if the user over-attunes. Sometimes un-attuning requires surgery. *Caveat hospes!*

Recharge: Chuul items that have a recharge do so on a 16+. Those who are willing to expend some of their life-essence may lower this to 11+ for a cumulative -1 penalty to all saves until their next full heal-up, or to 6+ for a cumulative -2 penalty to saves until the next full heal-up, or to an automatic recharge for a cumulative -3 penalty to saves until the next full heal-up.



DEATH CLAW

A lobster-clawed gauntlet that fits over the forearm of the off-hand. The clusters of eyes at the fleshy joints blink unnervingly.

[Gloves]

Chuulish recharge: Reroll a missed melee attack with a +1 attack bonus (champion: +2; epic: +3).

Quirk: The claw flexes and snaps when the host is excited.

EVIL EYES

This gauntlet has armored eyes on the knuckles, aiding archers and spellcasters alike.

[Gloves]

Always: Bonus to attacks and damage with ranged attacks: +1 (adventurer); +2 (champion); +3 (epic).

This bonus does not stack with bonuses from magic implements or weapons.

Chuulish recharge: Until the end of the battle or for five minutes, you can see the unseen. Invisible creatures are visible to you, and you spot illusions for what they are.

Quirk: The host has bone ridges and strangely patterned callouses on the arms.

IMPLANTED AVEHTAIL

The symbiotic creature is normally hidden beneath your skin. When commanded, a wave of small crab-like creatures pours out of gill-like openings in your skin, providing you with scale-like armor.

[Light Armor]

+1 AC (adventurer); +2 AC (champion); +3 AC (epic).

Unleashing the armor is a quick action, and you retain the AC bonus for as long as it is out and in place. When the insects are back beneath your skin you do not appear to be (or count as) wearing armor.

Quirk: Gill-like slits cover the host's rib cage, leading to the flesh-hives from which the armor skitters out from.

SPIDERS (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

Spiders!

The party meets monstrous spiders in the dungeon. The spiders aren't interested in negotiating with the adventurers, they are only interested in eating them!

Loot!

The spiders likely have some minor loot in one of their webs, maybe even a true magic item.

FIGHT!

The area has webs. Adventurers rolling a natural 1 become stuck (save ends).

Number of PCs	Giant Web Spider	Hunting Spider	Spider Hatchling
3	1	4	10
4	2	4	10
5	3	4	10
6	4	4	10
7	5	4	10

GIANT WEB SPIDER

The vile thing stalks slowly across the web-covered cave towards you.

Large 2nd level blocker [BEAST]

Initiative: +4

Bite +7 vs. AC—5 damage, and 5 ongoing poison damage

Natural even hit: The target also takes 2d6 ongoing poison damage if it's dazed or stuck.

C: Web +7 vs. PD (1 or 2 nearby enemies in a group)—3 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the spider's next turn

Natural 18+: The target is also stuck until the end of the spider's next turn.

Wall-crawler: A giant spider can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground.

AC 17

PD 16 HP 68

MD 12

HUNTING SPIDER

Your face is reflected in the many eyes of this hairy scuttling horror. It is as big as a cat!

2nd level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +6

Bite +6 vs. AC—8 damage

Natural 16+: The target also takes 1d8 ongoing poison damage.

Scuttle: A hunting spider can turn its own failed disengage check into a success by taking 1d4 damage.

Wall-crawler: A hunting spider can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground.

AC 17

PD 14 HP 34

MD 11

SPIDER HATCHLING

Urgh! They are everywhere!

0 level mook [BEAST]

Initiative: +0

Needle-like fangs +5 vs. AC—3 damage

Wall-crawler: A spider hatchling can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground.

AC 14

PD 13 HP 5 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one *spider hatchling* mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

UNDEAD KOBOLDS (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

Undead kobolds!

The party stumbles right into a group of undead kobolds. The kobolds have crystals growing out of their heads, a side-effect of their exposure to the magic crystals of Darkskye.

FIGHT!

The kobolds glow bright enough to see by.

Number of PCs	Ghoul	Zombie	Newly-Risen Ghoul
3	2	2	12
4	2	4	12
5	4	3	12
6	4	5	12
7	4	7	12

To represent the fact that these undead creatures used to be kobolds, they have the ability *stumbling evasion*.

KOBOLD GHOUL

They hunger only for what they used to be.

3rd level spoiler [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerability: holy

Claws and bite +8 vs. AC—8 damage

Natural even hit: The target is vulnerable (attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2) to attacks by undead until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

Pound of flesh: The ghoul's claws and bite attack deals +4 damage against vulnerable targets.

Infected bite: Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

Stumbling evasion: Undead kobolds take no damage from missed attacks when the escalation die is odd.

AC 18

PD 16 HP 36

MD 12

KOBOLD ZOMBIE

"Brains . . ."

2nd level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +1

Vulnerability: holy

Rotting fist +7 vs. AC—6 damage

Natural 16+: Both the zombie and its target take 1d6 damage!

Headshot: A critical hit against a zombie drops it to 0 hp.

Stumbling evasion: Undead kobolds take no damage from missed attacks when the escalation die is odd.

AC 15

PD 13 HP 60

MD 9

NEWLY-RISEN KOBOLD GHOUL

Newly slain, barely conscious, terribly hungry.

2nd level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +5

Vulnerability: holy

Scrabbling claws +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Natural 16+: The target is vulnerable (attacks vs. it have crit range expanded by 2) to attacks by undead until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

Pound of flesh: The newly-risen ghoul's scrabbling claws attack deals +2 damage against vulnerable targets.

Stumbling evasion: Undead kobolds take no damage from missed attacks when the escalation die is odd.

AC 17

PD 15 HP 9 (mook)

MD 11

Mook: Kill one newly-risen ghoul mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

SNAKES (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

Monstrous snakes!

Giant snakes with a head on both ends. The snakes originate in a nearby living dungeon and have crawled in to this location through a crack in a wall.

FIGHT!

Can adventurers get the heads to attack each other? Probably not, but a clever player somewhere will come up with a way to do it, and if you are fortunate enough to have such a bright and imaginative player let them succeed on a DC 15 skill check as a standard action with the snake doing 16 damage to itself.

Number of PCs	Two-Headed Snakes
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

TWO-HEADED SNAKE

These giant snakes have a head on each end of their bodies!

Large 2nd level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +6

Bite +7 vs. AC—14 damage

Natural 16+: The two-headed snake can make a squeeze attack against the target or another creature engaged with it as a free action.

[Special trigger] **Squeeze +7 vs. AC—10 damage**, and the two-headed snake can make a *constriction* attack against the target as a standard action during its next turn if it's engaged with that target.

[Special trigger] **Constriction +9 vs. AC (3 attacks)—10 damage**

R: Venom spit +6 vs. AC—5 ongoing poison damage

AC 17

PD 16 HP 64

MD 12

HORRID THINGS (RANDOM ENCOUNTER)

Horrid Things!

Half-formed monsters with too many mouths and tentacles. They are things. They are horrid. They want to do horrid things to the adventurers.

FIGHT!

What are these horrid things? The answer is that they are horrid, half-formed monsters birthed by the dungeon. Go overboard with your description of their horribleness.

Number of PCs	Horrid Things
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	4
7	5

HORRID THING

Half-formed monsters with too many mouths and tentacles, they leave a trail of poisons from their leaking bodies wherever they go.

Large 3rd level spoiler [ABERRATION]

Initiative: +8

Toothless maw +7 vs. AC—6 acid damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage

C: Noxious vomit +7 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)—14 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)

First natural 16+ each turn: The horrid thing makes a noxious vomit attack against a different target as a free action.

Poison cloud: Whenever a creature attacks the horrid thing and rolls a natural 1–5, any enemies engaged with the horrid thing take 1d20 poison damage.

Wall-crawler: A horrid thing can climb on ceilings and walls as easily as it moves on the ground, hauling itself along with its multitude of tentacles and pseudopods.

AC 20

PD 13 HP 80

MD 16

THE INFINITE STAIR (ENDING)

The penultimate section of the chapter.

The sound of rushing water echoes through the tunnels as the subterranean river reappears, roaring out of a crack in the wall. The previously ice-cold water is now boiling hot!

Up ahead is a sickly green glow. A hexagonal opening in the cavern floor reveals a set of steps going down, descending into the unknown depths of the world. Large glass jars full of glowing worms line the stairs for a few hundred feet downwards, but beyond their light all is darkness. From the bottom of the stairs comes the sound of chanting as out of a side-tunnel kobolds creep...

FIGHT!

Forcing a kobold off the stairs requires making a basic melee attack with no modifications (no barbarian rage, no flexible attack, no smite evil, no sneak attack, etc) and deals 4d10 damage to the kobold and removes it from the fight for one round. After the first kobold goes over the edge the other kobolds will fight more carefully—it is a once-per-battle trick.

Number of PCs	Kobold Dungeon-Shaman	Kobold Archers
3	1	7
4	2	7
5	2	7
6	3	7
7	3	7

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

KOBOLD DUNGEON-SHAMAN

Dungeon-shamans are wizard-engineers guided by dreams. They usually serve living dungeons, repairing traps and restocking treasure and monsters. In return a dungeon-shaman can call upon a dungeon to mystically entrap an area. Although small and seemingly frail a dungeon-shaman has mystic dungeon-strength.

Double-strength 4th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Bear traps on chains +9 vs. AC (2 attacks)—13 damage

Natural roll is above target's Wisdom (trapster): The kobold drags the target into a trap. See Trapster.

R: Hex of entrapment +9 vs. MD—26 damage

Natural roll is above target's Wisdom (trapster): The kobold summons a trap that was not there a moment ago, which the target triggers. See Trapster.

Miss: The target is stuck and hampered (save ends both).

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 110

MD 15

Trapster (roll d6)

1. Blast powder under a rock sends shrapnel into the adventurer's feet. 1d8+escalation die damage.
2. Barbed spikes shoot from the ceiling into the adventurer's head. The spikes are on strings, and they begin to winch the adventurer upwards into the darkness. 1d4+escalation die ongoing damage and the adventurer is stuck until they save against the damage. A kobold somewhere is playing with a puppet!
3. A bucket of angry scorpions, hidden under a fake rock. 1d8+escalation die poison damage.
4. Acid-filled needles shoot deep into the adventurer's eyes. 1d4+escalation die ongoing acid damage, and the adventurer is dazed (-4 to defences, no actions) until the start of their next turn.
5. Flaming oil bladder disguised as a rock sends fire up trouser legs. 1d8+escalation die fire damage.
6. Tripwire sends adventuring tumbling down the stairs. 2d8+escalation die damage.

HOT WATER (ENDING)

The boiling river pours down the stairs and from a hundred cracks in the walls. Once the adventurers reach the bottom they are drenched and have each been scalded and burned by the magma-heated liquid (1d6 fire damage each). The cavern at the bottom of the stairs is beginning to fill with boiling water. Staying down here for too long will mean getting cooked alive! In the distance a red glow can be seen, and an eldridge tooth-vibrating hum fills the air. It is hard to see what is going on through the steam, but it looks like the Darkskye Diamond is inside a glowing orb. Getting closer the adventurers see kobold priests performing a ritual inside a stone circle. Nearby a huge pile of gold sits unattended, doubtless an offering for their unholy dragon gods once they are once more extant. The water is rising, and getting hotter.

FIGHT!

The Kobold Dragon-Priest is busy with the ritual and will not join in the fight until the escalation die is 1+ or until she is attacked. Fortunately the adventurers are just in time to stop the kobolds from completing their ritual.

Number of PCs	Kobold Dragon-Priest*	Kobold Dragon-Soul	Kobold Archer
3	1	0	5
4	1	1	0
5	1	1	5
6	1	2	0
7	1	2	5

KOBOLD ARCHER

1st level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Simple knife +6 vs. AC—3 damage

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC—3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16

PD 14 HP 6 (mook)

MD 10

Mook: Kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

KOBOLD DRAGON-SOUL

These kobolds have claws that drip with acid, can fly using dragon-like wings, and can even spit out gobs of burning mucus.

5th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Claws +10 vs. AC—17 damage

Natural even hit: The target also takes 8 ongoing acid damage

R: Fire spit +10 vs. PD—18 fire damage

Natural even hit: If flying, the kobold can remain in the air until the end of its next turn if it would normally have to land at the end of this turn.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Flight: A dragon-souls wings aren't strong enough for sustained flapping flight, but with a headwind and a tall place to launch from it can glide for hours. During the battle, however, it must land at the end of its turn if the escalation die is even (but see fire spit).

AC 22

PD 19 HP 70

MD 14

KOBOLD DRAGON-PRIEST

She is the high-priest of the kobold clan's dragon-worshipping cult.

6th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Dragon rage +16 vs. AC—18 thunder damage

R: Wild black magic lightning +16 vs. PD—18 lightning damage

Natural even hit or miss: The target teleports to a point (nearby or far away) of the dragon-priest's choosing.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 22

PD 19 HP 70

MD 14

CHAPTER 5: THE MIDLAND SEA

This section of the adventure is designed for 5th level characters.

Chapter 5 is pretty free-form, a series of potential encounters that the adventurers could have on their way back from the isle of Omen. As GM your job is to flesh these out, weaving in the character's backgrounds and stories.

By the end of the chapter the adventurers should be headed towards Castle Zamak.

RECAP (THE STORY SO FAR)

The adventurers owe a debt to the Prince of Shadows. In order to repay their debt they performed crimes for him, one of which was stealing the Darkskye Diamond.

The Darkskye Diamond was in turn stolen from the Prince of Shadows, who asks that the adventurers steal it back.

The Darkskye Diamond has the power to control flying islands, and was originally mined from a flying island called Darkskye—an island that serves as a prison for the Dragon Empire's worst criminals. The person who stole the diamond from the Prince has taken the diamond to the flying Darkskye Prison.

The adventurers used a stolen flying ship to get aboard the flying island and steal back the diamond, but the prison crashed out of the sky into the Wild Wood.

The adventurers made their way out of the Wild Wood, tracked down the Darkskye Diamond to a group of kobolds, followed their trail to the isle of Omen, and retrieved the Darkskye Diamond.

Now the adventurers must get back to civilization...

OVERVIEW

The adventurers travel from Omen to the Demon Coast.

LEAVING OMEN

This montage scene is all about how the adventurers get off the island of Omen, and ends with them setting out across the Midland Sea.

Turn to a player and ask them to describe a problem that the party faced on the isle of Omen as the adventurers attempt to leave it; then turn to the next player and ask them how their adventurer solved the problem. There is no need for dice rolling, this is purely narrative.

As the players tell the tale of getting off the island you can use the encounters on this chapter to interrupt and play through the more interesting outcomes of their narration. For example, if a player mentions crossing a ravine you could put an encounter on the far side of that ravine.

Alternately you could finish the montage with the adventurers leaving the island and have encounters on the way to the Demon Coast, using one element from the montage as a reoccurring theme that links together the encounters.

GMs: If you and your players are confident with using montages, you feel confident improvising based on player input, and you want to switch it up a bit use the 'interrupted montage' method. If you prefer to take time to think out what is coming in the session up use one element of the montage as a reoccurring theme and plan your encounters around that.

ENCOUNTERS

Each of these encounters can be run in a couple of different ways, and strung together however best suits the story of the adventurers getting off the isle of Omen.

If you want the encounters to be truly random roll a d4.

Pirates—Either ashore or on the sea.

Sea Monster—The Archmage drove these out of the Midland Sea, but there are still some that lurk on the coastline.

Living Statues—Rising from the depths, or on the isle of Omen.

Mist of Ghosts—Strange weather that blows across from the Necropolis.

PIRATES

Yarr!

AS A FIGHT...

These pirates want treasure, and the adventurers have with them a huge glowing diamond.

FIGHT!

If you decide that it fits the story best if the pirates are undead give them a vulnerability to holy damage.

Number of PCs	Pirate Crew	Sea Wizard	Pirate Captain
3	4	1	1
4	5	2	1
5	7	2	1
6	9	2	1
7	11	2	1

PIRATE CREW

4th level troop [humanoid]

Initiative: +9

Cutlass +9 vs. AC—14 damage

R: Crossbow +9 vs. AC—14 damage

Limited use: The pirate needs to use its move action to reload.

Back to back: For every ally engaged with the enemy that the pirate is attacking it gains +2 to attacks (maximum +4)

AC 20

PD 17 HP 54

MD 13

SEA WIZARD

4th level caster [humanoid]

Initiative: +9

Forked lightning +12 vs. PD (1d3 engaged enemies)—5 lightning damage and the target pops free

R: Call the sea winds +12 vs. MD—7 ongoing thunder damage

AC 20

PD 13 HP 45

MD 17

PIRATE CAPTAIN

Double-strength 4th level leader [humanoid]

Initiative: +10

Hook and cutlass +9 vs. AC (two attacks)—15 damage.

Natural 16+: One ally may end an ongoing effect on it.

Shouted orders: If the pirate captain forgoes their standard action they may grant one ally +6 to their attacks until the end of that ally's next turn.

AC 21

PD 17 HP 110

MD 13

AS A ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITY...

The pirates are lost, either run aground on Omen or lost at sea after being cursed by a sand witch.

The pirate leader, Captain Vastaslice, wants to get his crew back to the mainland via the shortest possible route, in this case sailing south to the demon coast. If the adventurers can convince Captain Vastaslice that they can help remove or work around the sand witch's curse then the adventurers might be able to hitch a ride with the pirates.

OTHER...

The adventurers have decided to head to Shadow Port or Drakkenhall or somewhere other than the Demon Coast. Unfortunately the pirates kidnap them and set sail for their secret anchorage on the demon coast.

GMs: Yes, this is a tad rail-road-y. Chapter 5 starts on the Demon Coast and you need to find a way to get the party there. Of course if you are confident in your improvisational skills then you can let the players have a little more freedom in their destination and adjust Chapter 5 accordingly.

SEA MONSTER

Driven out of the water by the Archmage's magic, this monster is hungry...

AS A FIGHT...

The sea-monster lurches out of the mists, its tentacles flailing.

The Archmage's magic forced this thing out of the sea and onto the shoreline, where it has been waiting for its vengeance...

FIGHT!

We've given lots of nastier specials so you can customize it to what will best terrify your players.

Number of PCs	Sea Monsters
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

SEA MONSTER

7th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +11

Deep-sea maw +12 vs. AC—15 damage

Natural even hit: The target takes 10 ongoing damage.

Natural odd hit or miss: The sea monster can make a second or third *deep sea maw attack* as a free action.

Swimmer: Though the Archmage's magic keeps it out of the water this monster can still swim.

Nastier Specials

We've left this as a generic 'sea monster'. If you want to make it more flavorful use one or more of these nastier specials.

Grasping tentacles: Enemies engaged with the sea monster take a penalty to their disengage checks equal to the escalation die value.

Snail shell: Add +2 to the sea monster's AC, and +2 to its PD until the start of its next turn if it did not move on its turn.

Eye-stalk flails: Enemies who move into engagement with the sea monster take 7 damage.

Crab claws: When the sea monster makes a melee attack and misses it does 7 miss damage.

Ink cloud: When the sea monster first becomes staggered, all enemies engaged with it are dazed (hard save ends).

Sea urchin spikes: Creatures that miss the sea monster with a melee attack take 7 poison damage.

AC 22

PD 21 HP 100

MD 16

AS A ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITY...

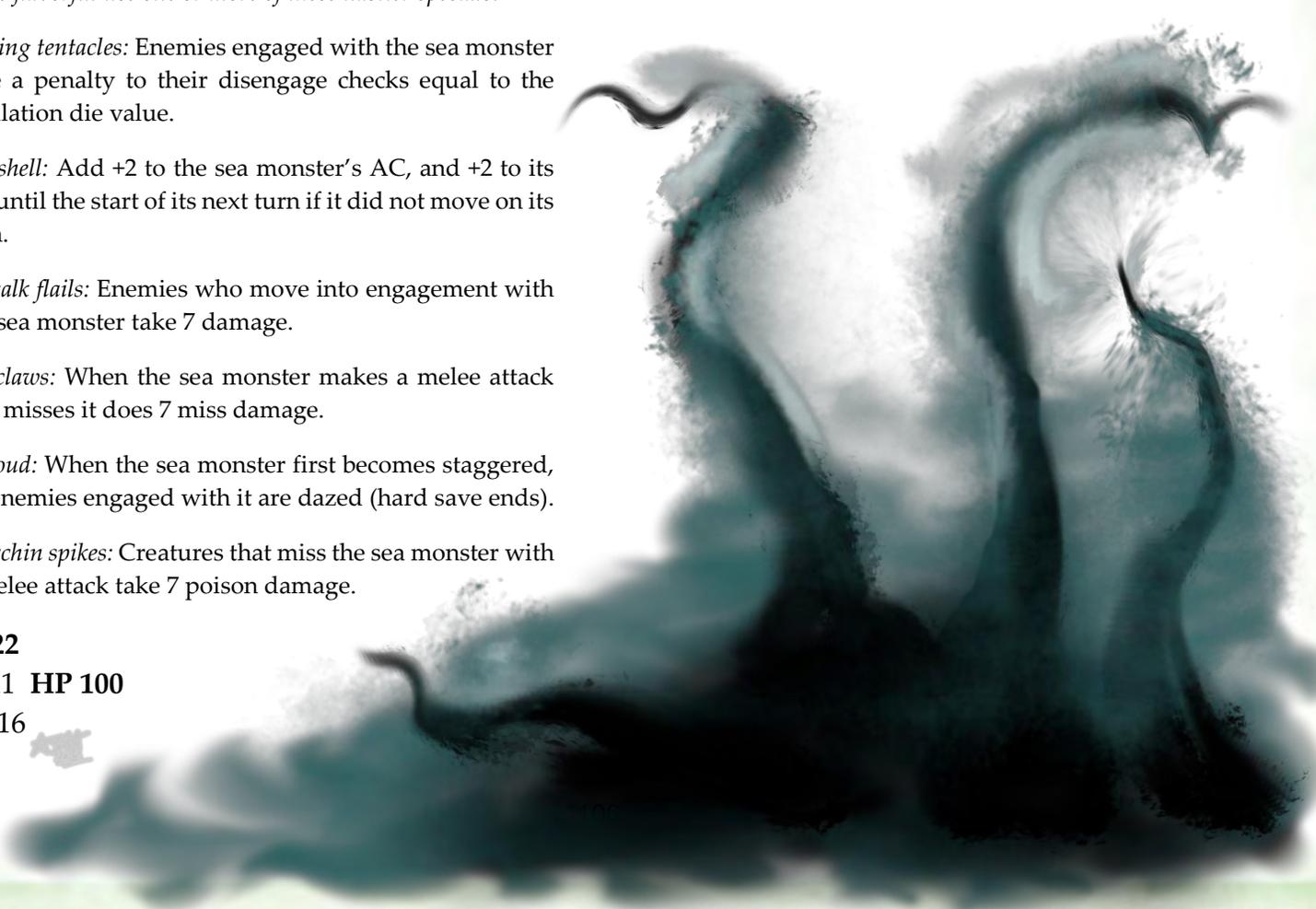
The sea monster is intelligent, and wants to get from where it is to the isle of Omen. Unfortunately the Archmage's magic prevents it from crossing the Midland Sea.

That is where the adventurers come in. If the adventurers agree to take it as far as the Demon Coast the sea monster will tell them where to find a ship that has run aground, and help them keep the wreck afloat.

OTHER...

The sea monster is cunning, and has access to magic. It has been able to circumvent the Archmage's magic that keeps monsters out of the Midland Sea by turning itself into a humanoid.

The Archmage's servants who maintain the sea wards are aware that something odd is happening with the monster and so have sent a sand witch out looking for it. The monster decides to travel with the party for protective camouflage, and suggests that they make landing at the Demon Coast. The disguised sea monster spins a tale that it is being chased by an evil sand witch and that the energies of the Demon Coast will help hide their trail from pursuers (an almost true story that warps a couple of details).



LIVING STATUES

These could be mistaken for fellow travelers at a distance...

AS A FIGHT...

These statues are harmless, but distract the adventurers from a more pressing menace...

FIGHT!

The sharks might end up chasing the adventurers at sea, or swoop in on land.

Number of PCs	Flying Sharks
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

FLYING SHARK

...and you thought land-sharks were bad. These flying ray-like creatures have underbellies the same shade and color as clouds.

Large 4th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +7

Bite +8 vs. AC—24 damage

Natural even hit: The target takes +2d6 poison damage from a tail sting.

Miss: 10 damage.

Scent of blood: The flying shark's crit range expands by 2 (to 18+) against staggered enemies.

Fly and swim: Flying sharks can 'swim' in the air, and positively fly through the water.

AC 19

PD 19 HP 130

MD 14

AS A ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITY...

The living statues are the survivors of a medusa attack, and were partially revived. They beg the adventurers to take them to the Demon Coast where a strange flower grows that can turn them back to flesh.

OTHER...

The living statues are patterned after the adventurers!

GMs: This is a good opportunity to showcase a player character who doesn't get a lot of screen time, or to spotlight some backgrounds that don't come into play that often.

MIST OF GHOSTS

Encountered at sea or on the land, this uncanny weather poses a problem for adventurers.

AS A FIGHT...

The mist deposits ghostly entities where the adventurers are, entities that attack without a sound...

FIGHT!

There is probably something that will keep these monsters at bay. What are mist ghosts afraid of? A 6 with the Priestess or Lich King will let the adventurers scare off the ghosts for a round or two.

Number of PCs	Mist Ghost	Chill Wind Ghast
3	2	3
4	2	5
5	3	5
6	3	7
7	4	7

MIST GHOST

6th level blocker [UNDEAD]

Initiative +9

Vulnerable: holy.

Soul-snatching claws +9 vs. PD—25 negative energy damage

Quick use: The mist ghost can take 15 damage to make this attack as a quick action (once per round).

C: Possessed puppetry +11 vs. MD (one enemy)—14 damage, and the target is confused (save ends).

Possession: While the target is confused the GM controls their move action. While the target is confused the mist ghost cannot make attacks nor be targeted by attacks that do not do holy damage.

Exploit trauma: A mist ghost's crit range with attacks against MD expands by 2 against staggered enemies.

Lost opportunity: This creature can't make opportunity attacks.

Resurgent spirit: The first time a mist ghost becomes staggered in a battle it gains a bonus equal to the current escalation die value to all attacks and defenses until the end of the battle or until it takes holy damage.

AC 22

PD 16 HP 90

MD 20

CHILL WIND GHAST

3rd level troop [UNDEAD]

Initiative +9

Vulnerable: holy.

Life draining claws +8 vs. PD-5 ongoing negative energy damage

Teleport: Once per round a chill wind ghastr can teleport as a free action, provided doing so puts it into engagement with an enemy.

Chill aura: Enemies that end their turn engaged with a chill wind ghastr take 5 cold damage.

AC 19

PD 13 HP 45

MD 17

AS A ROLE-PLAYING OPPORTUNITY...

The ghosts are not evil, just lost.

The ghosts plead with the party to find their mortal remains and bury them on the mainland so that the ghosts can at last rest.

GMs: The mortal remains are probably right where the party is at the moment, which is why the ghosts showed up. Of course the adventurers will be asked to take the remains to the Demon Coast as it is both the closest part of the mainland and has a special tie to the ghosts.

OTHER...

The mist of ghosts encircles the adventurers, and when it parts they are on the Demon Coast.

Doubtless other strange things happen to the party while they are in the mist (meetings with dead loved ones, strange omens, glimpses of the future, etc), but the end result is that the party ends up on the Demon Coast.

GMs: Yes, this is -road-y as all heck. Use this option if the players really have no idea where to head and are just as happy ending up on one part of the mainland as the other.

TO THE WYRM'S TALE

Eventually the adventurers arrive on the Demon Coast.

GMs: It doesn't matter what route the party takes in Chapter 5, provided they are ready to start Chapter 6 near Castle Zamak.



CHAPTER 6: TURN AND RETURN

This part of the adventure is designed for 6th level characters, but if you prefer to end the adventure with really hard fights and all-or-nothing gambits then run Chapter 6 for a 5th level party instead.

RECAP (THE STORY SO FAR)

The adventurers owe a debt to the Prince of Shadows. In order to repay their debt they performed crimes for him, one of which was stealing the Darkskye Diamond.

The Darkskye Diamond was in turn stolen from the Prince of Shadows, who asks that the adventurers steal it back.

The Darkskye Diamond has the power to control flying islands, and was originally mined from a flying island called Darkskye—an island that serves as a prison for the Dragon Empire’s worst criminals. The person who stole the diamond from the Prince has taken the diamond to the flying Darkskye Prison.

The adventurers used a stolen flying ship to get aboard the flying island and steal back the diamond, but the prison crashed out of the sky into the Wild Wood.

The adventurers made their way out of the Wild Wood, tracked down the Darkskye Diamond to a group of kobolds, followed their trail to the isle of Omen, and retrieved the Darkskye Diamond.

The adventurers have got back to civilization, and find themselves on the Demon Coast...

ATTACK ON CASTLE

ZAMAK

OVERVIEW

The adventurers start the adventure arriving at Castle Zamak, a castle run by the paladins who work for the Great Gold Wyrms. Forces loyal to The Three attack the castle, seeking to seize the contents of the vault (and the Darkskye Diamond). And after helping to defeat the servants of The Three the adventurers are tasked with the delicate mission of rescuing some missing paladins and the Darkskye Diamond.

JOURNEY TO CASTLE ZAMAK

This first section is a travel montage.

There are many dangers on the Demon Coast. Turn to a player and ask them to describe a possible danger—

then turn to the next player and tell them that their character faced and (barely) overcame that danger, and ask them to say how their character did that. There is no need to roll, this is a travel montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to invent a danger, and everybody has overcome a danger.

By the end of the montage the adventurers will arrive at a castle run by paladins of the Great Gold Wyrms, so help the players work towards that.

The castle is a refuge for travelers, and if they intend to survive their journey along the monster-haunted Demon Coast the party must stop there.

ARRIVAL

The adventurers are gladly received by the paladins of the small castle. The servants of the Great Gold Wyrms were warned in a dream to expect the adventures, and that they would be carrying the Darkskye Diamond with them.

GMs: The adventurers might be surprised that the Great Gold Wyrms know that they have the Darkskye Diamond—explain to them that with an item that has caused as much trouble as the diamond has it is likely that the icons are all taking an interest in it, and in the adventurers.

The leader of the paladins is called Lord D’Arcy of Zamak, and he is assisted by the castle’s chief knights: Sir Randall Gerard (the castle’s seneschal), Lady Erika Flint (a dwarf knight and chief of the armory), and Sir Goy Gurdo (a gnome knight). There are dozens of other knights, squires, and soldiers as well as many cooks, servants, and so on.

The adventurers are met by Lord D’Arcy (the leader of the paladins) who offers to let them store their glowing diamond and any other treasures in the castle’s vault, and offers the weary travelers refreshments.

GMs: Players, being a naturally suspicious lot, might decide that the paladins are trying to steal the diamond. Point out to the players that the adventurers have been given no indication of malfeasance from the paladins. Explain that these armored warriors of light can be trusted to keep their word, and the adventurers know it. If the adventurers flatly refuse to hand over the diamond then the paladins will offer to let the party stay guard outside the vault.

MESSAGES FROM THE ICONS

The following icon options can be used one after the other, but you should cut out those not applicable to the party's icon relationships or tailor them to the player characters as needed.

Emperor or Great Gold Wyrn option:

If the adventurers have strong ties to the Emperor or Great Gold Wyrn the following happens:

The adventurers are told by Lord D'Arcy that the knights will provide them an escort to Horizon, and from there on to Axis. Since the diamond was stolen the Emperor has sent many of the Dragon Empire's flying islands to uninhabited areas, where they will not harm anybody if they fall. Unfortunately many of these flying islands are of vital strategic or magical importance and if they cannot be set back to their usual places the empire will suffer. The paladins and their patron the Great Gold Wyrn want the adventurers to return the diamond to the Emperor.

Prince of Shadows option:

If the adventurers have ties to the Prince of Shadows the following happens:

During the meeting with Lord D'Arcy a squire slips a note to the party asking them to meet him in the stables.

The squire, Gotho the dwarf, is an agent of the Prince of Shadows. He explains that the Prince of Shadows wants the traitorous Shez-a-kah found and killed. The paladins have also been trying to track down the troublemaker (*some of the Great Gold Wyrn's paladins are missing-and it is the fault of Shez-a-kah*) and the party can probably manipulate the paladins into taking them by ship to a place the Prince of Shadows knows of—a ruined keep in a place called Roachdale. The keep is also known to Shez-a-kah and they may be able to pick up her trail there.

The party should also bring the Prince of Shadows the Diamond as soon as they have the chance, but first the traitor must be dealt with.

High Druid option:

If the adventurers have ties to the High Druid the following happens:

After the meeting with Lord D'Arcy a stag wanders into the castle, exhausted from journeying across the Demon Coast. The stag is on the verge of death, and while the paladins discuss eating it the beast mind-speaks with the adventurers.

The stag tells the party that the High Druid wants Shez-a-kah found and killed, as she suspects that the crashing of Darksyke Prison was just the first of many acts of terror that the Prince of Shadow's traitorous former-lieutenant will wreak on the natural world.

Lich King option:

If the adventurers have ties to the Lich King the following happens:

Later after the meeting with Lord D'Arcy the paladins provide the party with a meal of stag, saying that it wandered into the castle and died of exhaustion and the paladins decided to kill it and cook it—taking the unexpected bounty as a good omen.

As the adventurers tuck into the meat the stag's head animates and speaks to the party! It tells them that the Lich King is aware of the threat that Shez-a-kah poses to the Necropolis: if she is willing to steal the Darksyke Diamond to crash a flying island into the High Druid's domain then surely she's just warming up to take on the true master of the world—the Lich King.

The Lich King commands the party to find Shez-a-kah and dispatch her before she becomes a threat that he must deal with personally. The Lich King further commands that the party convince the paladins to provide them with resources to track down Shez-a-kah.

The cook who is carving the stag's meat is oblivious to the talking skull as are the other servants and denizens of the castle—the message was intended only for the adventurers.

Throughout the rest of the meal the (un)dead stag head continues to stare at the party.

'Other' option:

If the adventurers have no compelling ties to the Emperor, the Great Gold Wyrn, the High Druid, the Lich King, or the Prince of Shadows (or if they no longer wish to serve the Prince of Shadows, or if they wish to build a new relationship with the Great Gold Wyrn) the following happens:

Later that evening the adventurers meet again with Lord D'Arcy who tells them that the knights will provide them with a bodyguard so that they can continue their journey; he claims to have seen in a dream that disaster will befall the Dragon Empire if the diamond falls into the wrong hands.

That night, as the adventurers rest from their wounds and recuperate, they receive a vision. Read the following aloud to the players:

You see the Great Gold Wyrn, flying through a star-lit sky. He lands and you walk out from your home to meet him. The vast dragon inclines its head towards you, until its forehead touches yours.

You see a vision of questing knights, golden paladins of the Great Gold Wyrn, being snatched up by a vast shadowy claw. More knights travel out in search of the first knights, but are likewise taken. The claw is searching for a glowing gemstone, the Darkskye Diamond.

You see yourself and your companions, wearing cloaks, setting out in search of the lost knights. The shadowy claw searches for you, but cannot find you. You slip through its clutches again and again.

You approach a ruined keep atop a hill, and enter it as the shadowy claw searches the land for you in vain. In the keep you find a key with a golden thread attached to it. You follow the thread to a deep cave, and there you fight an ethereal menace that is cloaked in darkness. You defeat your nebulous enemy, and free the lost paladins from the golden thread.

You are then standing back where you started. The Great Gold Wyrn has become a knight in golden armor, who knights you with a sword. As you rise, now a knight, you are presented with a treasure beyond compare. The Great Gold Wyrn is once again a dragon, and breathes its fire upon you, but instead of being burned you are filled with power.

DRAGON FALL

The adventurers are in Castle Zamak when the paladins are roused to action by the call to arms.

The castle is a small enough one that it is possible to hear what is going on, no matter where the adventurers are in the castle: it's a dragon attack!

Suddenly a huge three-headed black dragon crashes into the area where the adventurers are and starts slaughtering everything it can reach. As bad luck would have it, the dragon's explosive entry into the room blocks the doors that the adventurers could use to easily escape or that the paladins could use to get in and fight alongside the adventurers.

FIGHT!

The paladins will eventually rally, break through into the area with the adventurers, and kill the dragon—but the adventurers must survive until the escalation die reaches 6, at which point the paladins rush the dragon and kill it at the end of the round.

If the paladins being cut off from the fight is too cheesy for you, describe how the first couple of couple paladins on the scene squeeze in through a shattered wall but are killed quickly. Then describe the ongoing efforts of the paladins to reach the party.

If the adventurers flee the fight the dragon likewise withdraws, and this affects how some later bits of this adventure will play out.

EMPYREAN DRAGON

Huge 9th level spoiler [DRAGON]

Initiative: +17

Gleaming bite +14 vs. AC—50 damage, and one effect triggers based on the head that attacks (GM's choice)

Head 1: The target can't use recoveries until end of its next turn.

Head 2: One enemy that hit the dragon since the dragon's last turn takes 12 damage.

Head 3: The target moves to a nearby non-harmful location of the dragon's choice as a free action. This movement can provoke opportunity attacks.

C: Venom breath +13 vs. PD (1d3 + 1 nearby enemies)—35 damage

Swarming notes: Each time the dragon uses this attack, a swarm of light motes that resolve into scorpions and stinging insects swirl around the targets. The swarm harasses each targeted enemy, hit or miss. During its next turn, any enemy being swarmed this way must choose one: Take 25 damage; OR roll twice for each attack roll it makes that turn, taking the lower result.

[Special trigger] **C: Crying heavens +13 vs. MD (each enemy in the battle)**—20 ongoing damage

Miss: 10 ongoing damage.

Temporal manastorm: The empyrean dragon's connection to the overworld falters, creating a storm of distorted time and magic in the area. The dragon's critical hit range for all attacks expands by 2 until the end of the

battle. In addition, when a target saves against the ongoing damage from this attack, the crit range of its attacks against the dragon expands by 1 until the end of the battle.

Limited use: 1/battle, as a free action when first staggered.

Three heads are better than one: The empyrean dragon can make two gleaming bite attacks as a single standard action, one each from two heads. The third head is assumed to be maneuvering the body around. It can choose not to make one of those attacks to end any condition affecting it except for ongoing damage (this includes the stunned condition, even though it technically doesn't get an action when stunned). Any enemy who scores a critical hit against an empyrean dragon can forego the extra damage to lop off one of the dragon's heads. If an enemy deals 150 damage with a single attack against the dragon, the attack will also remove a head. An empyrean dragon with two remaining heads can make only one gleaming bite attack as a standard action and can't sacrifice that attack to remove conditions. The dragon dies if all three heads are removed.

Intermittent breath: An empyrean dragon can use venom breath 1d2 + 1 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

AC 25

PD 23 HP 510

MD 21



QUESTIONING THE HARUSPEX

The three-headed dragon was not the only attacker, a cadre of blue sorcerers loyal to the Three attacked the castle at the same time. The paladins fought them off, and have captured one of the sorcerers, a dragonic who is dressed in robes that indicate seniority.

The paladins are questioning the creature, but are getting nowhere. Needing to know if another attack is imminent, the paladins invite the adventurers to question the blue sorcerer.

Rob says: "Everybody knows that the Three torture their underlings so effectively that their servants are pretty much immune to anyone else's torture, except maybe for the Diabolist. Frustrates the Crusader no end. So you'll have to be more subtle here, even if you were inclined towards torture."

ASH says: "Instead of torture adventurers will be best off asking questions and watch for facial tics, eye movements, and other tell-tale signs that the line of questioning is getting closer to the truth. Adventurers with relationships with icons known for their cunning might attempt trickery. Magically inclined adventurers might attempt to use magic to see into the sorcerer's mind. Some practically-minded adventures might go through the sorcerer's possessions, looking for physical clues."

Interrogating the sorcerer is a DC 20 skill check (it is pretty beat up from the fight with the paladins and doesn't fully have its wits about it), and each success reveals a new fact:

- The sorcerer is after something in the castle: a glowing diamond. The sorcerer is a haruspex, one who reads the future in the entrails of living creatures.
- The sorcerer and the three-headed black dragon work for the Three, and are doing their bidding. However the Three are working with somebody called Shez-akah, and the Three will hand the diamond to her.
- The sorcerer expects to be rescued, and is allied with a red dragon called Vatra Flamewing.

The 4th success lets the adventurers know that no other information can be gleaned at this time. If the party gets three successes before they get two failures they learn that another attack is very imminent, this time from a red dragon (this modifies how a later section of this adventure plays, as forewarned is forearmed).

GMs: In television procedural dramas (cop shows and detective dramas) the heroes always know when they have recovered all the available information and the scene ends (sometimes with a piece of dramatic music that signals to the

audience that a vital clue has been uncovered). In role-playing games this vital cue is missing, meaning that players can keep on questioning a character or searching for clues once all available information has been gleaned on the assumption that the GM is sneakily keeping something back and they can find it if only they spend more game time searching, or if they only interrogate harder or ask the right questions. If the players fall into the trap of over-searching, tell them know that their characters have honestly found all available information and move immediately on to the next part of the adventure.

FIRESTORM

The castle lookouts comes running—a huge red dragon is flying toward Castle Zamak. Clutched in each of its claws is a huge net full of barrels. The dragon flies overhead and drops the nets, splitting the barrels inside and covering the castle in flammable oil! The dragon circles about high overhead, setting fire to Castle Zamak while staying out of range of most of the defenders.

There are two ways to deal with this threat. The first solution is simply to drive the dragon off by attacking it. The second option (which is less deadly, at least for the player characters) is to stop the fire from spreading, and let the Great Gold Wyrms' paladins deal with the dragon. Suggest both options to the players, and let them pick which one to go with.

FIGHTING VATRA

If the adventurers learned about the red dragon while getting information from the haruspex they gain +2 to all their defenses during this fight.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers learned about the red dragon previously and are thus forewarned they gain +2 to all their defenses during this fight.

Vatra isn't interested in engaging individual enemies, she would rather fly above the castle and burn it with her flaming wings. At the start of each of her turns roll a d8, if it is above the escalation die she withdraws to the sky (she is *far away*, unless a character has a way of flying, or has jumped onto her back [a DC 30 skill check] while engaged with her). Vatra will flee the castle if she becomes staggered (her level has been decreased from 11th to 10th to reflect that fact).

VATRA FLAMEWING

Huge 10th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +16

Fangs, claws, and tail +13 vs.AC (3 attacks)—70 damage

First natural even hit or miss each turn: Roll a fourth fangs, claws, and tail attack.

Second natural even hit or miss each turn: Roll a fifth fangs, claws, and tail attack.

C: Fiery breath +13 vs. PD (2d3 nearby or far away enemies)—80 fire damage

Miss: Half damage.

Vatra's breath: Vatra can use fiery breath 4 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 144 hp or fewer are dazed (−4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Burning wings: Creatures with 145 hp or higher take 30 damage if they end their turn engaged with Vatra.

Resist fire 18+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 18+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 22

PD 27 HP 1200 (but flees once at 600 hp)

MD 23



THE ROOF IS ON FIRE...

The adventurers just need to survive the red dragon's onslaught long enough for the paladins to drive the red dragon off; and survival means fighting the fire.

Each player in turn must narrate how they help to stop the fire spreading, and make a skill check using an appropriate background, with a DC as determined by the below chart. When a player succeeds move one place upwards on the chart, but a failure moves the group one place down. When you move to a space on the chart take any damage listed there before making the skill check. If the adventurers learned about the red dragon earlier they are better prepared, and the DCs are 5 lower. Start where the chart says 'Start...'

End!	<i>The fire is out.</i>	Castle Zamak is safe! The red dragon Vatra is driven off by the paladins, and most of the fires are out. Proceed to the Haruspex's Rescue fight.
	DC 30	You almost have the fire out, and the castle is safe (for now).
Start	DC 25	The smoke is thick, everybody takes 1d6 poison damage.
	DC 20	The dragon comes around for another pass, everybody takes 2d4 fire damage.
	DC 20	The character making the skill check takes 3d4 poison damage from smoke.
End!	<i>All is lost!</i>	The fire cannot be put out! Vatra the red dragon flies off, her task complete. Proceed immediately to the fight in section 1.5 without the chance for the adventurers to rest.
	DC 25	The fire spreads, all characters take 2d12 fire damage.

THE HARUSPEX'S RESCUE

The haruspex's comrades burst into the partially burnt castle, looking for their captured leader. Those paladins that are still able to stand are busy putting out the fire and do not see the servants of the Three enter. The adventurers find themselves between the attackers and the dungeon where the haruspex is locked up.

If the three-headed empyrean dragon survived earlier add it to this battle fully recovered. If the adventurers failed to put out the fire (in the *The Roof is On Fire* section) they take 2d6 poison damage from smoke inhalation at the start of each round that the escalation die is even.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers flee from this fight there is a campaign loss: the servants of The Three loot the castle's vault of all magic items, not just the Darkskye Diamond. This means that later the servants of the Great Gold Wyrms cannot hand out magic items to the adventurers.

Number of PCs	<i>Elite Blue Sorcerer</i>	<i>Dragonic Brute</i>
3	2	1
4	2	3
5	3	2
6	3	4
7	4	3

DRAGONIC BRUTE

5th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +7

Spiked chains +10 vs. AC—14 damage

Natural even hit: The target is stuck and takes 8 ongoing damage (save ends both).

Reach: Once per battle the dragonic brute can use this attack as a close attack against a nearby or far away enemy.

C: Lightning breath +10 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—13 lightning damage

AC 21

PD 19 HP 72

MD 15

ELITE BLUE SORCERER

Double-strength 6th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Curved dagger +11 vs. AC—15 ongoing damage

C: Rolling thunder +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—30 damage

Gathered power: If the sorcerer didn't gather power on its last turn it can do so as a standard action. Roll d6 for the chaotic benefit:

1-2: +1 to AC until the start of its next turn.

3-4: One nearby enemy takes 2d6 lightning damage.

5-6: The next attack it makes does an extra 2d8 damage.

On its next turn it can cast one of the following spells:

[after gather power only] **C: Lightning flash +11 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)**—42 lightning damage and the target and the sorcerer swap places.

[after gather power only] **R: Storm spear +12 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)**—26 lightning damage

Natural even hit: If the target is nearby to one of its allies the storm spear does 2d6 thunder damage to the ally.

[after gather power only] **Theft of life's breath +12 vs. PD**—The target spends a recovery and rolls it but gets no benefit, the blue sorcerer gains the recovery value in temporary hit points.

AC 21

PD 18 HP 180

MD 20

COMPLICATIONS

If the empyrean dragon fled in a previous fight but is still alive add it to this battle, but with only half its normal hit points and only using *gleaming bite* (it is still wounded from its first encounter with the adventurers). If the adventurers failed to put out the fire that was burning through the castle then they take 2d6 poison damage from smoke inhalation at the start of each round that the escalation die is even.

During this fight the Darkskye Diamond is stolen by a *shadow thief* working for the Prince of Shadows' rebellious lieutenant Shez-a-kah. Unless a character was literally sat on top of the diamond and watching it every second there is no way to have guarded against the theft of the diamond—even then the shadow thief is going to get it after a quick struggle.

GMs: *Ah, but you'll get a clever player saying "Oh, but I had it in my pack the entire time watched over by my familiar and I warded it with magic and tied a string to it" or some other reason why there is absolutely no way that any force conceivable could have taken the diamond. Let the player know that the diamond was stolen by a supernatural thief—but they can get the diamond back.*



THE QUEST IS GIVEN

The battle is over and the haruspex and its companions are either dead or captured (or escaped if the adventurers fled the last fight). The captain of the paladins explains that the Three seem to have not been after the contents of the vault (where the few precious magic items in the castle were stored), but after the Darkskye Diamond. Some of the paladins saw an odd-moving shadow during the battle and think that it might have been a servant of the Prince of Shadows.

The castle's chaplain has also had a prophetic dream, sent by the Great Gold Wyrm. He says that they have been chosen by the Great Gold Wyrm to find and defeat an enemy that the Great Gold Wyrm's paladins are unable to find. In fact several groups of paladins have gone missing, the latest while investigating a ruined keep in a place called Roachdale.

Based on the chaplain's dream a squire has been sent to remove some magic items from the vault and give them to the adventurers as initial help from the Great Gold Wyrm.

Loot!

There are three items available for the party to distribute among themselves, unless the adventurers fled from any fight in Castle Zamak in which case the minions of the Three cleared out the vault and left it empty.

SUPERB BREASTPLATE

This glittering golden breastplate is inlaid with sapphires.

[Heavy armor]

+1 AC (adventurer); +2 AC (champion); +3 AC (epic).

Recharge 11+: You are not affected by fear, and when fighting an enemy with a fear aura you gain an extra bonus +1 to all defenses.

Quirk: Insists on taking the brunt of any potential danger

CONSECRATED BLADE

The blade has been dedicated to the gods of light.

[Weapon, any bladed]

+1 bonus to attacks and damage (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

Recharge 11+: Until the end of the battle the crit range for this weapon expands by a cumulative 1 every time it misses, to a maximum expansion of 4.

Quirk: Sings battle-hymns

HELM OF BRILLIANCE

The jewels of the richly adorned helmet sparkle in the light.

+1 MD (adventurer); +2 MD (champion); +3 MD (epic).

Recharge 16+: When a daily power misses all targets it is not expended and may be used again after the current battle.

Quirk: Prone to wild speculation



A DAY LATE AND A DIAMOND SHORT

OVERVIEW

The adventurer's quest for the Darkskye Diamond takes them to an abandoned village called Roachdale, near a ruined keep on a hill. A year ago the village was over-run demons, who used the keep as a prison. The demons were killed between then and now, and the place is now used as a secret meeting place for servants of evil icons. The adventurers are in Roachdale to look for clues as to where the Prince of Shadow's traitorous former lieutenant Shez-a-kah took the Darkskye Diamond.

The adventurers arrive much too late to recover the Darkskye Diamond and must search for clues as to where the diamond ended up.

THE ROAD TO ROACHDALE

This first section is a montage, dealing with the adventurers getting through the village of Roachdale itself.

The village of Roachdale is swarming with undead, though often they are only minor ones such as undead cockroaches or skeletal rats.

Turn to a player and ask them to describe a possible danger that the group faced; then turn to the next player and tell them that their character faced and overcame that danger, allowing the group as a whole to proceed forwards, and ask them to say how their character did that. There is no need to roll, this is a montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to invent a danger, and everybody has overcome a danger.

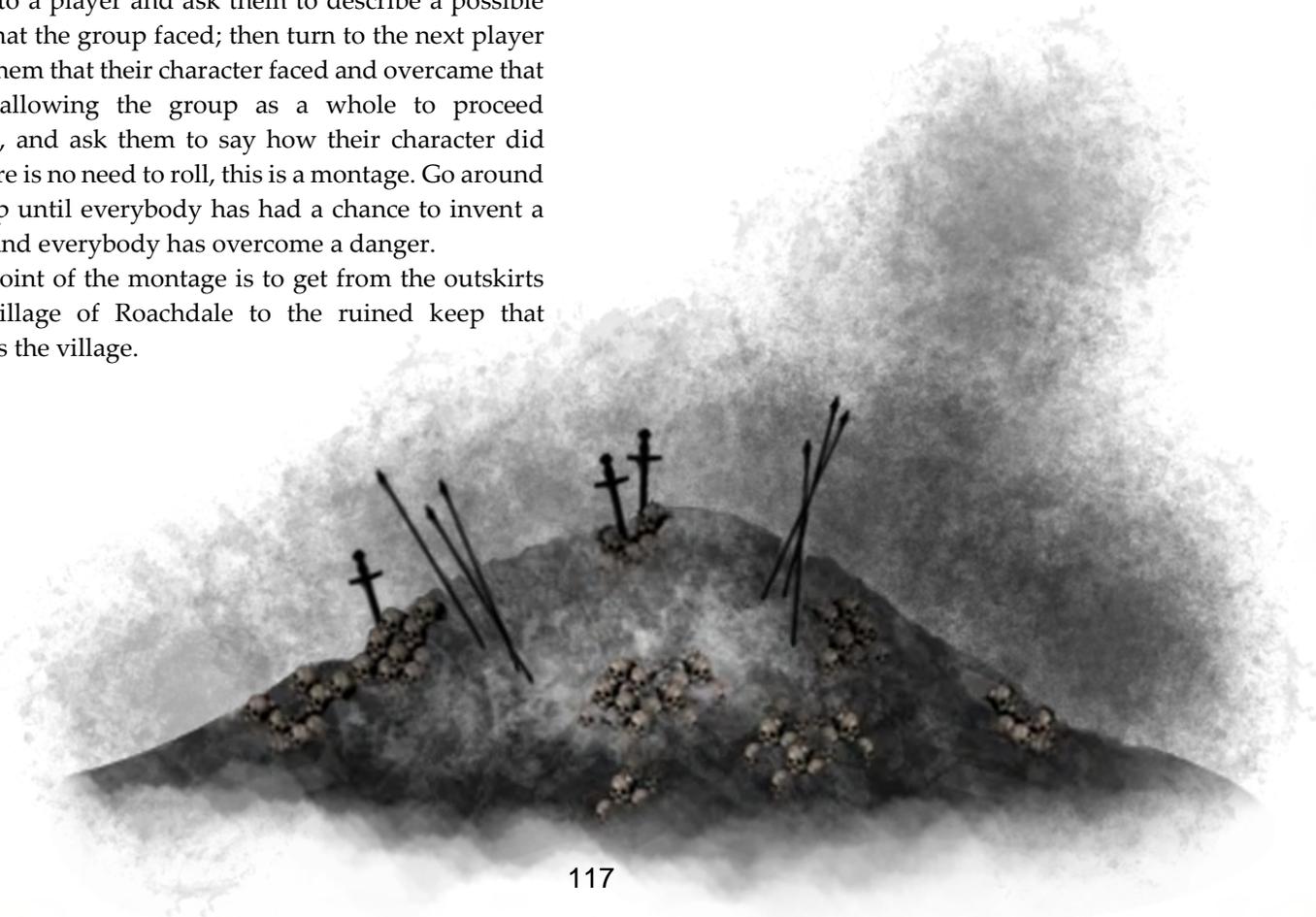
The point of the montage is to get from the outskirts of the village of Roachdale to the ruined keep that overlooks the village.

INTO THE KEEP

Once the adventurers are past the dangers of the abandoned village, they will need to get down into dungeons under the keep. Unfortunately the keep's entrance is guarded by a listless-looking pair of undead creatures. These were formerly demons, but the influence of the Lich King in this area has reanimated them into undead.

The obvious solution is to fight past the shambling undead, but a better idea is sneaking past. It is a DC 20 skill check to sneak past the undead, and a result of 30+ allows the sneaking adventurer to get past the undead and sneak an ally with them who otherwise failed their roll.

If any adventurers fail their roll, then a fight occurs, but PCs that succeeded at sneaking gain +1 to their attacks in the first round of combat and +4 to their initiative rolls.



FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

The adventurers can flee this fight: they can run down into the ruined keep, but the undead will follow and eventually find them.

Number of PCs	First Monster	Skeletal Dretch
3	3	10
4	5	10
5	7	10
6	9	10
7	11	10

SHAMBLING IMP

10th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +10

Festering claws +15 vs. AC—16 damage, and 10 ongoing damage

R: Blight jet +15 vs. PD—30 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)

First natural 16+ each turn: The imp can choose one: the target is weakened instead of dazed; OR the imp can make a blight jet attack against a different target as a free action.

AC 24

PD 22 HP 54 (mook)

MD 20

Mook: Kill one wretched imp mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob.

SKELETAL DRETCH

When a demon is killed and eaten in the Abyss, it passes out of its devourer as a dretch. Becoming undead is actually an improvement for them.

6th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +8

Claws +11 vs. AC—12 damage

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 30 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

AC 20

PD 18 HP 23 (mook)

MD 14

Mook: Kill one undead dretch mook for every 23 damage you deal to the mob.

THROUGH THE DUNGEON

The dungeon below the ruined keep is a labyrinth of twisting passages and dead ends. Its lack of upkeep and changing hands from those of demons to the boney undead hand of the Lich King has not made finding the way through the dungeon any easier, and in fact has added additional hazards to navigating the underground passages.

Co-operatively narrate with the players the tense journey through the dungeon, during which the adventurers must face the six obstacles below. The party should nominate a different adventurer to face each obstacle.

FALLING MASONRY	PIT / UNSTABLE FLOOR	HUNGRY UNDEAD RATS
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Unstable ceiling +10 vs AC (1d3 adventurers)—2d10 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Collapsing floor (automatic hit)—4d6 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Eternally hungry bites +20 vs AC (1d3 adventurers)—2d12 negative energy damage</p>
PIT TRAP	TRAPPED DOOR	ACID PUDDLE
<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Demon pit trap (automatic hit against 1d3 adventurers)—2d12 damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Poison Darts +25 vs AC—4d6 poison damage</p>	<p><i>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</i> Acid splash +20 vs AC (1d3 adventurers)—2d12 acid damage</p>

GMs: If the adventurers fled a fight in a previous part of the adventure now is a good time to have those monsters show up again. This is probably where the undead guards from the door show up if the party just ran away from them mid-fight. If the party fled from any other monster from the start of the adventure in Shadow Port to right now, they could well turn up here as servants of an evil icon opposing the adventurers.

MEET THE OOZE

Once all of the lesser dangers of the dungeon have been faced the party will have moved into the lowest level of the dungeon, and here encounters the true danger of this dungeon—a gelatinous octahedron has taken up residence.

FIGHT!

It is a DC 25 skill check to avoid walking face-first into the gelahedron, as it is almost invisible in the dim light. If the party has some warning (i.e. the person walking at the front passes the skill check) they can fight the gelahedron as usual, otherwise it gets a free attack on whoever was at the front of the party before initiative is rolled.

If the adventurers flee the fight with the ooze they find themselves turned around in the winding corridors and confusing dead-ends and end up wandering back toward (or into) the ooze. They'll get a chance to rest (a short rest) between the fights, but the fight starts again with an adventurer walking face-first into the fully healed ooze.

All oozes have the following two abilities:

Flows where it likes: The ooze is immune to opportunity attacks.

Ooze: The ooze is immune to effects. When an attack applies a condition to an ooze (dazed, hampered, weakened, ongoing damage, etc.), that condition doesn't affect it.



THE OOZE...

GELATINOUS OCTAHEDRON

These deadly oozes are hollow on the inside and contain a highly corrosive liquid.

Huge 6th level blocker [OOZE]

Initiative: +5

Shlup'n'schlorp +11 vs. PD—38 acid damage, and the cube engulfs the target (functions like a grab; see below) if it's smaller than the cube

Miss: The cube can make a spasms attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **C: Spasms +11 vs. AC (up to 2 attacks, each against a different nearby enemy)—19 damage**

Engulf and dissolve: Targets engulfed/grabbed (13th Age core book, page 172) by the cube take 38 acid damage at the start of the cube's turn but are not viable targets for additional attacks by the cube. Multiple targets can be held within the cube simultaneously. Any engulfed creature that is also staggered must begin making last gasp saves (page 200 of core book) or become paralyzed as the cube's toxins overwhelm it.

Instinctive actions: Gelatinous creatures have no brains, sometimes they just do things. When the escalation die is odd, instead of making an attack or moving, roll a d8 to see what the octahedron does. If an option is not viable (you roll a 3 but there are no nearby targets), reroll until you get a valid option.

1. **C: Acid splash +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—8 ongoing acid damage**

Each failed save: Acid destroys one of the target's non-magical items. The target takes a cumulative -1 attack penalty until the end of the battle (boots fall apart, shield straps snap, etc.).

Miss: 5 ongoing acid damage.

2. The octahedron grows an orifice that gushes out a liquid glue that floods the area. Each enemy engaged with the octahedron is stuck (hard save ends, 16+). Each nearby enemy not engaged with the octahedron is stuck (save ends). Each far away enemy is stuck (easy save ends, 6+). The glue has no effect on creatures who are flying or that have some way of avoiding it.

3. The octahedron squirts a slick slime that targets 1d3 nearby enemies. Until the end of the battle, each



target must roll an easy save each time it moves; on a failure, it's hampered until the end of its next turn.

4. The octahedron makes a fire gout attack as it splashes out a gel that ignites in the air and sticks to skin and clothing.

C: Fire gout +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—8 ongoing fire damage
Each failed save: The ongoing damage for all enemies hit by the attack increases by 1.

5. The octahedron sweats acid. Each enemy engaged with the octahedron must roll a normal save; on a failure, it takes 40 acid damage. On a success it takes 20 acid damage.

6. **C: Acid jet +11 vs. PD (one nearby or far away enemy)**—45 acid damage
Miss: 8 ongoing acid damage.

7. **C: Acid geyser +11 vs. PD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)**—30 acid damage, and the octahedron is propelled uncontrollably about the area, passing next to each of its enemies. Unlike normal, each enemy can make an opportunity attack against the ooze as it moves this way, but the ooze can make a glomp attack against those who do as a free action as it passes. (Tell the PCs that the ooze will get a counter-attack.)

Glomp +9 vs. PD—10 acid damage, and the cube engulfs the target if it's smaller than the cube

8. The octahedron splits into two tetrahedrons, and each one can act this turn (roll a d4 for the instinctive actions of each one). Divide the octahedron's current hit points equally between the two new creatures.

AC 21

PD 19 HP 280

MD 16

AND IF THE OCTAHEDRON SPLITS INTO TWO TETRAHEDRONS...

GELATINOUS TETRAHEDRON

The ooze whips out a tentacle, grasps an enemy, and flings it through the air to the opposite side of the cavern. Gelatinous tetrahedrons prefer their meals pulped . . .

Huge 4th level blocker [OOZE]

Initiative: +3

Shlup'n'schlorp +9 vs. PD—22 acid damage, and the tetrahedron engulfs the target (functions like a grab; see below) if it's smaller than the tetrahedron

Miss: The tetrahedron can make a spasms attack as a free action.

[Special trigger] **C: Spasms +9 vs. AC (up to 2 attacks, each against a different nearby enemy)**—11 damage

Engulf and dissolve: Targets engulfed/grabbed (13th Age core book, page 172) by the tetrahedron take 22 acid damage at the start of the cube's turn but are not viable targets for additional attacks by the tetrahedron.

Multiple targets can be held within the tetrahedron simultaneously. Any engulfed creature that is also staggered must begin making last gasp saves (page 200 of core rules) or become paralyzed as the tetrahedron's toxins overwhelm it.

Instinctive actions: Gelatinous creatures have no brains, sometimes they just do things. When the escalation die is odd, instead of making an attack or moving, roll a d4 to see what the tetrahedron does. If an option is not viable (you roll a 1 but there is no engaged enemy), reroll until you get a valid option.

1. **C: Fling +9 vs. PD (one engaged enemy)**—14 damage, and the target pops free from the ooze and must roll an easy save (6+); on a failure, it loses its next move action

2. **C: Fling +9 vs. PD (one nearby enemy not engaged with the ooze)**—28 damage, and the target is flung somewhere nearby and must roll an easy save (6+); on a failure, it loses its next move action

3. **C: Fling +9 vs. PD (one far away enemy)**—42 damage, and the target is flung somewhere far away and must roll an easy save (6+); on a failure, it loses its next move action

4. As a standard action the ooze quickly moves around the battlefield, oozing over 1d3 nearby enemies.

Those enemies become engaged with the ooze and stuck (save ends).

First failed save: The target is engulfed instead of stuck.

AC 19

PD 17 HP half of the Octahedron's hit points at the time of splitting

MD 14

WHAT THE OOZE REVEALS

The ooze, once defeated, drops a golden key that it had swallowed. The key has a name etched upon it "*The Crown and Gown*" a famous tavern in Shadow Port. Whoever was here last came from the city of the Prince of Shadows.

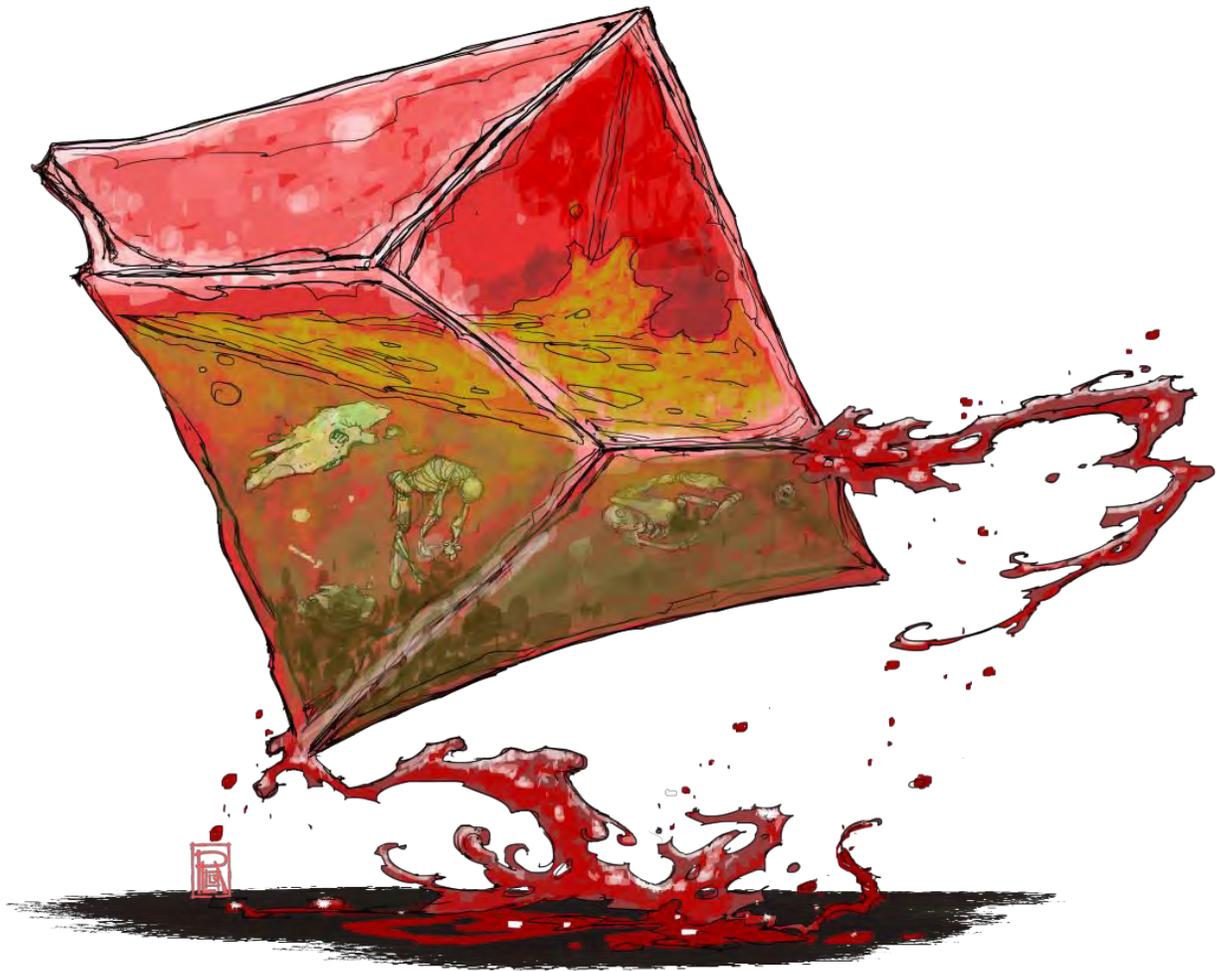
The ooze also contained a silver and jade statue (worth 1200 gp if sold in somewhere disreputable like Shadow Port). The statue looks like it was stolen from a temple in Shadow Port, as it is covered in depictions of the local gods and saints of the city.

THE DREAM

That night the adventurers receive another dream sent to them by the Great Gold Wyrn.

You ride on the back of the Great Gold Wyrn, flying over a defeated army and landing at a ghostly keep that you recognize as the one that you have just been exploring the dungeons of. You hold in your hand a key with a golden thread attached to it. You know that following the golden thread will lead to the missing paladins.

A shadowy claw belonging to an unseen monster fumbles blindly for you, but it cannot find you. The monster that took the diamond and kidnapped the Great Gold Wyrn's paladins is searching you paladins, but it cannot locate you. You see that the shadowy monster's arm emerges from Shadow Port, and the golden thread is tangled around it.



THE CROWN AND GOWN

OVERVIEW

The adventurers are searching once more for the Darkskye Diamond, stolen from them by servants of the Three and given to Shez-a-kah the traitorous former-servant of the Prince of Shadows. The adventurers know that the Prince of Shadows will want it back, and that the Great Gold Wyrm wants it taken to the Emperor.

BACK IN SHADOW PORT

This first section is a travel montage. The adventurers arrive at the bustling Shadow Port docks, a city that holds many dangers for the foolish or unlucky. Turn to a player and ask them to describe a possible danger of the piratical metropolis. Then turn to the next player and tell them that their character faced and overcame that danger which allowed the group as a whole to move onwards, and ask them to say how their character did that. There is no need to roll, this is a montage scene. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to invent a danger, and everybody has overcome a danger.

GMs: Ask the players if, since they are in a city, they wish to buy any potions, oils, etc... this is a prime opportunity to spend cash gained in previous adventures.

THE CROWN AND GOWN INN

While searching the secret meeting place in Rochdale the adventurers discovered a golden key for the Crown and Gown.

The Crown and Gown is probably the fanciest public drinking establishment in Shadow Port, though there are fancier private clubs. The drinks are exorbitantly priced, the food is respectable, and the entertainment is exceptional. The Crown and Gown is the place to be in Shadow Port, if you are fortunate enough to be on the list to be let in.

The upper stories of the Crown and Gown are private rooms, each of which looks out via latticework-shielded balconies onto the main hall of the tavern (and out onto the street outside). The key that the adventurers found last session fits some door here... but which one?

Getting past the doorman (a large half-orc woman called Anna Gladtooth) is a DC 20 skill check. Adventurers might try to talk their way past, sneak past, create a distraction, or bribe her. Adventurers who have been to the Crown and Gown before may add +5 to their roll. Anna won't fight the adventurers if she doesn't have to. The music from inside is too loud (a dwarf bard band

for any fight to be heard, though patrons near the door might come out to see what the fuss is about.

GMs: Remember that the adventurers who took part in Chapter 2's capers will likely still have a key to a private suite at the Crown and Gown, are always allowed in, and drink for free. If a player points out that their adventurer has already been here, ask them if they still have the key... if so getting through the front door will be much easier.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Anna won't fight the adventurers if she doesn't have to, so if she becomes staggered she surrenders or runs away to find help. Thankfully the Crown and Gown is noisy enough inside that aside from the Angry Patrons nobody will hear the fight.

Remind the players that they can choose to simply knock their foes out rather than attempting lethal blows.

Number of PCs	Anna Gladtooth	Angry Patrons
3	1	0
4	1	3
5	1	5
6	1	8
7	1	10

ANNA GLADTOOTH

Triple strength 7th level blocker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Pugilism +12 vs. AC—84 damage (non-lethal)

Natural even roll: The target pops free and is pushed back into the street.

Natural odd hit: No damage, but the target becomes dazed (save ends).

...*Failure to save against dazed:* The target instead becomes weakened (save ends).

...*Failure to save against weakened:* The target instead becomes stunned (save ends).

...*Failure to save against stunned:* The target instead becomes helpless until a bucket of water is thrown over them or something similar.

Run away: If Anna becomes staggered (165 hp or fewer) and the adventurers are using non-lethal damage she attempts to flee from the fight. No job is worth getting killed for, right?

AC 23

PD 21 HP 330

MD 17

ANGRY PATRON

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

Punch +15 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—30 damage

On rounds when the escalation die is odd the angry patron does the following...

If the patron is a sorceress

C: Inebriated lightning +15 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy)—4d20 fire damage

Miss: One other mook is hit.

If the patron is a dwarf mercenary

Smashed hammer +15 vs. AC (two attacks)—20 damage

Miss: If there is an ally engaged with the target, the ally takes the damage instead.

If the patron is just a merchant

C: Sloppy kick +15 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—30 damage and the target is stunned until the start of its next turn

Miss: The mook hits itself.

Mob: If the angry patron doesn't attack on its round it grants a cumulative +1 to attack against all enemies it is engaged with (maximum bonus +4).

AC 24

PD 21 HP 54 (mook)

MD 16

Mook: Kill one angry patron mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob. Apply damage to shadow-warriors using the elusive ability last (or ignore that damage)

INSIDE THE CROWN AND GOWN...

Once inside the crown and gown, the adventurers discover that the place is crowded. Wandering around the Crown and Gown trying doors shows that they key won't fit any of the doors upstairs, but the key is identical to the ones that the stage hand uses to open the door to the changing rooms and offices downstairs.

Sneaking past the young stage hand (called Roger) is a DC 15 skill check, and if the adventurers draw their weapons he'll just back away.

BACKSTAGE AT THE CROWN AND GOWN...

The rest of this part of the adventure involves exploration of the undercroft and cellars beneath the Crown and Gown.

There is no one true way, and the adventurers might end up headed straight to where they need to go or end up wandering through various rooms before they find the secret way to the ultimate showdown at the end of this adventure.

Each room or area can be run in various ways—usually including exploration, an option for combat, a social encounter, and so on.

The Corridor and Stairs—The central area downstairs.

The Office—An office where the acts for the Crown and Gown are booked.

The Money Counting Room—Lots of loot here.

The Factotum's Chamber—The area where repairs to scenery are made, with an unsettling secret.

The Store Room—An area containing a (broken?) golem.

The Special Reserve—Casks and crates, a good place to hide. It contains a secret door.

The Dressing Room—A dressing room.

The Secret Room—A secret room accessed from the *special reserve* area's secret door.

The *secret room* contains a hidden trapdoor that leads downwards (see the *Down the Hatch* section) to the lair of one of the Prince of Shadow's lieutenants.

GMs: Constantly point out to the players that it is too noisy for the adventurers to hear much down here (listening at doors is usually no good). The sound of the dwarven band up above will also mask any fight the adventurers engage in.

THE CROWN AND GOWN TREASURES

The backstage area of the Crown and Gown holds more than one secret. The following items can all be found by searching various areas...

WYRMSHOCK THE DRAGON-SLAYER

This sword is inlaid with gold, and when held aloft the image of the Great Gold Wyrn can occasionally be glimpsed as an aura around the blade.

[Weapon, long sword]

+1 bonus to attacks and damage (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

Recharge 11+: When fighting a dragon (or dragonic, or kobold) double the bonus granted by this weapon.

Quirk: Desires to eat eggs.

HEALING SALVE

A sticky pinkish paste, intended to be rubbed into the flesh.

[standard action to use, consumable]

- When applied in combat it revives a dying character, bringing them back to 1 hp
- When applied after combat the recipient gets their maximum recovery value for recoveries spent to heal during a short rest.

TERPSICHORE'S ORCHESTRION

This music box has intricate sliding hatches out of which emerge tiny automatons that play music. As they play a group of coryphée emerge from the top of the music box and dance together.

[Wondrous magic item]

Recharge 11+: Anybody who attempts to mimic the automatons' dance gains +2 to all skill rolls involving mime, dance, singing, oration, impressions, and other stage arts. The bonus lasts for the next hour or so. If the attuned owner listens to the music and mimics the dance they also roll twice for all disengage checks during their next battle that day.

Quirk: Prima donna style behavior.



THE CORRIDOR AND STAIRS

FROM OUTSIDE...

At the top of the stairs is a door, but hearing anything beyond it is impossible due to the music of the dwarven bard band. Peering through the keyhole a set of stairs leading downwards can be seen, at the bottom of which is a brightly burning brazier.

WHAT IS HERE

A set of stairs leads downwards into an L-shaped corridor. Near the turn of the L a brazier burns, providing illumination and warmth. The floor is stone, and the clink and chink of the adventurer's armor echoes, though it is hard to hear over the sound of music and revelry from upstairs in the Crown and Gown. Five double doors lead from the long leg of the L, four on the left and one on the right side of the corridor. The first two doors on the left side of the corridor are thick metal doors, and light can be seen coming from the keyholes. At the end of the long leg of the L is a red curtain, which wafts gently in a slight breeze.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

A dozen male dancers stand around the brazier, warming themselves. This troupe has travelled from Glitterhaegen, and are known as the Citterios. They are talking about a fight that they heard had happened outside, between the bouncer Anna and some idiots from out of town.

It is a DC 20 skill check to convince the dancers that the adventurers are supposed to be down here, if that succeeds the dancers will mostly ignore anything else the adventurers get up to. If the players fail this skill check the DC increases by a cumulative +5 for their next attempt. If the DC hits 40 the dancers will definitely know something is up (move this to a combat encounter).

If this is not a social encounter... the Citterios are already upstairs, performing.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

The red curtain at the end of the corridor wafts in a breeze, but where is it coming from? If the adventurers investigate the curtain it is a DC 25 skill check to notice the aglets... this is actually a paladin's cloak—how did this come to be down here being used as a curtain?

A DC 20 skill check allows the adventurers to notice that at the bottom of the brazier are partially melted pieces of metal—fishing these out (a DC 25 skill check to avoid 4d8 fire damage unless the adventurer uses the tip of a sword or similar) shows that they are the belt buckles

of a dozen paladin's belts, and each bears the likeness of the Great Gold Wyrm.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

Over a dozen performers stand around the brazier, warming themselves. They are fire-eaters, knife-jugglers, and acrobats, together with various stage-hands, hangers on, and flunkies.

When the performers and backstage crew see the adventurers they become angry if the adventurers fought Anna the doorman (she is their friend), but if the adventurers did not fight Anna the performers leave to go upstairs, as they are due on stage.

If this is not a combat encounter... the Citterios either don't care if the adventurers beat up Anna, or they are already upstairs performing.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

If the party didn't fight Anna then the performers simply leave, having no reason to fight the party. If the party fought Anna then word will have made it to the performers.

Number of PCs	Performers	Stage-hands
3	1	15
4	2	15
5	3	15
6	4	15
7	5	15

PERFORMER

6th level blocker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +12

These muscles aren't just for show +12 vs. AC (three attacks)—20 damage

Nastier Specials:

Acrobat: On a miss the performer pops free.

Exotic dancer: The performer's attack is against MD and does psychic damage. The dance is more than usually exotic.

Fire-eater: The damage is fire damage.

Knife juggler: The performer can use the following attack once per battle as a quick action:

C: Knife +12 vs. AC (one nearby enemy)—20 damage

AC 23

PD 18 HP 55

MD 14

STAGE-HAND

5th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +12

Kick and step +15 vs. AC (one nearby enemy) –7
damage (non-lethal)

Natural 16+: The target is stuck (save ends).

Team-work: Group the stage hands up into mobs of 5. For every mook in a mob of 5 who does not attack on its turn, add 1 to the defenses of all mooks in the mob until the start of their next turn.

AC 20

PD 13 HP 14 (mook)

MD 17

Mook: Kill one stage hand mook for every 14 damage you deal to the mob.

Not killing: remind players that their characters can aim to knock out enemies rather than aim to kill.

THE OFFICE

FROM OUTSIDE...

A thick set of metal double doors block access to this room. If an adventurer presses their ear up against the doors they will hear something like the crackle of a fire, though it is hard to hear anything over the sound of the band upstairs. The metal door is not as cool to the touch as it should be.

WHAT IS HERE

A roaring fire in one corner of the room provides warmth and illumination. It is clear that the fire-place is shared with the next room over and climbing through the fireplace will allow an adventurer to access the other room.

Climbing through a fireplace that is enchanted with a continual flame spell +15 vs PD –2d8 ongoing fire damage. Adventurers can attempt to put out a burning ally (DC 20 skill check), failing means that they also catch fire.

A chest sits next to the fireplace. The chest contains a set of leather armor, a shield, a club, and a crossbow.

Opposite the fireplace is a desk and two chairs. On the desk are several books, two of which are ledgers and one of which (a green book with a skull on the front) appears to be written in code. Breaking the code will take hours of work for somebody with an appropriate background, and it lists payments from and to criminal groups for various services rendered. Between the books is a war axe of orcish manufacture.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

In the room sits Mund Osmarvyn, a halfling book-keeper. He is adding up figures in the biggest ledger with the aid of an abacus.

Convincing Mund that the party are supposed to be here is a DC 30 skill check—if Mund is not convinced by them he will try not to show it (if the person attempting to convince Mund got at least a 25 on their skill check they see that Mund is not convinced, otherwise Mund looks convinced).

If the party acts in a way that threatens him, and Mund is not convinced that they are supposed to be down here Mund will run and hide in another area, potentially triggering a combat encounter in that other area.

If Mund is convinced that the adventurers are supposed to be in the office and the adventurer's threaten him he'll assume that they are collecting a debt owned to the Prince of Shadows and will give them a bag of



glowing gems (see the exploratory encounter option). If Mund is convinced that the adventurers are working security for his boss Lady Agetha who owns the Crown and Gown, then he'll mostly ignore them except to pass the time of day as pleasantly as a harried accountant who just wants to get on with his work can.

Mund doesn't really know who else is down in the basement, he just wants to finish his work and go home to his husband. Mund will attempt to run rather than fight, and will hide in another area. It is a DC 30 skill check to catch Mund as he flees between the adventurer's legs, and Mund will wiggle out of his coat and force a re-roll if the first roll succeeds. Mund's defenses are all 35 while he is fleeing, but if caught is so easy to hit that no roll is needed. Mund has 5 hit points, and is useless in a fight.

If this is not a social encounter... Mund is not here.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

Getting inside the room requires picking the lock (a DC 25 skill check). A DC 20 result will open the lock but will also spring a poison needle trap which makes the following attack:

Poison needle +10 vs PD—4d8 poison damage

If this is not an exploratory encounter... the door is unlocked.

The fireplace has a loose brick, behind which is a small concealed space with a velvet bag in it. The bag contains glowing gemstones. The party will recognize the stones as being from the flying prison island *Darkskye* which crashed in the Wild Wood some time ago.

THE MONEY-COUNTING ROOM

FROM OUTSIDE...

A thick set of metal double doors block access to this room. If an adventurer presses their ear up against the doors they will hear something like the crackle of a fire, though it is hard to hear anything over the sound of the band upstairs. The door is not as cool to the touch as it should be.

These doors are locked, and getting through them via lock-picking is a DC 30 skill check. The doors are magically re-enforced, making them hard to bash down (it requires two DC 30 skill checks to use brute force to enter the room).

WHAT IS HERE

The doors do not open all the way due to a large oak desk sat in front of them. On the desk is a sword, several bags of coins, some parchment, hundreds of loose silver

imperials and copper coins from across the Dragon Empire, and a candle. Behind the desk are three open chests which contain coins, mostly gold.

A roaring fire in one corner of the room provides warmth and illumination. It is clear that the fire-place is shared with the next room over and climbing through the fireplace will allow an adventurer to access the other room.

Climbing through a fireplace that is enchanted with a continual flame spell +15 vs PD—2d8 ongoing fire damage. Adventurers can attempt to put out a burning ally (DC 20 skill check), failing means that they also catch fire.

On the floor is an expensive looking rug. There is nothing hidden under the rug if the adventurers search under it.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

In the room sits Intius Criver the human, a former captain in the imperial army who now works for Lady Agetha, owner of the Crown and Gown. Intius works with Mund the Halfling to manage the day-to-day operations of the Crown and Gown. Convincing Intius that the adventurers are supposed to be down here is a DC 25 skill check.

Failing the skill check means that Intius believes that the adventurers are actually thugs here to shake him down for money. He'll hand out three bags each with 200 gp in each of them (actually aumaggits, see the exploratory encounter), and verbally tells chides them for stealing from the Crown and Gown while mentioning that he pays protection money to the Red Hand Mob for this not to happen.

If the adventurers succeed on their skill check Intius will deal with the adventurers depending on what lie they tell him or what disguise they are wearing. If Intius believes them to be performers he'll escort them upstairs and push them out onto the stage, as the Crown and Gown has a jester out sick and he has sent for a replacement act from the local Fool's Guild. What the adventurers do once on the stage in front of a crowd of several hundred people is down to them.

If this is not a social encounter... nobody is here (unless this is a combat encounter).

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

Looting the room yields about 1000 gp per adventurer—but there is too much to carry out and most of it is in small denomination coins. It would take several

trips to drag this much money upstairs, and moving it through the bar unseen would require several DC 20 skill checks. Adventurers can scoop up about 200 gp each if they don't mind their packs being incredibly heavy.

In one chest are three bags full of aumaggs. These look like 200 gp worth of coins per bag, but if jiggled about too much (say by an adventurer in their pack as they fight) they hatch into thousands of tiny worm-like things that feast on non-magical precious metals. It is a DC 25 skill check to notice that these coins are flat eggs that mimic coins. If the adventurers take these bags then during the next fight the bags explode (all combatants become stunned until the end of their next turn) and anything of worth that the adventurers have will be eaten by tiny worms that then scurry off through cracks in the ground. A wizard's mend spell will put the tiny coin-eating grubs to sleep until they are next jiggled, but this cannot be done mid-combat.

Beneath the desk is a triple-crossbow pointed at the door. The crossbow is attached to a counterweighted mechanism of dwarven design: twisting one of the desk handles releases a mechanism that cocks and loads the crossbow. The mechanism is large enough to take up most of the desk, it isn't something that can be repurposed into adventuring equipment. Upon closer examination the sword on the desk is magical, and once belonged to a paladin of the Great Gold Wurm.

Loot!

The sword is Wyrms shock the Dragon Slayer.

The parchments on the desk show the area around Castle Zamak.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

Upon seeing the adventurers the large man sat behind the desk widens his eyes and pulls on a handle. This triggers the following attack before the adventurers can react:

Under-desk crotch-height triple crossbow with barbed darts +20 vs AC (3 attacks)—3d4 damage and the target is hampered; it is a standard action to pull a barbed dart out, which ends the hampered effect and does another 3d4 damage to the target.

After the surprise attack roll initiative and normal combat rounds start.

If this is not a combat encounter... nobody is here (unless this is a social encounter).

FIGHT!

OK, so he's not a spell caster, but his martial tricks are similar enough to spells in action that it makes little difference.

Number of PCs	Intius Criver	(Tricks)
3	1	3
4	1	4
5	1	5
6	1	6
7	1	7

INTIUS CRIVER

Double-strength 8th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +11

Sudden thrust +13 vs. AC (+15 against dragonics and other dragon-like foes)—35 damage

Natural odd roll: Make another sudden thrust attack against a different target as a free action. Keep making attacks until an even hit or miss.

Tricks: Intius' years as an imperial captain has taught him a few tricks. Intius can use a number of tricks per battle equal to the number of PCs present. The tricks are free actions to use and he can use them at any time, but he can only use 2 per round.

AC 23

PD 22 HP 300

MD 19

TRICKS

I learned this one from a gnome!

C: Fire flash auto-hit (1d3 nearby enemies)—10 ongoing fire damage and target is weakened (save ends both)

Dagger through the foot!

C: Throwing knife auto-hit (one nearby enemy)—20 damage and the target is stuck (hard save ends)

Sudden distraction!

C: Bag of coins auto-hit (1d4+2 nearby enemies)—15 damage and the target is weakened until the start of their next turn

Dirty fighting...

Until the end of the battle, Intius does half damage on a miss.

Tricky footwork...

Intius moves as a free action, and two PCs must save or move where he wants them to.

THE FACTOTUM'S CHAMBER

FROM OUTSIDE...

There is no noise from behind the wooden double doors, or at least none that can be heard over the awfully loud music from upstairs. The doors are not locked.

WHAT IS HERE

The room is a workshop. There is a sturdy workbench at the far end of the room, and on the top of the workbench are various tools (saws, pliers, hammers, etc). Under the workbench there are various boxes.

This room is usually occupied by the Crown and Gown's factotum (a general worker, prop maker, seamstress and costumer, miss-fixit, etc).

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

The factotum of the Crown and Gown is Mistress Jenny Bellwether, and she is currently attempting to fix a life-size string-puppet. She will be quite surprised to see the adventurers, and knowing more of what goes on in the Crown and Gown than most do will be instantly aware that they are not supposed to be wandering about down here. However, Jenny is smart enough to know that if she tries to raise an alarm the adventurers might use violence against her, so she surrenders to the party.

Jenny knows almost everything that goes on in the Crown and Gown, including the fact that some paladins were bought here and taken to a secret room that is accessed from somewhere behind the curtain at the end of the corridor—she will offer this knowledge to the adventurers if they promise not to attack her. If the adventurers require evidence she'll tell them that she was given the paladin's belongings to dispose of, but instead of burning them like she was told she used the cloaks to replace the old curtain at the end of the corridor, and cut the paladin's clothes up for rags. The person who ordered her to dispose of the paladin's belongings was the sorceress Sonsy Solpok. Jenny says Sonsy is always taking people back behind the curtain at the end of the corridor, which is a storage area for the Crown and Gown's more expensive wines and ales.

If the party uses violence against her, she will be knocked out with the first attempted blow (or will just fake fainting if the blow misses and does no damage).

If the party doesn't tie her up or otherwise prevent her from doing so she'll head to another area as soon as she can do so without them spotting her in the corridor, and

try to raise the alarm. This will trigger a combat encounter elsewhere.

If this is not a social encounter... nobody is here.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

The room is empty of any obvious threat. Investigating the boxes under the workbench shows various oddments including an under-repair life-size string puppet, balls of twine, scraps of cloth, a sewing kit, bottles of paint and glue, jars full of nails, and so on. Some of the jars are too opaque to make out what is in them without opening them.

Loot!

Two murky jars with red lids contain healing salves.

Three rattling jars contain screws, clock pieces, and other metal oddments that might come in useful to a factotum.

One murky jar contains something heavy and clinks when shaken. Opening it unleashes a queen aumaggit that attacks a random adventurer.

Queen aumaggit's bone-liquefying bite +15 vs PD—20 ongoing negative energy and poison damage. The ongoing damage instantly ends if the queen is killed and her juices rubbed into the bite (DC 25 to know this about aumaggit biology).

The rags in one of the boxes have been cut from the clothing of a paladin of the Great Gold Wyrms, it is a DC 30 skill check to realize this.

In one box is a life-size marionette (a string puppet). The wooden puppet is broken, and its strings tangled. Those who are ritual casters (Wizards, Clerics, etc) will sense lingering magic on the puppet, but whatever magic was there is faded and no longer working—a DC 20 skill check with a suitable magical background reveals that the magic animated this puppet to sing and dance.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

Sat in the chair is a wooden life-size marionette (a string puppet). It is undressed, unpainted, and featureless. It looks to have been recently sanded, and some parts look newer like the puppet has been recently repaired. Unknown to the adventurers (at this time) is that the resident sorceress of the Crown and Gown helped out her friend the factotum and used magic to repair the puppet, magic that has gone horribly wrong. As the adventurers

sneak into the room the puppet comes to life and attacks, as do some of the tools on the workbench.

If this is not a combat encounter... the puppet is still awaiting repair and does not move by itself.

FIGHT!

So are adventurers turned into puppets dead, or can they be restored somehow? We leave that up to you, but turning a wooden puppet into a person is no easy feat of magic and might require its own quest.

Number of PCs	Animated Tools	Creepy Faceless Marionette
3	3	1
4	5	1
5	7	1
6	9	1
7	11	1

ANIMATED TOOLS

5th level troop [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +8

Bludgeoning, stabbing, sanding, etc +10 vs. AC—18 damage

Construct immunity: This monster is immune to all conditions, including ongoing damage. You can't confuse a hammer or daze a pair of pliers.

Immune to mind-affecting attacks: This monster is completely immune most attacks that target MD. If a player can make a good case why their attack should be the exception the tool's MD is 31.

AC 21

PD 19 HP 55

MD 31

CREEPY FACELESS MARIONETTE

Double-strength 7th level spoiler [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +15

Wooden claws +12 vs. AC—56 damage

Natural 16+ hit on a round when the escalation die is even:
Use your face is mine as a quick action.

Your face is mine! +15 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—

The adventurer must start making last gasp saves. If all the last gasp saves are failed the adventurer has been turned into a featureless wooden puppet identical to the creepy faceless marionette as it was at the start of the encounter, and the animated marionette now has a face.

C: No strings on me +12 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group)—The puppet's strings detach, and strings descend from the ceiling and pierce the flesh of the targets. 2d20 ongoing damage and the targets are confused and stuck and attack each other (save ends all).

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 36 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

AC 23

PD 21 HP 222

MD 12



THE STORE ROOM

FROM OUTSIDE...

There is no noise from behind the wooden double doors, or at least none that can be heard over the awfully loud music from upstairs. The doors are not locked, but are closed with a simple latch which can be opened by sliding a dagger between the doors.

WHAT IS HERE

This room is a store room for things that the Crown and Gown is not using right now, or that are broken and awaiting repair by the establishment's resident factotum.

The current contents of the room are a broken table and a stone golem which is facing away from the wall.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

There is nobody here to talk to, unless an NPC from another area fled here—in which case that NPC if threatened will activate the golem and turn this into a combat encounter.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

The stone golem is unmoving, and doesn't react to the adventurers in any way. If examined a bit more closely it looks like the golem was recently painted, possibly as part of a stage act. There is not much else of interest in the room.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

The stone golem awakens, and attacks the adventurers. Fortunately for the adventurers nobody can hear the fight over the noise from upstairs, unfortunately nobody will hear their screams either.

If this is not a combat encounter... the golem stands mutely unmoving, no matter what happens.

FIGHT!

Maybe this clay golem is activated by a command word, and if so perhaps the players can figure out what word that they said that set it off they may be able to figure out the word to deactivate it—if that is the case they might even end up activating it and deactivating it multiple times by accident. Maybe the word that stops and starts it is something simple like 'it'.

CLAY GOLEM

The gods made people out of clay, and clay golems are made of the material they had left over. Rumor has it that dwarfs are immune to the clay golem's curse because the gods made dwarves out of stone, not clay.

Large 7th level spoiler [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +6

Bare brutal hands +13 vs. AC—36 damage

Cursed wound: A non-dwarf creature damaged by a clay golem can't be healed to above half its maximum hit points until after the battle.

Golem immunity: Non-organic golems are immune to effects. They can't be dazed, weakened, confused, made vulnerable, or touched by ongoing damage. You can damage a golem, but that's about it.

Ignore attacks 11+: When an attack hits this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 11+ on the attack roll or it misses instead. That's all attacks.

Regeneration: This golem has been repaired repeatedly by magic, and the magic has accumulated. At the start of each of its turns it heals 20 hp. If the golem takes holy damage its regeneration stops working until the end of the fight.

AC 20

PD 18 HP 120

MD 14



THE SPECIAL RESERVE

FROM OUTSIDE...

A red curtain wafts gently in a breeze. It is impossible to overhear any noises from behind the curtain over the din of music from upstairs. Peeking behind the curtain shows a room with barrels and crates.

WHAT IS HERE

This room contains barrels and crates. The barrels are of high-priced ale. The crates are full of imported wine from New Port and mead from Forge, packaged in straw. The importer of the wines and mead is J. Rose and Sons, a reputable wine merchant with a dozen offices from Eldolan to Glitterhaegen.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

Asleep here is Jon-jon, a halfling in the uniform of the waiters of the Crown and Gown. He snuck back here to cat-nap on his break. If he is woken up he'll be afraid that he'll be accused of stealing some of the drinks (he didn't). It is not hard to wake him on purpose (simply shaking him will do), but he's unlikely to hear anything the adventurers get up to and be awoken by accident as he's stuffed rags into his ears to keep from being woken up by the sound of the band playing upstairs. Jon-jon, if awoken, will assume that the adventurers are supposed to be down here. Jon-jon doesn't know much about what happens in the Crown and Gown, he's only just started work there that week.

Jon-jon can't put up much of a fight, and will try to flee. It is a DC 25 skill check to catch Jon-jon as he flees between the adventurer's legs, and all his defenses are 20 while he is fleeing—if caught he is so easy to hit that no roll is needed. Jon-jon has 5 hit points, and no attacks worth mentioning. If Jon-jon flees he'll return to work and not mention meet the party to anybody, he'll assume that the adventurers were supposed to be checking for and punishing people stealing the expensive wine.

If this is not a social encounter... nobody is here, Jon-jon is upstairs serving drinks.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

The red curtain at the end of the corridor wafts in a breeze, but where is it coming from? If the adventurers investigate the curtain it is a DC 25 skill check to notice the aglets... this is actually a paladin's cloak—how did this come to be down here being used as a curtain?

A DC 20 skill check shows that one of the walls is in fact a hidden door (DC 15 if the adventurers are looking for the source of the breeze).

GMs: *If the party is stuck and doesn't see the secret door and you are ready for them to get into the secret room then simply leave the door ajar.*

A DC 30 skill check (or DC 25 for those with a relationship with the Archmage) shows that the hidden door is locked by magic... a pass phrase is needed to open it, and attempting to open it without the phrase will cause lightning to discharge from the door. Attempting to force the hidden door open through strength, cunning, or magic results in the magic sealing the hidden door shut in attacking them:

Jolt +15 vs PD—4d8 lightning damage

GMs: *If you are ready for the adventurers to move on to the secret room then mention that they saw the pass phrase that disarms the magic trap written down in an area that they have already explored. Otherwise the door is impassable to the adventurers, at least until they have stopped at other as yet unvisited areas and found the passphrase. You decide where the passphrase is/was written.*

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

There is nobody here, and nothing to fight... unless of course somebody else has fled here to hide from the adventurers, or unless a fight spills from elsewhere into this area.

THE DRESSING ROOM

FROM OUTSIDE...

These double doors on the left (east) side of the corridor are marked with a wooden star that has been painted gold. As the adventurers listen at the door the music upstairs pauses, and fainter music can be heard through the wooden doors. The door has a lock, but they have been left unlocked. Looking through the keyhole shows the viewer a table and desk with a mirror on, and a wall of brightly lit torches with mirrors beneath them.

WHAT IS HERE

This is a room set aside for star performers (other lesser performers have to get changed outside in the corridor).

On the south wall of this room is a dresser with a mirror on it, and a chair. The dresser has a music box running.

The east wall has five mirrors, each partitioned from its neighbor by a short section of wall. The partitions continue around to the north wall where three tables stand. There are bottles of drink on some of the tables.

Against the west wall (the one with the door into the corridor) is a bed, upon which are a woman's clothes. The clothing looks fancy, but is not a stage costume.

On the floor is an expensive looking rug.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

There is a half-elf woman here, changing into her costume. She is The Amazing Sherlini (real name Moraun Dowd), a quick-change artist and impressionist. The costume Sherlini is donning is a complex one which can be stripped away in layers to reveal new costumes underneath—in her act The Amazing Sherlini impersonates some of the icons, as well as some of the more notable heroes of the day.

GMs: This is a great spot for players to spend icon relationship dice 5s and 6s. If a player has a 5 then Sherlini picks up on the fact that they are the champion of an icon (or are the enemy of an icon, or the estranged daughter of an icon, or whatever the relationship is). Sherlini will continue dressing, but ask questions about the icon. If a player spends one of their 6s then the costume that Sherlini was just in the act of putting on was of them! Sherlini is momentarily dumbstruck, then asks the adventurer(s) in question if they want to join her on stage as part of her act tonight. She's willing to coach them on a quick comedy routine that she thinks just might work. If nobody has icon relationship 5s or 6s that they want to spend then Sherlini demands that the adventurers leave.

A DC 15 skill check result will convince Sherlini that they are there to see her, to get her autograph or something similar. If the adventurers fail the skill roll and don't spend icon relationship die results then Sherlini will insist that they leave and if that fails will call for help. As the music upstairs has paused (and Sherlini has quite a set of pipes) this will summon aid from one of the other areas (move a combat encounter from an unexplored area here).

If this is not a social encounter... Sherlini is still here if this is a combat encounter, but if this is an exploratory encounter she leaves the room just as the adventurers are about to enter in order to go on stage upstairs.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

On the desk is a music box, which is playing a popular tune. The music box belongs to The Amazing Sherlini and is a wondrous magic item.

Loot!

Terpsicore's Orchestrion is here.

Also on the desk are various bottles and jars, of interest only to those with a theatrical bent: greasepaint,

talc, fake eyebrows, spirit gum, that sort of thing. The drawers of the dresser do not have much in them, just the various oddments that might accumulate in such places: a set of cutlery, a cup, a glove (singular), an old sock, a half-drunk bottle of spirits that has rolled to the back of the draw, and a half-empty bottle of perfume... that sort of thing.

There is nothing hidden under the expensive-looking rug on the floor.

The clothing on the bed belongs to a woman of average stature, and although fancy looking it is street clothing rather than an expensive frock or stage outfit.

Under the bed is a travelling case with more women's clothes in, and has an easily detectable false bottom behind which the owner of the case has stashed her valuables (about 100 gp in coins, and 1000 gp in jewelry).

Two of the bottles on the tables (the green bottles) contain expensive wine, and are unopened. The third bottle (red, on the table in the corner opposite the door) looks fancier but when opened unleashes a spell. The owner of the bottle (the performer whose belongings are here) carries it as a deterrent for thieves. When the bottle is opened the magic inside attacks the opener, then the bottle reseals itself. The bottle is good for 1d3 uses.

Drowsing vapor +20 vs MD—target must start making last gasp saves as it falls into a magical slumber. Characters in a magical slumber make one save (11+) per hour to wake up, though taking damage will wake them up instantly. Once awoken from a magical slumber the character is at -2 to all rolls until the end of the day or until after their next combat.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

The Amazing Sherlini feels threatened by the adventurers and calls for aid. As the music upstairs has paused (and Sherlini has quite a set of pipes) this will summon aid from one of the other areas (move a combat encounter from an unexplored area here).

If this is not a combat encounter... Sherlini is still here if this is a social encounter, but if this is an exploratory encounter she leaves the room just as the adventurers are about to enter in order to go on stage upstairs.

THE SECRET ROOM

FROM OUTSIDE...

The secret door to this room is made of a thick brick wall section that pivots open when a certain brick is depressed. The door is too thick to hear anything through, but a breeze blows from under the secret door. See the exploratory part of the *special reserve* section for details of how to open this door.

GMs: If you are not yet ready for the adventurers to move on to the secret room and the end of this session then do not allow the door to open until they have stopped at other as yet unvisited areas and found the magical passphrase. You decide where the passphrase is written. If you are ready for the party to enter this area and the players are stuck have the door ajar.

WHAT IS HERE

This is a magical workspace, with shelves of books and a workbench with all manner of magical odds and ends on it. There are charts and diagrams pinned to the walls. On the floor is a large magic circle in thick chalk, though it is slightly scuffed in places. Near the workbench there is a trap door, from which comes a breeze.

The trap door leads to the *down the hatch* section of this adventure.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER

A human woman is here, wearing the practical work clothes of an enchantress. She heard the door opening and grabbed a wand from her work bench. She demands to know what the adventurers are doing here. This is the sorceress Sonly Solpok. She is employed by the Crown and Gown as a cosmetic enchantress and illusionist. Sonly is also a servant of the Prince of Shadows.

GMs: If the party pays Sonly (or somebody like her) an exorbitant price she can perform a ritual that will temporarily give them a better appearance and more likeable demeanor. If they go ahead with paying for cosmetic enchantment just swap their Charisma with a higher attribute after their next full heal-up. The swap wears off in anything from a week to a couple of months. If a player increases their character's Charisma permanently due to a level-up ability bonus they can explain that as a result of repeated uses of cosmetic sorcery.

Sonly knows full well that the adventurers are not supposed to be down here, but would rather convince the adventurers to leave than fight them. She will tell them that she is employed here to use cosmetic enchantments, which is (she claims) the big secret of the Crown and Gown's success. If asked about the trap door she will say that it leads to an underground river and isn't really used

any more, but in past ages this was the basement of a monastery and the trap door was an escape hatch used in times of trouble.

GMs: Sonly is obviously lying about the purpose of the trap door, so let the players know that the adventurers are able to tell that she is lying without a skill roll.

If Sonly does convince the adventurers to leave they notice that on her desk is a human skull, and that unlike the one on her shelf it looks new (not covered-in-gore new but still suspiciously fresh). On Sonly's workbench (partially hidden beneath some parchments) is a medallion that belonged to a paladin of the Great Gold Wyrms. Sonly notices the adventurers noticing, and attacks.

If this is not a social encounter... Sonly is still here in the room if this is a combat encounter, but not if it is an exploratory encounter.

EXPLORATORY ENCOUNTER

There is much of interest in this room. The charts on the wall and magic circle look very sinister, but anybody with a background that relates to magic or will realize that this is the workshop of a cosmetic enchanter, a type of magic user that improves the appearance of others through illusions, charms, and minor polymorph-style spells. Otherwise it is a DC 25 skill check to realize what this room is for.

On the workbench are several potions, all of them unlabeled or labeled so poorly that it is hard to tell just what is inside. The potion bottles are opaque, with narrow necks. There are ten bottles, roll randomly (d8) to find the contents of each as they are examined.

1. A clear odorless liquid. Water, just water.
2. A colorless liquid with a slight acid odor. A mild acid: 3d8 acid damage if drunk, 4 acid damage if spilled on skin.
3. A milky white fluid. A healing concoction (for external use only): it heals 3d6 hp if poured onto an open wound or onto a burn, but does 2d6 poison damage if drunk.
4. A turgid purple fluid. 1d6 poison damage if drunk. It is useless for anything but obscure cosmetic enchantment rituals.
5. A thick red fluid. A growth potion. Causes an almost imperceptible increase in size of the whole body if drunk, enough that clothes no longer quite fit properly. If poured on a body part it increases the size, which means that if drunk the drinker's tongue

will swell so that they become unable to speak. The effects wear off after an hour or so.

6. A thin red fluid that smells of radishes. A shrinking potion. Just like the growth potion, but in reverse.
7. A pale green watery fluid that smells of flowers. A potion that numbs the senses and stupefies the mind. For the next hour the drinker must succeed at a DC 25 Constitution-based skill check or lose concentration any time they try a complicated task outside of combat (casting rituals, picking a lock, telling a convoluted lie), and in their first combat in that hour nudge their d20 rolls to 1 lower (a natural 20 becomes a 19, a natural 19 becomes an 18, and so on).
8. A colorless liquid with a pungent odor. This potion ends any ongoing effects on the drinker (ongoing damage, stuck, last gasp saves).

Under one of the parchments on the workbench is a golden medallion belonging to one of the missing paladins. On the desk is a suspiciously fresh skull (not bloody-fresh, but not an antique either).

The implements, accretions, and ingredients together with the small library of books are worth a great deal if sold in Horizon (4d20x100 gp, roll the amount when they are sold). However, carting all the stuff out of the room will take some time.

The trap door leads to a dark void, from which arises a cool breeze and the sound of moving water. The shaft that the trap door leads down into has a ladder bolted to one wall. There is no smell of sewage coming up the deep shaft, so it probably doesn't lead to shadow Port's sewers.

If this is not an exploratory encounter... Sonly is here in the room.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER

A tiefling woman is here, wearing the practical work clothes of an enchantress. She heard the door opening and grabbed a scalpel from her work bench. She demands to know what the adventurers are doing here. This is the sorceress Sonly Solpok. She is employed by the Crown and Gown as a cosmetic enchantress and illusionist. She is also a servant of the Prince of Shadows. Seeing that the jig is up, she attacks.

If this is not a combat encounter... Sonly is still here in the room if this is a social encounter (and that is likely to become a combat encounter anyway), but not if it is purely an exploratory encounter.

FIGHT!

After the battle each transformed character rolls a d20 with a bonus equal to their constitution modifier:

- 1-5: The character looks like Sonly, at least until they can find a cosmetic enchanter and pay them to undo the effect. The cosmetic enchanter will likely charge the transformed character an extortionate fee.
- 6-10: The character looks like Sonly until the end of next session, when they will partially transform back. When they partially transform back they will be a woman who looks like Sonly but part of their original appearance is apparent in the mix (original race, hair color, eye color, clothing color, etc).
- 11-15: The character looks like Sonly until the end of next session, when they will fully transform back.
- 16+: The effect wears off at the end of this session.

The transformation is purely skin-deep, no racial modifiers or powers change. Adventurers who look like Sonly will have an advantage when they are sneaking around later on...

Number of PCs	Sonly Solpok	Summoned Shadow-Hounds
3	1	1
4	1	3
5	1	5
6	1	7
7	1	9

SUMMONED SHADOW-HOUND

These creatures of smoke and shadow defend their summoner to the death.

5th level blocker [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +14

Soul-bite +10 vs. MD—10 ongoing negative energy damage

Phasing interception: If an enemy is moving toward their summoner, this creature pops free and intercepts the movement. Phasing interception does not provoke and cannot be intercepted. Staggered shadow-hounds can't use this ability.

AC 21

PD 19 HP 70

MD 14

Clever adventurers: Adventurers might not know which of the transformed people Sönsy is, but the dogs do. If the adventurers work that out, the save to target the correct person is easy (6+).

SÖNSY SÖLPÖK

Triple-strength 8th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +14

Scalpel meets vein +13 vs. AC (three attacks against the same target) –80 damage

C: Thrown scalpels +13 vs. AC (three attacks against three different nearby targets) –80 damage

R: Flask of acid +13 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group) –40 ongoing acid damage

You are me: Once per turn as a quick action Sönsy transforms an enemy into her likeness* and teleports them both to different spots in the room. Enemies must roll a save on their turns or target the wrong ‘Sönsy’, targeting their most recently transformed ally instead.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 654

MD 20

DOWN THE HATCH

The trap door in the secret room leads to a smooth-sided shaft that runs deep into the bedrock of Shadow Port. The sound of moving water filters up the chute, and the air has a damp quality to it. As the adventurers listen at the trap door they hear voices from deep beneath Shadow Port. The distance and echoes make the voices hard to make out clearly, but some words do clearly drift up from below:

“...paladins ...diamond...shadows...”

There is a ladder built into the side of the shaft leading downwards, and this appears to be the way onwards.



INTO THE SHADOWS

OVERVIEW

The adventurers have descended into the dark beneath Shadow Port, looking for the missing Darkskye Diamond and the Great Gold Wyrn's kidnapped paladins.

In the shadows beneath Shadow Port the adventurers will meet one of the Prince of Shadow's lieutenants.

GETTING DOWN THE SHAFT

This first section is a travel montage, though one that takes place in a very tight space. The shaft is part of a system of shafts and tunnels under Shadow Port, some of which serve as sewers. All of the shafts are unlit, they are often slick, and sometimes they have *things* in them. Turn to a player and ask them to describe a possible danger. Then turn to the next player and tell them that their character faced and overcame that danger and thus allowed the group to continue to travel downwards, and ask them to say how their character did that. There is no need to roll, this is a montage. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to invent a danger, and everybody has overcome a danger.

GMs: At the bottom of the shaft there is an area where the adventurers can briefly rest in the darkness.

DARK RUNS THE RIVER, AND DEEP

The adventurers reach the bottom of the shaft, and find themselves in a dark subterranean area. A river runs through the cavern, leading off into absolute darkness. A chain is attached to a wall, leading off into the darkness of the river. Going upriver is impossible, it originates high up a cliff face behind the adventurers, a torrent of white water issuing forth from a crack.

Following the chain into the darkness requires three DC 20 skill checks per adventurer, every time an adventurer fails their skill check they hit their head on the rock or slip on the slick wet stones under their feet—adventurers who fail their roll take 4d8 damage. If an adventurer is wearing heavy protective gear (helmet, heavy armor, etc) then the skill check becomes DC 25 but the damage if it is failed is reduced to 3d6.

If any adventurer fails all three skill checks they slip into the water and are carried away by the current. Characters carried away by the current take 4d8 ongoing damage. When the character saves against the damage they may make a DC 25 skill check to climb/swim/crawl back up the passage to where there is air, a failure means

that they again get swept away by the flow of water and take the ongoing damage.

Eventually the adventurers emerge into an area where guide-chains from many tunnels emerge, but they all join with the chain in the river. There are different colored ribbons attached to each chain, some sort of code to tell those that use these tunnels which chain leads where.

As adventurers contemplate their next move strange shadowy creatures emerge from the main tunnel into which all the chains (and the river) leads. If the adventurers fought Sony the sorceress in the last session the shadow creatures will look similar to those that Sony summoned, similar but not identical. The shadowy creatures circle around the adventurers at the edge of their light, then head back into the tunnel from where they emerged.



SIDE-TUNNELS

There are ten side-tunnels with chains that lead off into the darkness. Each chain has colored ribbons attached to it at regular intervals. Following a chain away from the main river chain will lead the adventurers into the darkness and further adventure.

GMs: The lure of the other tunnels will doubtless lead to some groups investigating them, hoping to find many interesting locations in and under Shadow Port... however, the main part of the adventure doesn't lie down these other tunnels but instead at the end of the chain by the river.



THE BLACK CHAIN

Following this chain leads the party to an area of the tunnels far from the river, where crates are piled up around a large chamber.

The crates contain the uniforms of imperial guards, and there are enough complete uniforms to outfit one hundred people.

There is evidence that this area has been visited recently, with a still-warm oil lantern sat on one of the boxes.

THE WHITE CHAIN

The chain leads to an earthen tunnel with piles of dirt at its entrance. There are long boxes on ropes at the entrance which are full of dirt (those with a background related to mining will know that these boxes are used to haul dirt and rubble out of tunnels under excavation).

This chain leads down a tunnel of packed earth and wooden props and terminates suddenly. At the end of the tunnel is a brick wall. The end of the tunnel contains various tools, including shovels and picks.

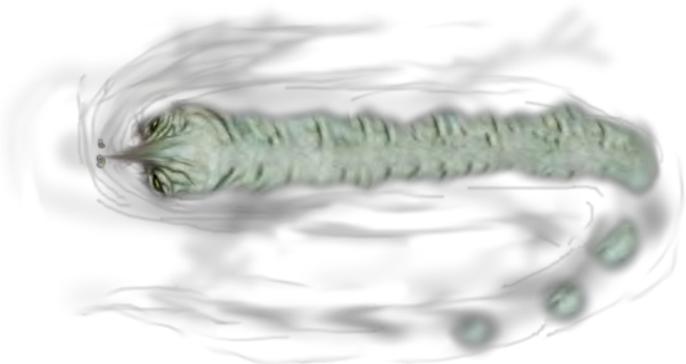
The brick wall looks as if it has recently been damaged, it is obvious that whoever is digging this tunnel intends to break through the brick wall but has yet to do so.

GMs: What is on the other side of the brick wall? I leave that down to you, but I suggest that you use the opportunity to highlight the background or one unique thing of a character who has yet to have their full share of then lime light.

THE RED CHAIN

The chain leads down a side tunnel and into the sewers of Shadow Port.

Lurking in the sewer is a giant albino reptile, looking for its next meal. Normally the pale predator eats dire rats, but the adventurer's legs look very tasty today.



FIGHT!

Is the albinogator kept down here by somebody, or is it just an escaped pet that has grown large? We leave that up to you.

Number of PCs	Albino Alligator
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

ALBINO ALLIGATOR

7th level wrecker [BEAST]

Initiative: +12

Bite +12 vs. AC (two attacks against different enemies) – 14 damage

Natural 16+ hit: The target is dragged under into the sewer and takes 10 damage each round until they are no longer engaged with the alligator. Characters who do not breathe do not take the ongoing damage.

Thrash and chomp: Characters who are in the 'water' of the sewer and move away from the alligator take 7 damage, even if they pop free or disengage first. Characters who teleport, fly, or otherwise instantly escape the water don't take the 7 damage.

AC 23

PD 22 HP 112

MD 17

THE ORANGE CHAIN

This chain leads to a brick tunnel that has a sturdy door at the end. The door is not locked.

Opening the door reveals that it is a secret door (concealed on the other side) that leads to the back alley that contains the doorway to the Dark Jester Tavern.

GMs: The Dark Jester Tavern was the first tavern in this adventure.

THE YELLOW CHAIN

The yellow chain leads off into the darkness and ends at a series of half-height earth tunnels. Humans, elves, half orcs and so on must crawl through these tunnels but shorter characters can move at a crouch.

At the mouth of one of these tunnels is a corpse, killed by extreme violence and torn apart.

The tunnels are interlinked and maze-like, and run beneath a graveyard, allowing grave-robbers to access graves and tombs from beneath. Unfortunately for the adventurers the dead are fed up with this practice, and have started attacking grave robbers who try to use these tunnels.

FIGHT!

Tall characters take a -2 penalty to their attacks and defenses due to the cramped confines, short characters only have a -1 penalty. Due to the cramped conditions the only weapons that can be used are small one-handed weapons (daggers, etc).

The large number of mooks in this battle might seem like a lot, but due to the narrow tunnels only 4 zombies can attack each character at once. Use these zombies in waves.

Number of PCs	Grave Chill Zombie
3	30
4	40
5	50
6	60
7	70

GRAVE CHILL ZOMBIE

6th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +5

Vulnerability: fire, holy

Chill claws +11 vs. AC—12 cold damage

Icy breath of the grave +11 vs. PD—9 cold damage, and the target is vulnerable to cold attacks (save ends)

Resist cold 18+: When a cold attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 18+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Fiery decapitation: Grave chill zombies have frozen, iron-hard flesh that makes them tougher than normal zombies—critical hits that deal fire damage deal triple damage to ice zombies; other critical hits just deal double damage.

AC 22

PD 22 HP 20 (mook)

MD 13

Mook: Kill one grave chill zombie mook for every 20 damage you deal to the mob.

The dead do have good stuff though...

LOOT!

The adventurers locate at least two champion-tier magic items if they defeat the undead.

THE GREEN CHAIN

This tunnel leads to the sewers of Shadow Port near the docks, and is home to a nest of phase spiders.

FIGHT!

Phase spiders like to steal items, let the players know that their adventurers know that fact.

Number of PCs	Juvenile Phase Spiders
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	6

JUVENILE PHASE SPIDER

7th level spoiler [BEAST]

Initiative: +16

Phasing fangs +11 vs. PD (2 attacks)—12 damage

Natural even hit: The spider can make a rummage and filch attack against the target as a free action, even if the target isn't staggered.

Rummage and filch +11 vs. MD (one staggered creature)—the phase spider steals a random true magic item from the target (see below).

Phasing abilities: As long as it didn't just return from being out of phase, at the start of the phase spider's turn, roll a d6 to see which of its phase and teleport abilities it can access that turn. The spider doesn't have to use the available ability and can attack normally, if it wishes.

1-2: Short teleport—As a move action, the spider can teleport anywhere it can see nearby.

3: Long teleport—As a move action, the spider can teleport anywhere it can see nearby or far away.

4-5: Phase out—As a move action, the spider can remove itself from the battlefield, returning on its next initiative turn anywhere it chooses nearby. It doesn't get to make a phase roll at the start of its next turn though.

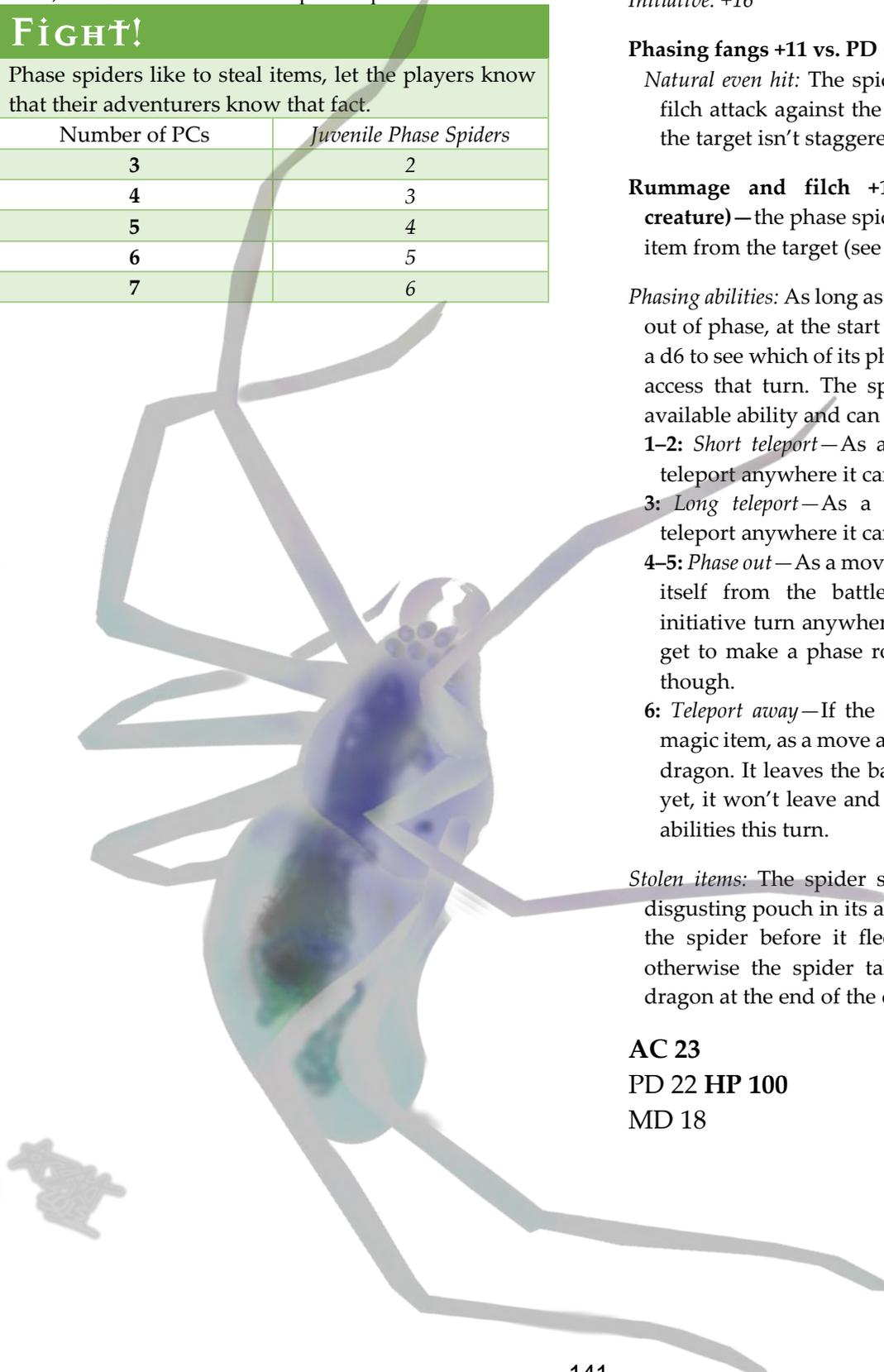
6: Teleport away—If the spider has stolen at least one magic item, as a move action it teleports to the shadow dragon. It leaves the battle. If it hasn't stolen an item yet, it won't leave and can use its choice of the other abilities this turn.

Stolen items: The spider stows items it has stolen in a disgusting pouch in its abdomen. If the heroes can slay the spider before it flees, they get their stuff back, otherwise the spider takes the items to the shadow dragon at the end of the chapter.

AC 23

PD 22 HP 100

MD 18



THE CYAN CHAIN

This chain leads off into a tunnel that is blocked by a magical field. It is a DC 30 skill check to disable the magical ward to pass through.

Further down the tunnel is a large room with many ever-burning lanterns in it. Glittering in piles on the ground are hundreds of necklaces, rings, belt buckles, and other pieces of ornamentation snatched from victims in street robberies.

This is one of the Prince of Shadow's personal vaults that he uses to pay his followers from.

Loot!

The adventurers can come away with 2000 gp each in jewelry if they loot this area.

THE BLUE CHAIN

This tunnel leads to the basement of a wizard's guild in Shadow Port.

The tunnel that leads to the basement has signs left by the followers of the Prince of Shadows set in to it, and the way ahead has been roped off. The signs all have skulls on and other easy to understand warning symbols and say variations on the following:

DANGER!

GO BACK

At the end of the tunnel is a doorway (but no door) to a basement. In the center of the basement room is a clockwork devil bound in a glowing red circle.

The doors down to the basement from the guild above are securely bolted and spell-locked from the outside (a DC 30 skill check to break through after a DC 30 ritual to remove the binding spell). The reason the wizards bound the doors shut with magic is that they accidentally weakened the barriers between realities during a botched ritual ended up with a demon trapped and bound in their basement.

The clockwork devil promises to resurrect any fallen party members if they will break the circle binding the devil. The devil is even willing to tell the party exactly how to break the binding.

FIGHT!

If the adventurers enter the basement and refuse to free the devil it attacks, but if they stay clear or agree to aid it there will be no fight.

The demon can't leave the basement until it is unbound. There is no immediate campaign loss associated with fleeing from the demon, though leaving the demon down there is not a great idea long-term. Freeing the demon is not a good idea either, but again has no immediate bad outcome. The demon and the problems it creates once free can be a springboard for your own campaign.

This fight is a tough fight for smaller parties—remind players that adventurers can choose to flee.

Number of PCs	Clockwork Devil
3	1
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	1

CLOCKWORK DEVIL

The fiend is trapped in the basement, for now...

Huge 9th level spoiler [DEVIL]

Initiative: +13

Dust to dust +14 vs. PD (two attacks against different enemies)—75 negative energy damage

Critical hit: The target must start making last gasp saves as it begins to age and turn to dust.

Miss: The crit range for this attack expands by a cumulative 1 (19+, 18+, 17+, 16+, and so on) until the end of the fight or until the demon next rolls a critical hit. When the demon next rolls a critical hit its crit range resets (to scoring a critical hit on a 20 only).

Bound: The devil can't move to engage far away enemies.

R: Time's arrow +14 vs. PD—The target takes ongoing damage equal to their initiative score.

Devil's bargain: If the party agree to break the circle binding the clockwork devil it will return any dead characters to life (including those turned to dust). The devil will then wish to leave, not continue the fight. Adventurers who want to bargain further with an *unbound* devil do so at their peril.

AC 25

PD 22 HP 600

MD 20

THE PURPLE CHAIN

This chain leads to a series of traps and then a dead end.

SPIKED PIT TRAP	ELECTRIFIED CHAIN	POISON DARTS
<p>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</p> <p>Spiked pit +10 vs AC (1d3 adventurers) — 3d10 damage</p>	<p>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</p> <p>Zap! (automatic hit) — 4d6 ongoing lightning damage (hard save or ally pulling target off ends)</p>	<p>Difficulty to avoid: DC 25</p> <p>Poison dart trap +20 vs AC (1d3 adventurers) — 3d12 poison damage</p>

THE MAGENTA CHAIN

This chain leads down a series of tunnels to a hidden door concealed in a closet in a house of ill repute.

GMs: *What is going on in the bordello? I leave that down to you, but I suggest that you use the opportunity to highlight the background or one unique thing of a character who has yet to have their full share of then lime light.*

THE SHADOWS ATTACK

Once the adventurers start down the main river tunnel away from the side-tunnels the shadow-creatures attack.

FIGHT!

After the fight the defeated shadow-creatures melt into pools of shadow and flee back from where they came.

Number of PCs	Stalking Shadow	Hunting Shadow
3	1	4
4	2	3
5	3	2
6	3	4
7	3	6

STALKING SHADOW

Double-strength 6th level archer [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +13

Tenebrous teeth +11 vs. AC (two attacks against different targets) — 20 damage

R: Dark mist +17 vs. AC — 18 ongoing negative energy damage

Natural 16+: The target is pushed out of phase with the rest of reality. It is must roll a save (11+) or become stunned (-4 to defenses, no actions) until it next takes damage or the end of its next turn.

Leaping shadows: If the escalation die is odd the shadow can teleport on its turn as a quick action. If the escalation die is even the teleport is a move action.

AC 22

PD 20 HP 180

MD 16

HUNTING SHADOW

5th level blocker [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +15

Tenebrous teeth +10 vs. AC (two attacks against different targets) — 10 damage

C: Shadowy tentacles +10 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group) — 7 ongoing negative energy damage, and the target takes a -1 penalty to attacks while they are taking ongoing negative energy damage from this attack or from shadow bow.

Leaping shadows: If the escalation die is odd the shadow can teleport on its turn as a quick action. If the escalation die is even the teleport is a move action.

Phasing interception: Once per round if an enemy is moving toward another shadow creature, this shadow creature pops free and intercepts the movement. Phasing interception does not provoke and cannot be intercepted. Staggered shadow-hounds can't use this ability.

AC 21

PD 19 HP 70

MD 14

LOOT!

One of the shadow-elves is carrying the following cursed items, but it is not immediately obvious that they are cursed.

If a party member just picks up an item and starts using it they attune to it, but if they take a short rest to investigate the item they have a 50% chance of discovering the curse. An examination of an item during a full rest reveals the curse.

VEXATIOUS BLADE

This wickedly sharp blade seems to feel more comfortable in your offhand.

[Dagger, cursed]

+3 to attack and damage with this weapon, or a cumulative +1 to hit to spells or attacks when used in the offhand (the bonus stacks with other magic items held in the main hand).

Curse: Critical hits made by the wielder are re-targeted to the wielder.

Quirk: Overly sneaky.

REBEL'S CHAIN

A golden necklace made to look like interlinking claws.

[Necklace, cursed]

+3 to saves when you have 25 hp or fewer

Recharge 11+: Turn an ally's miss into a crit.

Curse: When fighting dragons (and similar creatures) nearby allies who are staggered are also dazed.

Quirk: Desires to fall at the feet of dragons and worship.

THE SISTERHOOD OF SHEZ-A-KAH

The river rushes into a cataract that disappears down into the darkness, but the guide-chain leads into a tunnel from which light comes. The adventurers hear the sounds of voices from the side tunnel and can smell food cooking.

Emerging from the tunnel the adventurers find themselves standing at the edge of a subterranean village. Side-passages have been carved out into homes, there are lean-tos, and even huts and wooden walkways. The place is evidently inhabited, and also has obviously been here for some time. Moving around the 'village' are dozens of identical individuals.

These people all look like Shez-a-kah, a tiefling that the adventurers have each met previously in Shadow Port (she met them in the Crown and Gown when they stole the Darkskye Diamond).

GMs: Beyond this 'village' is the lair of a shadow dragon called Shez-a-kah, a lieutenant of the Prince of Shadows—her humanoid form is that of a tiefling, so she has built a cult of identical-looking people who can stand in for her. The shadow dragon sends her many doubles out on missions for her, keeping herself safe.

The adventurers are in a position where they can observe without being observed. After a few minutes it becomes obvious that these women are not all exactly identical, but have undergone cosmetic enchantments to make them look identical.

GMs: Anybody who looks like Sonsy Solpok the sorceress (and cosmetic enchanter) might be able to bluff that they are Sonsy, and thus gain information from a 'Shez-a-kah'. It was Sonsy who enabled these followers of the Prince of Shadows to all look alike.

SNEAKING & INVESTIGATING

It is a DC 20 skill check to sneak through the village to the other side unobserved, where there are large stairs leading upwards. There is nothing much of interest in the village, just the usual oddments you'd expect in a village.

INTERROGATION

It is a DC 20 skill check to snatch a Shez-a-kah, drag her into the tunnel, and start interrogating her.

The Shez-a-kah that the adventurers capture is scared at first, but starts to laugh. She mocks the adventurers, telling them that they will never find their way out from down here, and that their mistress the dragon Shez-a-kah will kill and eat them.

If they continue to question her she reveals that she is a member of the Sisterhood of Shez-a-kah, an elite group

of spies and agents who carry out the will of their mistress a shadow dragon. If pressed for details of the activities of her secretive group she'll lie through her teeth, make up ridiculous plots, and confirm any theories that the party might have no matter how preposterous. It is a DC 15 skill check to see through her rather obvious yet intriguing lies and realize that she won't give out any actually useful information.

If the adventurers come up with a clever way of getting the Shez-a-kah cultist to talk use the rules for information gathering in the *bluffing* section below.

BLUFFING

If any of the adventurers look like the sorceress Sony, and the others can disguise themselves (perhaps with long face-hiding robes) then they can walk through the village unmolested. Sony is known to the Sisterhood of Shez-a-kah, as she is one of the cosmetic enchanters that makes them all look alike. It is a DC 20 skill check to speak to a Shez-a-kah without giving the game away. If the adventurers manage to pull off the deception they learn two of the following facts (roll d4 for which two are learned).

1. The Sisterhood ultimately works for the Prince of Shadows.
2. The sisterhood is led by a shadow dragon, who resides up the stairs to the end of the village.
3. The Prince of Shadows has a plan that involves weakening the other icons and fermenting distrust and strife between them, a plan that involves the Darkskye Diamond.
4. The sisterhood has captured some paladins of the Great Gold Wurm, and they are being held in the area up the stairs

If the adventurers want to learn a second fact they need to succeed at the DC 20 skill check again. After all four facts are known it becomes apparent to the party that should they continue to converse with the Shez-a-kahs they will look suspicious and might be caught.

COMBAT

If the adventurers decide to fight (or if they blow their cover or fail to sneak about) then the Shez-a-kahs flee. If the adventurers attempt to chase the fleeing women the shadow dragon from the next section enters the village and attacks the adventurers. If the shadow dragon attacks them in the village and becomes staggered it flees up the stairs and gets the benefits of a full heal-up.

FIGHT!

If the party starts a fight or causes a ruckus here the shadow dragon comes and attacks them in the village. If the shadow dragon attacks them in the village and becomes staggered it flees up the stairs and gets the benefits of a full heal-up.

LAIR OF THE SHADOW DRAGON

The adventurers ascend the stairs and find themselves in the lair of a dragon. Instead of a hoard of gold, here is a hoard of mysteries, for scratched upon the rock walls are hundreds of secrets. Most notable of the secrets here are the plans of the Prince of Shadows. It seems that he has a plan to destabilize the Dragon Empire and ... do something. The dragon's scratching don't details everything, but they do show that he was ultimately behind Darkskye Prison crashing into the Wild Wood.

On an altar at the back of the area is the Darkskye Diamond! First though, there is the dragon herself to face...

FIGHT!

The dragon will not try to escape this fight, this is its home and it will defend it to the death.

After the fight the dragon's body phases away, leaving only its bones behind.

Number of PCs	Shadow Thief	Shadow Dragon
3	1	1
4	4	1
5	6	1
6	8	1
7	12	1

SHADOW DRAGON

Its huge but undefined form flickers from shadow to shadow. One moment it's there, and then it's gone.

Large 8th level caster [DRAGON]

Initiative: +13

Shadow claws +13 vs. AC—50 psychic damage

Natural 16+: The target is confused (hard save ends, 16+).

C: Nightmare breath +12 vs. MD (1d3 nearby or far away enemies)—60 negative energy damage, and the target becomes a living shadow (hard save ends, 16+)

Living shadow: While a living shadow, the target can't physically interact with or gain aid from companions or aid them (including healing, bonuses, and effects) but is otherwise "normal."

Limited use: 1/battle, but the ability recharges when the dragon is staggered. If it hasn't already made a nightmare breath attack when it becomes staggered, the dragon makes the attack as a free action and then the breath recharges.

Made of shadow: The shadow dragon perceives the invisible, is unaffected by the blur spell, and ignores illusions. Rogues attempting to shadow walk near a shadow dragon end up in the dragon's belly (save ends). While there, they are helpless and take 2d12 damage at the start of each of their turns until they save and fall back out of shadow.

Shadowy escalation: When in poorly lit areas of shadow, the dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls. Complete darkness or bright daylight negates the ability.

Nastier Specials

Shadowy phasing: When the escalation die is even, natural odd attack rolls against the dragon automatically miss. When the escalation die is odd, natural even attack rolls against the dragon automatically miss. Attacks that deal holy damage ignore this ability.

AC 25

PD 22 HP 260

MD 22

SHADOW THIEF

Vaguely humanoid, winged, and two-dimensional. A psychic extension of the dragon, it slithers along the wall and wraps long fingers around your shadow's neck. Suddenly it's very hard to breathe.

8th level mook [DRAGON]

Initiative: +17

Shadow strangulation +13 vs. PD—20 psychic damage

Natural 16+: The target takes 20 negative energy damage, and the shadow thief can make a shadow possession attack as a free action (but see group ability).

[Group ability] **C: Shadow possession +13 vs. MD (one enemy hit by shadow strangulation)**—The shadow thief "crawls inside" the target. The target is confused (save ends), and the shadow thief can't be the target of an attack or effect until it's forced from the target's body when that creature saves against the confusion effect.

Group ability: For every four shadow thieves in the battle (round up), one of them can use shadow possession during the battle.

Shadow thievery: The shadow thief is an extension of the shadow dragon, not really a separate entity. When it drops to 0 hp, it flees back to the shadow dragon and merges with it. When this happens, if there is at least one enemy engaged with that shadow thief, the thief chooses one enemy engaged with it. Roll a d20; on a 16+, the shadow thief steals a random magic item from the chosen enemy as it flees back to the dragon (but see stop . . . thief below). Stolen items are replaced with shadowy duplicates that work until the end of the battle then fade to nothingness. The items can be recovered if the dragon is slain in the same battle.

Stop . . . thief! When a shadow thief steals an item, the creature it steals from can choose to prevent the theft, but at a cost. If the natural d20 thievery roll was odd, the target of the thievery attempt can choose to keep the item but become hampered (save ends) as they wrestle with the shadow. If the natural thievery roll was even, the target has the same choice, but it's a hard save (16+) to end the hampered effect.

AC 25

PD 20 HP 38 (mook)

MD 16

Mook: Kill one shadow thief mook for every 38 damage you deal to the mob.

THE RESCUE

The paladins are at the back of the underground lair, tied up and badly abused but alive. On the walls are written many secrets, not only of the Prince of Shadow's doings but also secrets that relate to the Court of Stars, the Cathedral, even a few mysteries of Forge and Hell Marsh. If the dragon's scratched words are even part-way true the Prince of Shadows is maneuvering the icons of the Dragon Empire into conflict for his benefit.

Worse... many of the Prince's schemes have benefitted from the unwitting involvement of the adventurers themselves. Central to the Prince's plans is the Darkskye Diamond.

GMs: At this point do a quick free-form cooperatively narrated section where you and the players play through getting the rescued paladins to the surface and out of Shadow Port—and of course getting the Darkskye Diamond out of the city!

If the adventurers fled from the dragon they instead suffer a campaign loss; when they return the dragon and the many identical Shez-a-kahs are gone, and the paladins are dead. The party will still have a chance to snatch the diamond on the way out even if they flee.

A GIFT FROM THE GREAT GOLD WYRM

That night the adventurers dream of golden wings. The voice of the Great Gold WyrM urges the adventurers to take the Darkskye Diamond to the Emperor.

If the adventurers rescued the paladins then when they wake they discover gifts of epic tier magic items.

GMs: Or optionally you can upgrade existing magic items to epic tier.

Remember that a champion-tier character needs to attune two 'slots' to an epic tier item—it counts as two items for the purposes of over-attunement.



CHAPTER 7: AGAINST THE ICONS

This part of the adventure is designed for 7th level characters, and the fights are all pitched so that they are tough!

This chapter consists of modules to plug into your plot and play through. If the party has negative relationships with an icon then that icon becomes an enemy that opposes the adventurers taking the diamond where it needs to go while icons that have a positive relationship with the adventurers will provide aid.

RECAP (THE STORY SO FAR)

The adventurers owe a debt to the Prince of Shadows. In order to repay their debt they performed crimes for him, one of which was stealing the Darkskye Diamond.

The Darkskye Diamond was in turn stolen from the Prince of Shadows, who asks that the adventurers steal it back.

The Darkskye Diamond has the power to control flying islands, and was originally mined from a flying island called Darkskye—an island that serves as a prison for the Dragon Empire's worst criminals. The person who stole the diamond from the Prince has taken the diamond to the flying Darkskye Prison.

The adventurers used a stolen flying ship to get aboard the flying island and steal back the diamond, but the prison crashed out of the sky into the Wild Wood.

The adventurers made their way out of the Wild Wood, tracked down the Darkskye Diamond to a group of kobolds, followed their trail to the isle of Omen, and retrieved the Darkskye Diamond.

The adventurers have got back to civilization, and found themselves on the Demon Coast. With nowhere to turn to the adventurers sought refuge with followers of the Great Gold Wyrm. The castle of the paladins was attacked, and the Darkskye Diamond once more taken.

The adventurers followed a trail of clues and travelled to Shadow Port to confront the Prince of Shadows' rebellious lieutenant, and retrieved the Darkskye Diamond.

Now the adventurers must choose who to give the powerful magic item to...

AGAINST THE ICONS

OVERVIEW

The adventurers at last have the Darkskye Diamond, and must return it to the Emperor (or take it to another icon of their choosing). However, the party is opposed in its goal by an icon or icons that want the Darkskye Diamond for themselves.

A WELL DESERVED REST

This first section is a montage, during which the party discusses their next move. The party are sat somewhere, cleaning their wounds and mending their gear.

Turn to a player and ask them to describe a scar that their adventurer has picked up during the adventure and how the situation that they got the scar has informed their views on where to take the Darkskye Diamond. Then turn to the next player and ask them for their character's reaction to the first adventurer. Go around the group until everybody has had a chance to tell the story of how they got a scar, how their adventure has changed them, and how they have reacted to their fellow adventurers.

Keep going around the group until the players and their characters have reached a consensus on where to take the Darkskye Diamond.

GMs: Just throwing the diamond into a volcano or tossing it into the sea won't work—any one of the icons have enough power to retrieve the diamond. The adventurers also don't have the wherewithal to destroy the magical diamond. Let the players know that an icon will end up with the Darkskye Diamond—but they are in a position to decide which one gets it.

ICONIC OPPOSITION

The rest of this chapter is composed of plug-in encounters to be used as the party's icon relationships determine.

First work out who the party is taking the Darkskye Diamond to, then work out which icons are actively opposing them. Finally sprinkle some aid from friendly icons and some complications.

DESTINATIONS, MOTIVATIONS, REWARDS

TAKE THE DARKSKYE DIAMOND TO...

So who should the party take the gem to?

THE ARCHMAGE

Why the icon wants it...

The Darkskye Diamond was enchanted by the Archmage of a past age, and used to create and control the flying islands that serve the needs of the Dragon Empire.

With the Darkskye Diamond in his possession the Archmage can prevent further catastrophes like the fall of the Darkskye flying prison, and learn how to create new flying islands.

Of course the Archmage will give the Darkskye Diamond to the Emperor... once he's done some research first.

What the party needs to do...

The party needs to get the Darkskye Diamond to the city of Horizon and into the hands of one of the Archmage's servants.

The only problem is that the party might not know who to trust in Horizon, and factions of wizards loyal to other icons will attempt to take the diamond for themselves.

The reward...

As soon as he unlocks its secrets the Archmage will use the magic of the Darkskye Diamond to create a flying castle for the adventurers!

THE CRUSADER

Why the icon wants it...

The Crusader has no historic claim on the Darkskye Diamond, he just wants it for its power. In the proper hands the magic gem could be a very potent weapon indeed.

What the party needs to do...

The Crusader is currently leading his forces in an attack on a hell hole. To get the Darkskye Diamond to the Crusader the party will need to break through enemy lines while dodging agents of other icons.

The reward...

The Crusader has liberated a lot of interesting artifacts in his campaigns against demons, and will allow the adventurers to pick the best items out for themselves from his treasure hoard.

THE DIABOLIST

Why the icon wants it...

Chaos, pure and simple. The Diabolist will shatter the Darkskye Diamond and unleash the raw wild magic within.

What the party needs to do...

The Diabolist is somewhere in Hell Marsh, or perhaps in a hell itself. The party's journey will not be an easy one, especially as the other icons definitely do not want to see

the diabolist with the type of power that the Darkskye Diamond contains.

The reward...

Reward? Isn't chaos its own reward?

Of course standing at ground zero of a chaotic magical blast wave will doubtless imbue the adventurers with strange new powers and abilities. Probably. Or kill them. Fortune favors the brave.

THE DWARF KING

Why the icon wants it...

Everybody knows that it was the dwarves who mined the Darkskye Diamond from the living rock, so the gem belongs to the Dwarf King by rights.

What the party needs to do...

The Dwarf King is in the great dwarven capitol of Forge, and will give an audience to the adventurers in exchange for one of the lost treasures of dwarvenkind.

Of course Forge is under siege right now, so the party must get past the Dwarf King's enemies to get their audience.

The reward...

The Dwarf King will shower the party with gold and titles, and will see to it that their likenesses are carved into the dwarven Hall of Heroes.

THE ELF QUEEN

Why the icon wants it...

The Darkskye Diamond used to belong to the elves, a present to their monarch from the dwarves in a past age. It will gladden the hearts of all the elven peoples to see the gemstone returned.

What the party needs to do...

The Court of Stars is troubled, both with external threats and internal dissention.

The adventurers must make their way through the Queen's Wood, and slip past the Elf Queen's enemies who are searching for the Darkskye Diamond. Once at the court the adventurers must keep the diamond a secret from the various factions until they are ready to present it to the Elf Queen herself.

The reward...

The elven bards will compose songs about the party, and while the elves remember and sing about them the adventurers will never truly die.

THE EMPEROR

Why the icon wants it...

The Darkskye Diamond legally belongs to the Emperor. Without the Darkskye diamond the empire's wizards

cannot control the flight of their tamed flying islands, putting the security of the empire at risk.

What the party needs to do...

The party needs to get the Darkskye Diamond to the imperial capitol of Axis, and hand it over to a trusted agent of the Emperor. Along the way they'll face opposition from icons who would rather have the magic jewel for themselves.

The reward...

The party will be rewarded with a personal audience with the Emperor himself! The adventurers can parlay the Emperor's favor into land and titles.

THE HIGH DRUID

Why the icon wants it...

The flying island of Darkskye poisoned the land when it came crashing out of the sky, scattering magic-imbued crystals across a portion of the Wild Wood. The land is recovering, but slowly.

With the Darkskye Diamond the High Druid will be able to undo much of the damage that was wrought on her realm... and will ensure that no other similar incidents can happen in future.

What the party needs to do...

The High Druid is deep within the Wild Wood, in seclusion communing with nature. The party must find the High Druid and give her the Darkskye Diamond, a task made more difficult by the other icons trying to seize the diamond for themselves.

The reward...

The High Druid will give stewardship of some of her land to the party, letting them set up their own small kingdom. Of course the party must agree to live in harmony with nature, and follow her decrees.

THE LICH KING

Why the icon wants it...

The Lich King is trapped on the Necropolis, or at least tied to it with mystical bonds. The Darkskye Diamond can make islands fly. The necropolis is an island...

What the party needs to do...

Just get the Darkskye Diamond to the Necropolis and hand it over to the Lich King. Of course every other icon will oppose the party.

The reward...

Eternal life! The Lich King promises to perform dark rituals that will make the adventurers undying and will and promote them to his trusted lieutenants if they can bring him the gem that will make the Necropolis fly.

THE ORC LORD

Why the icon wants it...

The ability to hurl flying islands at his enemies... why wouldn't the Orc Lord want that?

The Orc Lord is particularly interested in how the crystals on the flying island of Darkskye mutated plants and wildlife making it more dangerous, and is keen to see if the Darkskye Diamond has the same properties.

What the party needs to do...

All the party has to do is present the Darkskye Diamond to the Orc Lord, without it first being snatched from them and the glory stolen by one of the Orc Lord's followers.

Oh, and every other icon will want to stop the Orc Lord getting hold of the Darkskye Diamond.

The reward...

The Orc Lord will give some of the lands he has seized to the adventurers. The adventurers will have to tame the barbarian lands, and will constantly have to fight off orcs—but it is the opportunity to carve their own little kingdom out of the north.

THE PRIESTESS

Why the icon wants it...

The Darkskye Diamond was one of the artifacts that the Archmage used to help raise the Cathedral in Santa Cora. If the gem falls into the wrong hands it could spell disaster for the followers of the gods of light.

Who better to safeguard the Darkskye Diamond than the Priestess? Yes, it legally belongs to the Emperor, but he has shown that he is not capable of safeguarding it. I mean, parading it through the streets of Shadow Port? That just doesn't speak highly of the Emperor's competence or priorities. Time for wiser heads and safer hands to take care of the Darkskye Diamond.

What the party needs to do...

The adventurers must transport the Darkskye Diamond to the cathedral in Santa Cora, while dodging the agents of the other icons.

The reward...

The party will receive sainthood when they die, and the blessings of the gods of light now. The party are surely safeguarding their place in the heavens by performing this good deed.

OR MAYBE TAKING THE DARKSKYE DIAMOND TO...

The following icons don't want the gem.

THE GREAT GOLD WYRM

Why the icon doesn't want it...

The Great Gold Wyrm doesn't want the Darkskye Diamond, the good dragon wants the Emperor to have it. The Emperor is its legal owner, and the Emperor needs the diamond to keep his people safe.

If the party takes the diamond to the Great Gold Wyrm the icon will question why the adventurers don't trust the Emperor. The Great Gold Wyrm will aid the adventurers but will also send turn the characters away with the command to take the troublesome gem to its rightful owner.

THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS

Why the icon doesn't want it...

The Prince of Shadows did have a plan to use the Darkskye Diamond to turn the icons against each other, as part of a bigger plot. *Did.* Past tense.

Now that Shez-a-kah the shadow dragon is dead or fled the Prince of Shadows has moved on to the next scheme. In fact a vital part of the Prince's new scheme is to get various icons chasing the Darkskye Diamond as it is transported by the adventurers. The Prince doesn't care who the adventurers take the diamond to, anything they choose will advance one of his schemes.

In fact this could all have been his plan from the very beginning...

THE THREE

Why the icon doesn't want it...

The evil dragons helped the Prince of Shadows retrieve the diamond when it went missing and handed it to him in exchange for aid in some dark plot that the Three are currently hatching. If the Three take the Darkskye Diamond for themselves the Prince of Shadows might be tempted to betray them in their current conspiracy.

The Three will direct the adventurers to take the Darkskye Diamond back to the Prince of Shadows.

ICONIC OPPOSITION AND AID

Whoever the party decide to give the Darkskye Diamond to there will be at least two icons that want to prevent that or interfere with the adventurer's journey.

AID FROM...

Some icons might send aid to the party, either because the party are bringing the gem to them or because the party intends to give the Darkskye Diamond to one of that icon's allies.

...or maybe it's a trick.

AID FROM...THE ARCHMAGE, DIABOLIST, ELF QUEEN, HIGH DRUID, PRIESTESS

Magical message

The party are warned by magical means to change their plans or take a different route. Though the warning comes too late for plans to be changed it means that the party are on their guard and get a +5 bonus to their next initiative rolls.

AID FROM...THE CRUSADER, DWARF KING, EMPEROR, PRINCE OF SHADOWS

Practical aid

The party receive practical aid in moving forward with their plans: a night spent under a friendly roof, disguises, the correct paperwork, or just a map and fresh horses. Whatever the aid is, it equates to a +5 bonus to each character's next skill roll.

AID FROM...THE CRUSADER, LICH KING, ORC LORD

The enemy of my enemy is my friend

An icon aids the party (either knowingly or unknowingly) by attacking those that are chasing the party. The next fight that the party has will have the enemies at only 70% of their normal hit points.

AID FROM...THE GREAT GOLD WYRM, THE THREE

Dragon-back ride

The party gets to bypass a potential complication, if they trust the dragons that have showed up to keep their word.

Of course the dragons can't take the party the whole way, the party's enemies would be expecting that—but the dragons can take the party part way on their journey (and then the dragons will head off as a distraction while the party carries the Darkskye Diamond to its intended destination).

OPPOSITION FROM... THE ARCHMAGE

FIGHT!

Normally we don't use tokens in 13TH AGE, but I think that it's kind of fun for these specific enemies to do so. It is usually obvious to onlookers who is building up mana, so if you use miniatures you can put little glass beads or coins next to these arcane enemies to show how they are crackling with an ever-increasing amount of power.

Number of PCs	Great Mage	Arcane Companion	Arcane Apprentice
3	1	0	4
4	1	1	1
5	1	1	4
6	2	1	1
7	2	1	4

ARCANE APPRENTICE

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +13

R: Mana zap +15 vs. PD—35 damage

Natural odd miss: The arcane apprentice gains a mana token.

Mana battery: As a standard or move action the arcane apprentice may give all of their mana tokens to a nearby great mage.

Nastier Specials

Mana explosion: If the arcane apprentice dies with mana tokens, make one mana zap attack per mana token that the arcane apprentice had—those tokens are then expended.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 54 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one arcane apprentice mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob.

ARCANE COMPANION

10th level troop [BEAST, DEMON, or CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +13

Vicious claws +15 vs. AC—58 damage

Thaumavore: When the escalation die is even, as a quick action; the epic familiar may 'eat' a mana token from a nearby ally to heal 40 hp.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 200

MD 24

GREAT MAGE

10th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +16

Mana blast +15 vs. PD—35 force damage

Any natural even: The great mage teleports nearby.

Any natural odd: The great mage gains a mana token.

C: Mana wave +15 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)—40 damage

Natural odd miss: The great mage gains a mana token.

R: Mana flash +15 vs. PD—58 damage

Natural odd miss: The great mage gains a mana token.

Spells

As a standard action expend a mana token to cast one of the following spells

Zebgast's preternatural ambiguation +15 vs. MD—Until the end of the battle the great mage takes half damage (rounded up) from all attacks, and the target takes the other half. Targets can be hit by this spell once per battle only.

C: Zuwix's colliery of tentacles +15 vs. PD (all nearby enemies)—30 damage, and until the end of the battle all enemies nearby the great mage are stuck until the great mage is no longer nearby

R: Fistiran's forever-fire +15 vs. PD—15 ongoing fire damage (hard save ends)

Aftereffect: When the target saves they take 40 cold damage.

R: Astar's song of pain (automatic hit)—15 ongoing psychic damage

Limited escalator: The grand mage adds the escalation die to its attack rolls when it has unspent mana tokens.

AC 25

PD 26 HP 220

MD 24

OPPOSITION FROM... THE CRUSADER

FIGHT!

The Crusader's forces might include clerics too—though they would be clerics of dark gods. The Crusader might even have captured and enslaved demons working for him.

Number of PCs	Dark Paladin	Elite Champion
3	1	1
4	1	1
5	2	1
6	2	1
7	2	2

DARK PALADIN

Remember, paladins can work for the gods of light... or the dark gods.

10th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +14

Darkblessed blade +15 vs. AC—40 damage

Miss: 10 damage.

[quick action] **Armored fist of the gods +15 vs. AC**—16 holy damage and the target pops free and is dazed (-4 to attack) until the end of its next turn

Heavily armored: Twice per battle as a free action; the stalwart paladin totally negates an attack against it, ignoring all damage and effects on a hit or miss.

Pick ONE special ability:

Fear aura: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Protected by divine providence: Pick a damage type, this battle the stalwart paladin is totally immune to attacks that includes that damage type.

Slayer of the unfaithful: Once per battle turn one of the stalwart paladin's attacks that misses into a crit instead.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 220

MD 20

ELITE CHAMPION

10th level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +16

Expert maneuver +15 vs. AC—50 damage

Natural even hit: The target takes 5 ongoing damage.

Natural even miss: The target takes 10 damage and the elite champion pops free and moves as a free action.

Natural odd hit: The target is weakened (-4 to attacks and damage) until the end of its next turn.

Natural odd miss: 10 damage.

Careful aim: If the elite champion makes no attack on its turn it can make an expert shot attack on its next turn.

R: Expert shot +15 vs. AC (1d3 enemies)—60 damage

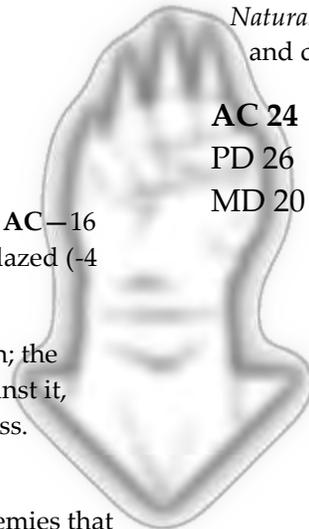
Natural even hit: Until the end of the battle the target takes 20 damage each time it moves.

Natural odd hit: The target is weakened (-4 to attacks and damage) until the end of its next turn.

AC 24

PD 26 HP 200

MD 20



OPPOSITION FROM... THE DIABOLIST

FIGHT!

The diabolist might also send corrupted former followers of other icons to do her bidding.

Number of PCs	Demonic Warrior	Demonic Fly Swarm	Possessed Cultist
3	1	2	2
4	1	3	3
5	1	5	4
6	1	6	5
7	2	5	4

DEMONIC WARRIOR

This soldier of hell is more than eager to send you there.

10th level troop [DEMON]

Initiative: +16

Vulnerability: holy

Fiery whip +15 vs. AC—20 damage and 15 ongoing fire damage

Miss: 10 fire damage.

[quick action, twice per battle] **C: Burning breath +15 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group)**—20 ongoing fire damage

Fear aura: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Burning aura: Each enemy engaged with this monster at the start of its turn takes 2d10 fire damage.

Resist fire 16+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 26

PD 20 HP 230

MD 24

DEMONIC FLY SWARM

10th level mook [DEMON]

Initiative: +14

Vulnerability: holy

Thought eaters +15 vs. MD—15 ongoing psychic damage

Flight: Yes, these flies can fly.

AC 26

PD 22 HP 60 (mook)

MD 22

Mook: Kill one demonic fly swarm mook for every 60 damage you deal to the mob.

POSSESSED CULTIST

10th level mook [DEMON]

Initiative: +20

Vulnerability: holy

Wicked claws +15 vs. AC—37 damage

C: Elongated tongue +15 vs. AC (1 nearby enemy)—20 ongoing acid damage

Natural even hit or miss: The target is pulled into engagement with the possessed cultist.

R: Vile whispers +15 vs. MD—10 ongoing psychic damage and the target becomes confused (save ends both).

Aftereffect: When the target saves it takes 20 psychic damage.

Nastier Specials

Flight: The demon can fly, sprouting leathery wings; if it attacks while flying it pops free after its attack.

Climber: The demon can climb like a spider, and it gains a +5 attack bonus if it drops down from the ceiling onto its intended target.

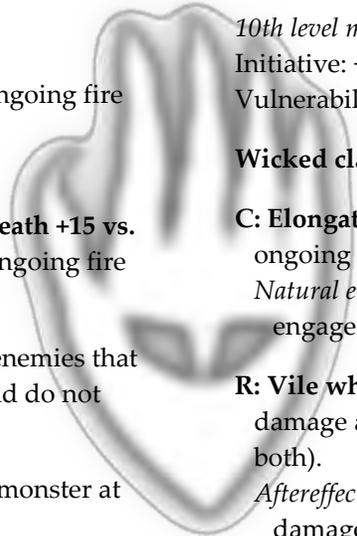
Sense weakness: The demon has +2 to defenses against attacks made by staggered enemies.

AC 26

PD 26 HP 54 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one possessed cultist mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob.



OPPOSITION FROM... THE DWARF KING

FIGHT!

It is likely that at least one of these dwarves has in their possession a magic item. You can give one of the dwarves a magic item that you've picked out beforehand, or give that same dwarf a +1d4 bonus to attacks and defenses—and let the players choose an appropriate item to find if (when) they loot the body; either way even if the nature of the item is not immediately obvious the dwarf will appear to have a special aura around them that the adventurers can plainly perceive.

Number of PCs	Dwarven Hero	Dwarven Defender	Dwarven Warden
3	1	0	4
4	1	1	1
5	1	1	4
6	2	1	1
7	2	1	4

DWARVEN DEFENDER

10th level blocker [humanoid]

Initiative: +14

[quick action, up to 3 times per turn] **Swift hammers +15 vs. AC**—35 damage

Bodyguard: Once per round, as a free action; the dwarven defender can pop free and move to intercept a moving enemy.

Fearless: The dwarven defender is immune to fear and fear-like effects.

AC 29

PD 24 HP 154

MD 20

DWARVEN HERO

10th level spoiler [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +14

Mighty hammer +15 vs. AC—1d8x10 damage

Damage dice rolls a 1 or an 8: Either use the damage die result, or re-roll it and add an extra use of shield bash this battle.

[quick action, twice per battle] **Shield bash (automatic hit)**—The target pops free and is dazed (-4 to attack) until the end of its next turn

C: Whirling hammer +15 vs. AC (1 nearby or far away enemy)—60 damage

Natural 16+ hit against a nearby enemy: Target is dazed (save ends).

Escalator: The dwarven hero adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 220

MD 20

DWARVEN WARDEN

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +13

Ancestral axe +15 vs. AC—35 damage

R: Throwing axe +14 vs. AC—30 damage

Lock shields: For every dwarven warden mook in a mob add +1 to their AC, and add +1 to their PD against ranged attacks, up to a maximum of +4.

Nastier Specials

Ancestral guidance: Count non-mook dwarven allies as dwarven wardens for the purposes of this character's lock shields ability.

Axe of my forebears: This dwarf has +1 to attack and damage.

AC 20 (see lock shields)

PD 24 HP 54 (mook)

MD 20

Mook: Kill one dwarven warden mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob.

OPPOSITION FROM... THE ELF QUEEN

FIGHT!

These elves have an initiative modifier of +3d10. If you feel like it you can roll for each elf, or you can roll once for each type of elf. If you don't feel like rolling just count the initiative as +16.

These elves have abilities that key off their variable modifier, making them 'swingly'. Fast elves are deadly, elves who go last less so. If you don't like your elves swingy, use 16 as the variable modifier.

Number of PCs	Elven Blade Dancer	Elven Archer	Elven Warrior
3	1	0	4
4	1	1	1
5	1	1	4
6	2	1	1
7	2	1	4

ELVEN BLADE DANCER

10th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3d10

Blade dance +15 vs. AC—40 damage

Natural even hit or miss: Make a blade trick, cutting sidestep, or smooth ploy attack.

Miss: Damage equal to the elf's initiative bonus.

[Special trigger] **C: Blade trick +15 vs. AC**—10 ongoing damage

[Special trigger] **C: Cutting sidestep +15 vs. AC**—20 damage and the elven blade dancer pops free and moves as a free action

[Special trigger] **C: Smooth ploy +14 vs. MD**—If the target moves before the end of its next turn one elf mook can make a free attack against it

Aura of whirling blades: Each enemy engaged with this monster at the start of its turn takes 2d6 damage.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 230

MD 20

ELVEN ARCHER

10th level archer [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3d10

Point blank shot +15 vs. AC—50 damage and the archer pops free

Natural even miss: The archer pops free.

R: Elven bow +15 vs. AC—30 ongoing damage

First miss this battle: Damage equal to half the elf's initiative bonus.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 210

MD 20

ELVEN WARRIOR

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +3d10

Elven blade +15 vs. AC—37 damage

R: Elven bow +15 vs. AC (1 or 2 enemies)—30 damage

AC 26

PD 26 HP 50 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one elven warrior mook for every 50 damage you deal to the mob.

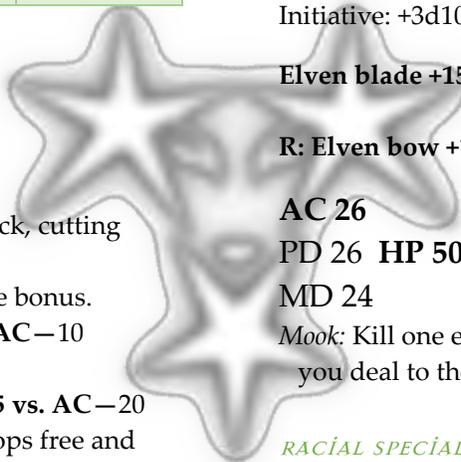
RACIAL SPECIALS

Pick one per elf...

Dark elf blade venom: Once per battle, as a free action; an enemy engaged with this creature takes poison damage equal to this elf's initiative bonus.

High elf magic: Once per battle, as a free action; one nearby enemy takes force damage equal to this elf's initiative bonus.

Wood elf swiftness: Once per battle this elf may add half its initiative bonus (rounded up) to its attack roll.



OPPOSITION FROM... THE EMPEROR

FIGHT!

If the adventurers manage to separate the rider and the dragon (a very difficult task mid-combat, but maybe the adventurers sneak up on them while the rider is off having lunch at a tavern and the dragon is washing its scales in the Bronze River nearby) then the rider has 200 hp and the dragon has 700 hp.

Number of PCs	Veteran Imperial Legionnaire	Imperial Dragon & Dragon Rider
3	5	0
4	1	1
5	2	1
6	3	1
7	5	1

VETERAN IMPERIAL LEGIONNAIRE

12th level mook [humanoid]

Initiative: +17

Disciplined attack +15 vs. AC—45 damage

Miss: 15 damage.

R: Volley fire +15 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—30 damage

Miss: 10 damage.

Orderly advance: When a veteran imperial legionnaire rolls a natural 19 or 20 another veteran imperial legionnaire can make a melee attack as a free action against a different target.

AC 28

PD 26 HP 90 (mook)

MD 26

Mook: Kill one veteran imperial legionnaire mook for every 90 damage you deal to the mob.

IMPERIAL DRAGON & DRAGON RIDER

Large 12th level wrecker [DRAGON + HUMANOID]

Initiative: +20

This monster can make two standard actions on each of its turns (two rider actions, two dragon actions, or one of each). The pair only get one move action and one quick action between them.

Rider actions

Lance +15 vs. AC—90 damage

Special: This attack may be performed while the dragon is mid-move.

C: Rain of arrows +17 vs. AC (1d3 nearby enemies, or one faraway enemy)—60 damage

Spotter: As a standard action the rider acts as a second pair of eyes for the dragon, allowing it to roll 3d20 for its attacks and use the best d20 roll.

Dragon actions

Raking claws +17 vs. AC (2 attacks)—70 damage

Both attacks miss: The dragon makes a *wing slam* attack as a quick action.

C: Wing slam +15 vs. PD (1 nearby enemy)—12 damage and the dragon pops free and may move as a free action

C: Fiery breath +17 vs. PD (1d4 nearby or far away enemies)—30 ongoing fire damage

Flight: The dragon can fly, fast and acrobatically.

Escalator: The dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls, but its rider does not

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 120 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Resist fire 16+: When a fire attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 28

PD 26 HP 900*

MD 22

** When this pair becomes staggered the dragon rider is either dead or incapacitated, and the pair cannot take rider actions.*

OPPOSITION FROM... THE GREAT GOLD WYRM

FIGHT!

You only get to use *protected by the gods* once per battle, no matter how many *exarch clerics* there are. My advice is to wait until a player whips out their killer fireball or ultimate combo of crits and lucky rolls and casually point to this text box to let them know that the gods have decided that their favorite damage type just won't fly this battle. The gods can be cruel and capricious, this is your chance to be likewise.

Number of PCs	Stalwart Paladin	Exarch Cleric
3	1	1
4	1	1
5	1	2
6	1	2
7	2	2

STALWART PALADIN

10th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +14

Bright-blessed blade +15 vs. AC—40 damage

Miss: 10 damage.

[quick action] **Armored fist of the gods +15 vs. AC**—16 holy damage and the target pops free and is dazed (-4 to attack) until the end of its next turn

Heavily armored: Twice per battle as a free action; the stalwart paladin totally negates an attack against it, ignoring all damage and effects on a hit or miss.

Pick ONE special ability:

Fear aura: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Protected by divine providence: Pick a damage type, this battle the stalwart paladin is totally immune to attacks that includes that damage type.

Slayer of the unfaithful: Once per battle turn one of the stalwart paladin's attacks that misses into a crit instead.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 220

MD 20

EXARCH CLERIC

10th level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +14

Smite +15 vs. AC—50+1d12 holy damage

...and on a hit:

The d12 comes up 1-2: Target is stunned until the start of its next turn.

The d12 comes up 3-4: The exarch and one ally heal 10 hp each.

The d12 comes up 5-6: The exarch and one ally may pop free.

The d12 comes up 7-8: All conditions on the exarch end.

The d12 comes up 9-10: The target is considered to be staggered for the rest of the battle, no matter their hp total.

The d12 comes up 11-12: The d12 'explodes'. Re-roll the d12, and add the result to the total damage; if you roll an 11 or 12 again re-roll again, and add the result to the damage—and so on until you do not roll an 11 or 12.

C: Devout prayer +15 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—40 holy damage

Natural even hit or miss: The exarch cleric or one nearby ally heals 20 hp.

R: Holy light +15 vs. PD—58 holy damage

Blessing: Once per round, as a free action; the exarch cleric can bless an ally and allow them to re-roll an attack.

Holy immunity: The exarch cleric ignores all attacks against it that do holy damage.

Nastier Specials

Protected by the gods: Once per battle only, the GM can declare mid-battle one condition (confused, dazed, ongoing damage, fear effects, etc) or damage type (fire, psychic, acid, etc) that the exarch cleric and all its allies are immune to. This ends once the last exarch cleric in the battle is dead or fled. You can only use this once per battle, no matter how many exarch clerics are in the battle. You can't use this to make anybody immune to untyped damage.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 222

MD 20

OPPOSITION FROM... THE HIGH DRUID

FIGHT!

My intention with the monolith's *mystic node* ability is that at some point in the battle all the monoliths will form a stone circle, and begin glowing or otherwise giving a clue that something odd is happening.

Number of PCs	Wild Druid	Awakened Monolith
3	1	4
4	1	6
5	1	9
6	1	11
7	2	9

AWAKENED MONOLITH

This stone giant used to be part of a stone circle, now it accompanies the druid into battle.

10th level mook [ELEMENTAL]

Initiative: +10

Crush +12 vs. AC—37 damage

R: Past lives +12 vs. MD—The target is confused (save ends), and gains a +4 attack bonus until no longer confused

Limited use: Only one enemy can only be confused by past lives at any one time. It is up to the GM and player if the past lives revealed are true or are just illusions, and how much of these past lives are remembered after the battle.

Mystic node: All normal saves become hard saves, all hard saves become impossible. This ability requires all monoliths in the battle to do nothing but sit there radiating mystic energy. If any monolith does something on its turn that is not this, the effect ends.

AC 29

PD 26 HP 54 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one awakened monolith mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob.

WILD DRUID

10th level caster [HUMANOID or BEAST]

Initiative: +16

[quick action 1/round] **C: Wild growth (automatic hit vs one nearby enemy)**—5 ongoing damage and the target is stuck (save ends both)

First failed save: Target is vulnerable to attacks until no longer stuck.

Second failed save: The save against the 5 ongoing damage + stuck + vulnerable becomes a hard save (16+).

As part of a move action, or instead of a move action; the druid can switch between humanoid and beast. Switching forms ends all conditions on the druid.

Humanoid attacks

Wave of earth +15 vs. AC (1 to 3 targets)—33 damage

Special: Each target may be attacked separately while the druid is mid-movement, as the wild druid surfs a wave of mud and rock.

C: Fire blast +15 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies, targeting the closest enemies first)—17 ongoing fire damage

R: Storm flash +15 vs. PD (2 attacks)—38 damage: the first attack does lightning damage, the second attack does thunder damage

C: Tsunami +15 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies, targeting the closest enemies first)—25 damage and the target must save or pop free and be pushed far away from the wild druid's current position

Beast attacks

C: Leaping attack +15 vs. AC (1 nearby or far away enemy)—48 damage and the wild druid pops free and leaps into engagement with the target

Miss: The wild druid pops free

Savage claws +15 vs. AC (1d3 attacks)—30 damage

AC 26

PD 24 HP 216

MD 20

OPPOSITION FROM... THE LICH KING

FIGHT!

The attack and defense penalties for *withering touch* stack, but can only be a maximum of -4. It only takes one save to throw off all *withering touch* ongoing damage and effects at once.

Number of PCs	Deathwalker Tsar	Deathwalker	Skull Bat
3	1	2	4
4	1	3	6
5	1	5	8
6	1	6	10
7	2	5	8

DEATHWALKER

This withered husk is quicker than it looks.

10th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +20

Vulnerability: holy

Withering touch +15 vs. PD—18 ongoing negative energy and cold damage

Each failed save: Target takes a cumulative -1 penalty to all attack rolls and defenses until they save against the ongoing damage (max -4).

The quick and the dead: On rounds where the escalation die is not even (0,1,3,5) the deathwalker can double move as a move action.

Resist cold and negative energy 16+: When a cold or negative energy attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Negative healing: When a negative energy attack targets this creature and misses, the deathwalker heals 50 hp.

AC 26

PD 20 HP 50 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one deathwalker mook for every 50 damage you deal to the mob.

DEATHWALKER TSAR

This winter zombie is very tough, and very smart, and wears an iron crown.

10th level wrecker [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +20

Vulnerability: holy

Steal life's breath +15 vs. PD—30 ongoing negative energy and cold damage

C: Termination +15 vs. MD (one nearby enemy already taking ongoing negative energy damage)—58 psychic and cold damage

Critical hit: The target must start making last gasp saves as they turn into a deathwalker.

Resist cold and negative energy 16+: When a cold or negative energy attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

Negative healing: When a negative energy attack targets this creature and misses, the deathwalker heals 50 hp.

Nastier Specials

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Chill aura: Each enemy engaged with this monster at the start of its turn takes 3d6 cold damage.

AC 26

PD 20 HP 250

MD 24

SKULL BAT

Half-strength 10th level mook [UNDEAD]

Initiative: +16

Vulnerability: holy

Bite +15 vs. AC—20 damage

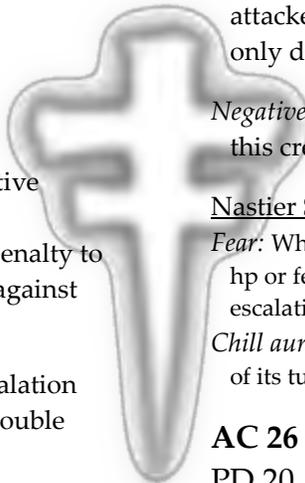
Flight: This monster flies, cackling as it does so.

AC 26

PD 26 HP 25 (mook)

MD 18

Mook: Kill one skull bat mook for every 25 damage you deal to the mob. Two skull bats equals one normal 10th level mook.



OPPOSITION FROM... THE ORC LORD

FIGHT!

If you don't like the idea of dragons being corruptible by the foul mystic taint of the Orc Lord, replace each dragon with a horde of ten *great fang cadre* orcs.

Number of PCs	Corrupted Dragon	Great Fang Cadre
3	1	4
4	2	1
5	2	4
6	3	1
7	3	4

CORRUPTED DRAGON

Large 10th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +15

Diseased claws +15 vs. AC (each engaged enemy)—35 ongoing negative energy damage

Natural 16+ hit: The target becomes feverish, making it vulnerable to all attacks until the end of the battle.

C: Balefire breath +15 vs. PD (1d4 nearby enemies in a group)—40 fire and negative energy damage

Miss: half damage.

Corruption aura: Each enemy engaged with this monster at the start of its turn takes 2d10 negative energy and psychic damage.

Orc rage: Whenever an orc dies in this battle the crit range of this dragon expands by 1 (to a maximum of 16+).

Flight: The creature can fly, though its wings are twisted and misshapen.

Escalator: This monster adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 450

MD 20

GREAT FANG CADRE

Among the countless cursed strains of orcs, there are many who grow into tall, fierce warriors when fed on the highest quality food. In particular, they thrive on the flesh of beautiful, talented, experienced, and powerful people.

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +13

Double-ended axe +15 vs. AC—25 damage

Natural 11+: The cadre can make a second double-ended axe attack (no more) as a free action.

Dangerous mooks: The crit range of melee attacks by great fang cadre orcs expands by 3 until half the great fang cadre mob has been dropped.

R: Big, black, creaking bow +15 vs. AC—37 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The attack targets PD instead of AC.

Nastier Specials

On the spot mutation: Whenever an attack eliminates one or more members of the mob, there is a 50% chance that each survivor gains a mutation like a sudden new body part or temporary magical aura. The GM chooses one of the following improvements, perhaps at random, and invents a new body-part or magic effect to explain it:

Extra melee attack: the orc can make two melee attacks on its turn

Damage aura: 1d20 damage vs. any enemy that starts its turn engaged with the orc

Stone-tough hide: +4 bonus to AC.

AC 27

PD 25 HP 50 (mook)

MD 21

Mook: Kill one great fang cadre mook for every 50 damage you deal to the mob.

OPPOSITION FROM... THE PRIESTESS

FIGHT!

An early draft of the sanctified warrior was called the martyr warrior and had them setting themselves on fire, dealing +4d6 fire damage (hit or miss) but taking 15 damage per round. I dropped that idea, but you can use it if you like—just be aware of the potential interactions with the exarch clerics' *devout prayer*.

Number of PCs	Exarch Cleric	Sanctified Warrior
3	1	4
4	1	6
5	1	9
6	1	11
7	1	14

SANCTIFIED WARRIOR

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +16

Zealous attack +15 vs. AC—24 damage, or 30 damage against staggered targets
Miss: 2d12 damage.

Fanatical charge: If the sanctified warrior moves into engagement in a way that could be considered charging then it gains a cumulative +2 to attack and damage with its next attack each time it provokes an attack during its movement.

Nastier Specials

Blessed armor: The sanctified warrior gains +3 to defenses against attacks that it provokes while moving.

'tis only a scratch: The last sanctified warrior in a battle can keep fighting no matter how low its hp (even massively negative hp) provided at least one exarch cleric remains standing. Only a crit that reduces the sanctified warrior to 0 hp or fewer, or killing or driving away all the exarch clerics, will finally kill this holy fool.

AC 26

PD 26 HP 60 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one sanctified warrior mook for every 60 damage you deal to the mob.

EXARCH CLERIC

10th level leader [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +14

Smite +15 vs. AC—50+1d12 holy damage

...and on a hit:

The d12 comes up 1-2: Target is stunned until the start of its next turn.

The d12 comes up 3-4: The exarch and one ally heal 10 hp each.

The d12 comes up 5-6: The exarch and one ally may pop free.

The d12 comes up 7-8: All conditions on the exarch end.

The d12 comes up 9-10: The target is considered to be staggered for the rest of the battle, no matter their hp total.

The d12 comes up 11-12: The d12 'explodes'. Re-roll the d12, and add the result to the total damage; if you roll an 11 or 12 again re-roll again, and add the result to the damage—and so on until you do not roll an 11 or 12.

C: Devout prayer +15 vs. MD (one nearby enemy)—40 holy damage

Natural even hit or miss: The exarch cleric or one nearby ally heals 20 hp.

R: Holy light +15 vs. PD—58 holy damage

Blessing: Once per round, as a free action; the exarch cleric can bless an ally and allow them to re-roll an attack.

Holy immunity: The exarch cleric ignores all attacks against it that do holy damage.

Nastier Specials

Protected by the gods: Once per battle only, the GM can declare mid-battle one condition (confused, dazed, ongoing damage, fear effects, etc) or damage type (fire, psychic, acid, etc) that the exarch cleric and all its allies are immune to. This ends once the last exarch cleric in the battle is dead or fled. You can only use this once per battle, no matter how many exarch clerics are in the battle. You can't use this to make anybody immune to untyped damage.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 222

MD 20

OPPOSITION FROM... THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS

FIGHT!

When you are down to your last *shadow warrior* you replace it with a *deadly assassin* at full hp. This represents the final assassin revealing that it is in fact an expert killer hiding among the mooks; of course it could also represent the deadlier foe hiding somewhere else and springing out when the time is right, pushing the last mook aside and delivering a short monolog about its unstoppable technique.

Number of PCs	Shadow Warrior	Deadly Assassin
3	9	0?
4	11	0?
5	14	0?
6	16	0?
7	19	0?

SHADOW WARRIOR

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +15

Razor-sharp swords +15 vs. AC—37 damage

C: Throwing blades +15 vs. AC (1d3 nearby or far away enemies in a group)—25 damage

Law of diminishing ninjas: When a group of shadow warriors surround an enemy only one makes an attack, with an attack and damage bonus equal to the number of black clad assassins who have died.

Nastier specials

Last assassin standing: When only one shadow warrior is left in the battle it is replaced with a deadly assassin with full hit points.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 54 (mook)

MD 20

Mook: Kill one shadow warrior mook for every 54 damage you deal to the mob.

DEADLY ASSASSIN

The last one left, but far tougher than the rest.

Double-strength 10th level spoiler [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +15, or the same as the Shadow Warriors if the Deadly Assassin joins mid-fight

Broken blade technique +15 vs. AC (1d3 attacks)—40 ongoing damage

All three attacks hit the same target: The target is vulnerable to all assassin’s attacks until the end of the battle.

Limited flight: The creature can fly—well it is more like jumping off objects and running up walls fast, but we’ll call it ‘flying’. While ‘flying’ it does not provoke attacks. It has to land at the end of its turn.

Escalator: This assassin adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

Expert martial artist: This creature can redirect other’s attacks. While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 72 hp or fewer and hit with an attack must save or re-roll their attack against a target that the deadly assassin picks (maybe themselves if there are no other available targets).

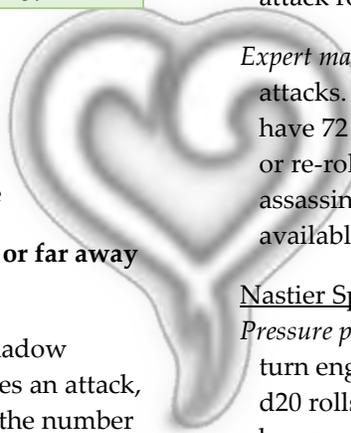
Nastier Specials

Pressure point attack: Enemies that start and end their turn engaged with the deadly assassin lower all their d20 rolls by 1 until the end of the battle: natural 2s become natural 1s, natural 20s become natural 19s, etc.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 454

MD 20



OPPOSITION FROM... THE THREE

FIGHT!

...or you could use dragons from the core book.

Number of PCs	Black Assassin	Blue Enchantress	Red Fire Cultist
3	0	1	4
4	1	1	1
5	1	1	4
6	1	1	6
7	1	1	9

RED FIRE CULTIST

10th level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +16

Vulnerability: cold

Burning scimitar +15 vs. AC—18 ongoing fire damage

Natural 19+ hit: Make a second attack against the same target, and the fire cultist takes 1d12 fire damage.

R: Burning trident +15 vs. AC—36 fire damage

Natural 19+ hit: The fire damage is ongoing.

Lure of the flames: Enemies taking ongoing fire damage take a -5 penalty to disengage checks when engaged with a red fire cultist.

AC 26

PD 26 HP 64 (mook)

MD 24

Mook: Kill one red fire cultist mook for every 64 damage you deal to the mob.

BLACK ASSASSIN

10th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +15

Spinning chains +15 vs. AC (1 or 2 engaged enemies)—45 damage

Natural even hit or miss: The target pops free and is weakened until the start of the target's next turn.

C: Poisonous dust +15 vs. PD (the nearest enemy)—30 ongoing poison damage

The attack also hits against the target's MD: The gifted assassin disappears until the start of its next turn.

R: Blow-dart +15 vs. PD—30 ongoing poison damage

Natural even hit: Target is dazed, easy save ends.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 216

MD 20

BLUE ENCHANTRESS

10th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +16

Dimensional detonation +15 vs. PD—55 force and lightning damage

Natural even hit or miss: The target is teleported to a point far away.

Natural odd hit or miss: The blue enchantress can fly or teleport with her next move action.

C: Arc lightning +15 vs. PD (1 nearby enemy)—30 lightning damage

Natural even hit or miss: Make another arc lightning attack against an enemy nearby the creature just targeted. You may keep doing this until you roll an odd attack roll or you run out of new targets.

R: Mana storm +15 vs. PD (all enemies in a group)—20 thunder and force damage

Miss: half damage.

Gather power: Whenever the blue enchantress misses, her crit range expands by 1 until the end of the battle (max 16+).

Expanded lightning aura: Each enemy engaged with the blue enchantress at the start of her turn takes 2d10 lightning damage. If no enemies are engaged with the blue enchantress the damage is dealt to the closest enemy.

Nastier Specials

Resist spells 16+: When a spell attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage. Attacks using weapons or magic weapons, unarmed attacks, or attacks granted by racial abilities do not count as spell attacks.

AC 26

PD 24 HP 216

MD 20

KROMA DRAGONICS

The September 2015 edition of 13TH AGE MONTHLY has full stats for 'Kroma Dragonics', if you want the opposition from the Three to be specifically dragonic then check out that issue.

COMPLICATIONS...

AN UNUSUAL OFFER

The party is approached by an agent of an icon which they had not considered giving the diamond to, and makes it clear to the party that should they take the diamond to their patron (instead of the icon that they are currently trying to reach) the party will be very richly rewarded.

Naturally the agent refuses the diamond—it is much too dangerous an item to own as everybody is after it; the agent is merely a messenger, offering an olive branch and a golden handshake.

Will the party switch their loyalties? What would it take to buy them off? Of course no matter what they choose they will still face opposition, though now the icons opposing and aiding the party will be different.

THE BRIDGE

The adventurers must cross a bridge while facing opposition from an icon.

Maybe the other icon's forces are blocking off the bridge and won't let the adventurers cross without first handing over the Darkskye Diamond.

Maybe the bridge serves as an ambush spot, where archers or others with ranged attacks can pick off the adventurers while they are pinned down in a fight.

Of course the 'bridge' could also be a river ford, a ferry crossing, a castle gatehouse, a narrow street, or any other spot where the party is exposed and could be ambushed.

POISONED!

The adventurers stop at a tavern only to have their drinks poisoned.

It is a DC 35 Wisdom based skill check for each adventurer to either notice that something is up with the drinks and avoid drinking (a natural 20 lets the adventurer warn an ally allowing them a re-roll) or a DC 35 Constitution-based skill check to avoid the effects of the poison (those that have poison resistance can add half their resistance to their skill roll). Adventurers who are poisoned lose half their current hit points.

Before the party can rest to purge their systems and seek an antidote (that is to say spend some recoveries) they will doubtless be attacked.

THE IMPOSTER

The party are approached by somebody who claims to be working for the very icon that they are trying to get the Darkskye Diamond to.

Of course it is a trick. It is a DC 30 skill check to see through the impersonation. Failing to see through the impersonation means that the party realizes that they have been fooled only after they have handed over the diamond and must chase after it, or after the party have been led into an ambush.

SNATCH AND GRAB

Somebody just runs up and grans the diamond! The simplest plans really are the best sometimes...

The party must chase the thief down.

Each player in turn must narrate how they help to catch the thief, and make a skill check using an appropriate background, with a DC as determined by the below chart. When a player succeeds move one place upwards on the chart, but a failure moves the group one place down. When you move to a space on the chart take any damage or consequence listed there before making the skill check. Start where the chart says 'Start...'

End!	Captured!	The thief has been apprehended, and the diamond is safe.
	DC 30	The thief has almost been caught, and the party are hot on the diamond's trail.
	DC 25	The lead member of the party loses a recovery from exhaustion.
Start	DC 20	The lead member of the party loses a recovery from exhaustion.
	DC 20	The party has almost lost the thief, but the trail is still hot.
	DC 25	The Darkskye Diamond is out of the party's reach—for now at least. The good news is that the party has a good idea of where the diamond currently is and can go get it back.
End!	Escaped!	

ENEMY STRONGHOLD

The party have somehow lost the diamond and it is in an enemy stronghold.

It is a DC 25 skill check to sneak into the stronghold, failing forwards means that the adventurers get inside but alert the guards or other opposition. However, if the party successfully sneak in and can successfully get the diamond from wherever it is locked up or guarded (a DC 25 skill check), and escape without alerting anybody (a third DC 25 skill check) then they have retrieved the diamond and avoided a fight.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Use an appropriate fight from this adventure if the party fails one of the three skill checks.

THE SEARCHERS

Enemy forces are looking for the party. Maybe the party are hiding in a cellar, or trying to sneak through a city crowd, or are in a forest... whatever the situation those friendly to an icon that opposes the party are out looking for them.

Each adventurer in turn must succeed at a DC 20 skill check. Failing the skill check means that the party must change hiding places or tactics and causes the next party member's difficulty to be 5 higher (DC 25). Passing the skill check lowers the difficulty for the next party member to 5 lower (DC 15). If the final person to roll succeeds then the party have got away, otherwise the party must face those that are searching for them.

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Use an appropriate fight from this adventure if the final person in the party fails the final skill check.

ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

The party discovers that their route to their destination is far more dangerous than they anticipated. Going ahead with whatever their plan was will involve facing the agents of two icons at once!

Of course there is another option, but it involves trusting an icon who so far has not been involved with the adventure and whose loyalties and motives the party is unsure of.

NATURAL BARRIER

The bridge is washed out, the city gates are closed, the icon that they are trying to reach is in a different location, the Koru Behemoth migration is today... some chance happening is working against the adventurers.

The party needs to pass three DC 25 skill checks to get past the thing that is impeding their progress, the party nominates which adventurer(s) will make the skill checks. If the party fails one of the three rolls then they get past the barrier but have alerted their enemies to their planned route. If the party fails two of the three rolls then their enemies have found them and they must fight their way to freedom. If the party fail all three skill checks then they have ended up in such a compromised situation that during the fight with their enemies the escalation die will only be a d4!

FIGHT! (OPTIONAL)

Use an appropriate fight from this adventure if the party fails at least two of the three skill checks.

DAANGEROUS ENVIRONMENTS

Ah, but where will the adventurers face their enemies?

ACTIVE VOLCANO

An active volcano, or a hellhole, or maybe the edge of the Abyss itself. Wherever this place is, it is inhospitable.

GMs: As a twist, turn fire damage into cold damage and turn this into an ice volcano up near Moonwreck.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Avoiding natural environmental threats such as slow moving lava flows or obvious pools of acid: DC 20
- Avoiding less obvious threats like invisible toxic clouds or pools of clear-looking 'water' that can dissolve even metal: DC 25
- Rushing to cover to avoid sudden threats like mud-flows or eruptions of super-heated gas: DC 30, success means that the adventurer only takes half damage.

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Lava flow +15 vs PD—2d10 damage (probably poison or acid damage, definitely fire damage)

Miss: Half damage

Acid pool +20 vs PD—4d6 acid damage

Miss: Half damage

Super-heated steam +25 vs PD (the whole party)—4d6 fire and poison damage

Miss: Half damage

DARKEST DUNGEON

This could be a deadly living dungeon on Omen, the basement of the Cathedral, or the secret heart of First Triumph, or the deeper places formerly inhabited by the dwarves.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Navigating the dungeon: DC 20
- Avoiding the dungeon's guards or native inhabitants: DC 20
- Convincing somebody that you are supposed to be down here, honest: DC 25
- Disguising yourself as a dungeon inhabitant, and fooling other dungeon denizens: DC 25
- Opening a door with many traps and locks, without springing a trap: DC 30
- Spotting that a corridor is trapped: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Dart or acid trap +15 vs AC (1d3 party members)—3d6 damage (probably poison or acid damage)

Living corridor's gnashing teeth +20 vs AC (1d3 party members)—2d10 damage

Trapped door +25 vs AC—2d20 damage of more than one type (maybe ongoing damage if it occurs mid-fight).

DEEPEST PART OF THE WOOD

You aren't sure that this place is even still part of the mortal realm. Strange creatures lurk in the shadows of trees that reach to the clouds, plants grow so fast that they move as quickly as animals, and strange unearthly smells fill the air.

This could be the Queen's Wood near the Court of Stars, or the very heart of the Wild Wood.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Talking to a tree, and getting it to tell you something useful: DC 20
- Finding your way, after getting lost again: DC 20
- The plants here grow fast, you must avoid getting trapped by them growing over you: DC 20
- Avoiding the half-glimpsed thing in the trees that has been tracking you for half an hour now: DC 25
- The druid/elf/talking tree/forest spirit/walking monolith doesn't think you should be here, and you must convince it otherwise: DC 25
- NOT drinking from that forbidden pool that looks so inviting: DC 30, with interesting consequences if the adventurer does drink.
- Cutting free from roots that grew over you while you slumbered in the preternaturally still forest: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Beautiful flowers with poisoned thorns +15 vs PD—2d10 poison damage

Soporific pollen and the music of wind through the trees +20 vs PD or MD (the whole party)—A -5 penalty to all skill checks until your next rest.

Animated trees +25 vs AC—2d20 damage

FAILING WARD

This is one of the Archmage's wards, or one of his power nodes. The ward is failing (or perhaps has already failed) and the dangerous energies or creatures that it was keeping at bay are spilling forth into the world.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Unlocking a magically locked door or entering a magically protected area without setting off a magical trap: DC 20
- Navigating a magical maze: DC 20
- Convincing a paranoid defender of the ward that you are there to help: DC 25
- Working out a deeply arcane problem, solving a hard riddle, or other feats of intelligence focused on deep magic: DC 25
- Talking your way past a magical guardian: DC 30
- Restoring the ward: DC 30, requires multiple successes with failures increasing damage from traps and other dangers by a cumulative +1d10 each time.

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

A magical trap +15 vs PD—2d10 damage (probably force, lightning, or psychic damage)

A magical explosion (mild) +20 vs PD (1d3 adventurers)—3d10 damage (probably force and fire, maybe other damage types too)

A magical explosion (severe) +25 vs PD (the whole party)—4d6 damage, plus some weird effect like the party being teleported somewhere unpleasant or switching minds

Miss: Half damage, and no weird secondary effect.

HELL ITSELF

Yep, you are in hell.

Maybe it is lakes of fiery caverns, maybe a labyrinth of torture chambers, maybe it is all allegories and metaphors. Whatever the place is, it is crawling with demons and is not a pleasant place.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Interrogating a soul imprisoned in hell: DC 20
- The psychic load of hell starts to get to you: DC 20, the person with the lowest MD in the party rolls. If the skill check is failed the PC who failed and one PC that they nominate become confused, hard save (16+) ends. Roll initiative!
- Navigating hell: DC 25
- Sweet-talking your way past a demon while armed with nothing but flim-flam and self-confidence: DC 30
- Rescuing an imprisoned soul: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Unbearable hellish environment +15 vs PD (the whole party)—3d6 damage (probably fire damage, but might be cold damage)

Animated torture implements +20 vs AC—3d10 damage OR half damage and the target is weakened until after their next rest (target choose before the attack is rolled).

Psychic corruption +25 vs MD (the whole party)—4d6 psychic damage, and nightmares for life.

MONSTROUS LAIR

An elder dragon's cave protected by dragonic worshipers, the hidden temple of a monster-worshipping cult, or perhaps somewhere in or under Drakkenhall.

Wherever this lair is, it is more than just a cave, it is a cave network with a community of monsters serving or worshipping the monster that calls this place home.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Creeping past a sleeping guard-beast: DC 20
- Avoiding a hidden trap: DC 20
- Creeping past watchful guards: DC 25
- Navigating the maze of interior chambers: DC 25
- Fast-talking a cultist into letting you pass unhindered: DC 30
- Sneaking up on the slumbering beast: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Natural cave dangers: pit, falling rocks, chasm +15 vs AC—2d10 damage (or 3d6 damage if the attack is against each party member)

Cunning trap +20 vs AC—3d10 damage (probably untyped damage, but maybe poison damage or thunder damage)

Strange cave flora +25 vs PD or MD—2d20 damage (or 2d10 poison damage and target is confused save ends in the case of hallucinogenic fungus)

KORU BEHEMOTH

Yes, a Koru Behemoth is an environment rather than a creature—even the icons steer clear of directly challenging these beasts.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Climbing onto a Koru Behemoth, if it is at rest or moving very slowly: DC 20
- Locating a city built atop the Behemoth: DC 20
- Dealing with the strange customs of the people who live in the city atop the Behemoth: DC 25
- Arranging a trade deal with a race that is not normally found in the Dragon Empire: DC 25, or DC 30 if the race is really outlandish
- Getting on or off a moving behemoth: DC 30, use the earthquake attack if the roll is failed but only against the PC who failed the roll

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Strange flora and fauna that lives on the behemoth +15 vs AC—2d10 damage

Falling off the behemoth (but catching yourself on a tree rooted in its flank) +20 vs PD—3d10 damage

Earthquake +25 vs PD (the whole party)—4d6 damage (or maybe 5d8 damage if the party were foolish enough to be standing *directly* in the path of the behemoth).

Natural even miss: Half damage.

PALACE STRONGHOLD

The imperial palace, the secret lair of the Prince of Shadows, the Archmage's tower, or even the audience hall of the Dwarf King... all of these are places where just having a good sword arm isn't enough.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Navigating conversations with courtiers, without giving offence or agreeing to do something dubious: DC 20
- Sneaking past guards into a restricted area, or talking your way out of trouble when you get caught: DC 20
- Making a good impression with an icon: DC 25
- Swaying a courtier toward your cause: DC 25
- Obtaining an audience with an icon, before the matter in hand becomes moot: DC 30
- Swaying an icon towards your cause: DC 30, will require swaying quite a few courtiers first and everybody making a good impression.

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Poisoned wine +15 vs PD—2d10 poison damage

Cunning traps guarding the treasure vault +20 vs AC—3d10 damage, and probably an alarm going off
Pit of vipers, or some other method of punishing intruders +25 vs AC, PD, or MD—4d10 damage (and it probably requires a DC 35 skill check to escape the pit before it makes another attack)

REALM OF THE GODS

This might be the realm of the gods of light, or of the dark gods, or might be an astral sea of the overworld.

GMs: Remember, wizards have Overworld Advantage!

SKILL CHALLENGES

- A servitor of the god wants to talk to you about something important but there is a cultural or ecumenical misunderstanding, the difficulty to avoid the misunderstanding or to extricate yourself from it is: DC 20
- Avoiding weird phenomena of the overworld (holy balls of glowing color, strange mind-warping winds, rivers of souls, etc): DC 20
- Sailing on the astral sea, and getting to your destination without too much fuss: DC 20
- A native creature is interested in you, and you need to avoid its unwelcome attention: DC 25
- Impersonating a demi-god from some far off place, or disguising yourself as an obscure god (“*What do you mean you’ve never heard of me... I’m, erm, Kzaniel—lesser angel of lost cats*”): DC 25, and the deception won’t hold up for long, but maybe just long enough to fast-talk your way into somewhere
- Sneaking into a god’s domain undetected: DC 30
- Talking to the manifestation of your god and not looking like a total fool in front of the deity that you serve: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Lightning bolt +15 vs PD—2d10 holy and lightning damage

Psychic wind +20 vs MD (the whole party)—2d10 psychic damage

Attack by divine pests (a nest of axiomatic serpents, a swarm of celestial bees, a flock of heavenly avians, etc) +25 vs AC (1d3 adventurers)—4d6 damage (probably holy damage, and maybe other damage types depending which god’s home you are nearest)

RUINS OF A PAST AGE

These could be the grey towers, the ruins on the Lamphaven islands, or perhaps even the Oldwall.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Deciphering writing in a lost language: DC 20
- Realizing that the golden idol is the trigger for a trap: DC 20
- Locating a path that avoids the traps: DC 25
- Avoiding the tribe of monsters who live in or near the ruins: DC 25
- Route-finding through a labyrinth of tunnels: DC 30
- Impersonating a god and intimidating the intelligent monsters who worship whatever used to live here: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Unstable floor +15 vs PD (1d3 adventurers)—3d6 damage from falling (an extra +1d4 damage if there are spikes or sharp objects at the bottom, and maybe +1d4 poison damage from scorpions)

Angry ghost +20 vs MD—2d8 ongoing psychic damage and the target is confused and attacks their allies (save ends both)

Huge rolling stone +25 vs AC (the whole party)—4d6 damage

SHORES OF THE IRON SEA

The Iron Sea hates the land, and batters it with a supernatural ferocity.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Finding the ancient ship tossed atop the Sea Wall ages ago: DC 20
- Locating a temple to a forgotten god, hidden in the Sea Wall: DC 25
- Finding shelter on the beach, when the tide comes in or a storm rises: DC 25; 2d10 damage if the skill check is failed by 10, 3d10 damage if the skill check is failed by 20+
- Giving an offering to the Iron Sea that will allow you to pass to the Isle of Fire: DC 30
- Swimming in the Iron Sea: DC 30, and you’d better get back onto dry land fast before it tries to drown you.

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

The Iron Sea’s whispering wind +15 vs MD (the whole party)—1d6 psychic damage and the target is dazed until after their next rest.

Carnivorous rock pool +20 vs AC/PD/MD—3d10 damage (probably untyped damage, maybe poison damage, but who knows it might be acid or lightning too)

Dragged out, battered, and drowned by the Iron Sea +25 vs PD—1d6 damage and the Iron Sea makes a 2nd attack that does 2d6 damage, and if that hits it makes a 3rd attack that does 3d6 damage, and if that hits it makes a 4th attack that does 4d6 damage... and so on. After each attack the person being tossed against the shore by the angry ocean may make a DC 30 skill check to desperately cling to a rock and crawl back to dry land

STRANGE CITY

This city might be high in the Overworld, deep in the underground realms, or even in another realm of existence.

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Navigating the city streets, without running into complications from pick-pockets, thugs, or local festivals: DC 20
- Avoiding the natural environmental strangeness of the city: DC 20; failure means that character is the target of a *strange storm* attack
- Bluffing a city guard: DC 25
- Gaining an audience with the ruler or rulers of the city: DC 25; failing forwards probably means that you'll have to speak to several underlings first
- Navigating the sewers or other secret ways of the city: DC 30
- Sneaking into or breaking out of somewhere forbidden (city treasury, gateway to other realms, a prison for demigods): DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Strange storm +15 vs AC or PD or MD—3d6 damage, the damage type depends on where the strange city is (a city on the plane of fire might have fire storms, a city on an astral sea might have psychic storms, an underground city might have rock falls)

Elemental runes +20 vs PD—3d10 damage (definitely cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage)

Psychic barrier +25 vs MD (the whole party)—4d6 psychic damage

TOWER TO THE OVERWORLD

This magical tower reaches far up into the Overworld itself, and surrounding its upper floors are buildings built on clouds, the roosts of fantastical beasts, and a dock for flying ships. This tower might be the Cathedral itself, a

tower in Horizon, the tower of the Blue in Drakkenhall, or a wizard's tower in a place far away from any city.

GMs: Remember, wizards have Overworld Advantage!

SKILL CHALLENGES

- Convincing a guard that you are supposed to be here: DC 20
- Getting past a magical force-field or other similar arcane or divine barrier: DC 20
- Climbing the outside of the tower: DC 25, failing leads to 2d20 falling damage as the adventurer grabs hold of a window ledge and wrenches their arm.
- Dealing with strange creatures of the overworld: DC 25
- A visitation from a demi-god or otherworldly being requires special etiquette: DC 30
- Navigating a flying ship through a storm: DC 30

TRAPS AND OTHER DANGERS

Magical field +15 vs PD or MD—1d20 damage (probably holy or force damage)

Magical storm +20 vs AC or PD (1d3 adventurers)—2d10 damage (probably force damage, definitely thunder and lightning damage)

Miss: 1d8 damage.

Magical rune trap +25 vs PD—2d20 damage (probably force or holy damage, maybe both)

THE END!

Though dangers untold the adventurers have finally reached their destination.

DIASASTER?

The adventurers have failed, and despite their best efforts the Darkskye Diamond has ended up in the hands of somebody undesirable. Maybe the party tried to hide it, destroy it, or threw it away only to discover that course of action played right into the hands of an icon—or maybe the adventurers just failed in their quest and their enemies took the diamond.

Never fear. There is always epic tier to put things right in, and a failure now sets up the epic conflict for levels 8-10. The adventurers will still have a powerful patron, a powerful enemy, and a quest. Saving the world is just going to take a little bit longer and be a little bit harder than if they had succeeded.

TRIVMPH!

The adventurers have taken the Darkskye Diamond to the icon that they believe should have it.

The party receives the rewards that they are due (see the *destinations, motivations, rewards* section) and receive high praise from the icon. Of course now the adventurers are recognized as players on the world stage, and are closely aligned with an icon—that means that that icon's enemies have just become their enemies. Epic tier will likely involve striking at their patron's enemies and helping to usher in a new age.

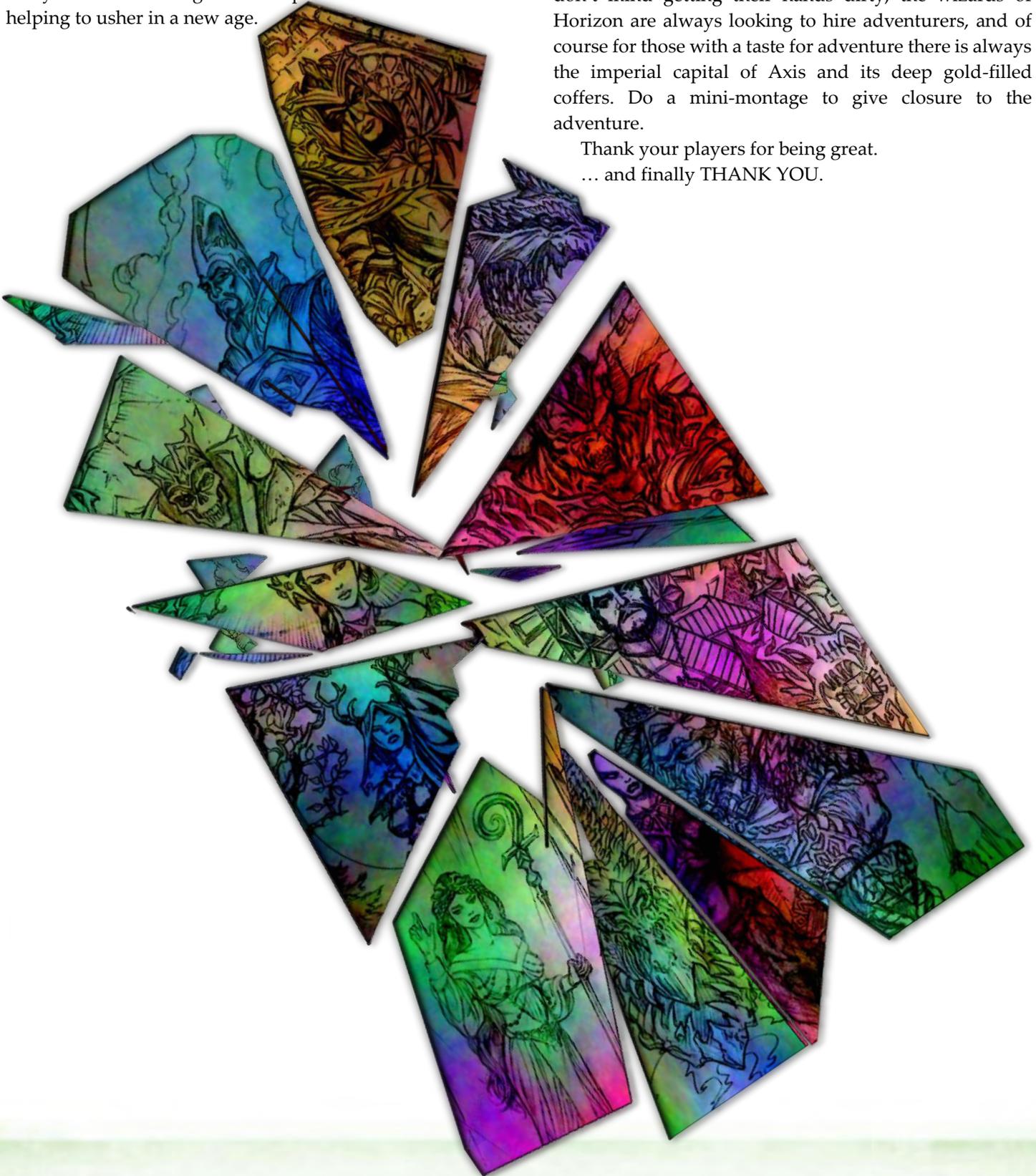
THIS CONCLUDES THE ADVENTURE!

Success or failure, the party are recognized by one and all as mighty heroes of renown.

Go around the table and ask each player what their adventurer does next, and where they plan to go. There are rumors of jobs for adventurers in Drakkenhall who don't mind getting their hands dirty, the wizards of Horizon are always looking to hire adventurers, and of course for those with a taste for adventure there is always the imperial capital of Axis and its deep gold-filled coffers. Do a mini-montage to give closure to the adventure.

Thank your players for being great.

... and finally THANK YOU.



APPENDIX: MAGIC ITEMS

The following magic items might be found at any point in the adventure. You can find more magic items in the 13TH AGE core rule book and the BOOK OF LOOT.

GMs: Remember to mention that items are alive and have personalities, so that characters using magic items can have personality quirks if they wish. If you have more items than your level, then your items take over and you become a vehicle for their personalities!

CHAIN ARMOR OF IRON WILL

The steel links of this heavy chain armor have an opalescent quality that reflects light around the wielder in a splay of muted colors, which some claim represent the gods' dominions. Whatever the case, the armor does bolster the mental defenses of its wearer.

+1 AC and MD (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

Quirk: Prone to abstract speculation.

SUPPLE BOOTS OF THE SLIPPERY EEL

These soft boots are made from the skin of the giant black eels that live among the Wake Islands in the Midland Sea. The eel skin soles are surprisingly resilient and surprisingly slick.

+1 to disengage checks.

Add your Dexterity modifier to your disengage checks.

Quirk: Loves puns.

ELVEN CLOAK

Each elven cloak, often called a "forestfold cloak," is said to be sewn by the handmaidens of the Elf Queen and holds the memory of her forest court within its threads.

+1 to PD (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

Add +10 to checks to remain hidden in natural surroundings.

Quirk: Prefers the finest things in life; of course, they are elven.

HELM OF THE UNDAUNTED HERO

Those who have the will to follow the Crusader can do anything, many of their helms become imbued with their endless courage. Many of them also don't have owners anymore.

+1 to MD (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

Recharge 6+ (after save roll): At the start of your turn, you can roll a save against one ongoing save ends effect as a free action. Make the recharge roll immediately after you use the power instead of during your next short rest.

Quirk: Favors traditional battle hymns.

SHIELD OF PROTECTION

This stout kite shield bearing the likeness of the Great Gold Wyrm once belonged a paladin who fought beside the Gold in a past age.

Enemies engaged with you take a -1 attack penalty against your allies.

Quirk: Tends to others with too much familiarity.

SYMBOL OF GATHERED POWER

This odd symbol has a different precious gemstone forming each of its three prongs.

Recharge with full heal-up: During a short rest, you can regain an expended daily adventurer level spell.

Quirk: One-track mind.

WEAPON OF VENGEANCE

This brutal-looking weapon oozes emotional violence and anger, and it's obvious that its sole design is to harm others. The simple but effective styling is a common element among the barbarian weaponsmiths who create such weapons to fight for or against the Orc Lord.

[Melee weapon]

+1 bonus to attacks and damage (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

While you are staggered, you deal +1d6 damage with attacks that hit using this weapon.

Quirk: Quick to take offense.

HAUGHTY WEAPON

Two types of these weapons are known to have been created: those designed for the imperial soldiers against the creatures of the Wild, and those designed for the servants of the Wild against the agents of the Empire. In either case, these weapons are highly effective at taking down enemy leaders.

[Ranged weapon]

+1 bonus to attack and damage (champion tier: +2; epic tier: +3).

When you hit an enemy with this weapon, if it's the most dangerous foe in the battle (or tied for most dangerous, GM's assessment), you deal +1d3 damage to it (champion: +2d3, epic +3d3).

Quirk: Challenges others to improvised contests.

POTIONS AND OILS

Not as permanent as a true magic item, but also less likely to possess you or get you killed by others who seek your precious treasure.

[standard action to use, consumable]

- Adventurer-tier healing potions (2): Heal using a recovery + 1d8 hp (max 30 hp).
- Adventurer tier potion of fire resistance: Gain fire resistance for rest of battle. Attacker must roll natural 16+ or fire attack deals only half damage.
- Adventurer tier magic oil: Until end of battle, an item oil is applied to gains a +1 bonus. For armor: +1 AC. For weapon or implement: +1 to attack and damage. This does not stack with bonuses from magic items.

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