

# Trail of the Apprentice

an all-ages adventure path



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# Trail of the Apprentice

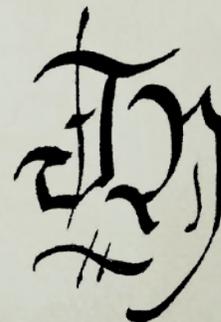
INTRODUCTION	2
PART 1: THE BANDIT'S CAVE	4
PART 2: THE KING'S CURSE	44
PART 3: THE THIEVES' DEN	88
PART 4: THE ORACLE'S TEST	126
PART 5: THE WIZARD'S DUNGEON	176
APPENDICES	232
APPENDIX 1: THE LAND OF TERRALIEN	234
APPENDIX 2: MONSTERS OF TERRALIEN	252
APPENDIX 3: CHARACTERS OF TERRALIEN	264
APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS	286

# What You Will Find Inside Trail of the Apprentice

Long has the dreaded Sorceress slumbered in her enchanted prison, but at long last her power-hungry apprentice is ready to release her evil once more upon the land! His plan starts small, with a seemingly minor theft of a dusty relic kept by a small-town scholar. As your heroes chase down the bandit gang responsible, the trail leads to a mysterious museum in a nearby city where the relic's mate is also stolen and a terrible curse unleashed. The PCs must seek the aid of a rival faction in the criminal underworld to expose their shadowy foes. Fending off ambushes by their adversaries and uncovering the ancient ruins of a fallen kingdom, a blind oracle holds the secret to the identity of the dread disciple of the Sorceress and the place where he will consummate his plan, guiding them to the dreaded Shadescar Rift, a chasm that leads down to the dark tunnels of Kimmeros, the lands below the surface world. In this shunned place, the boundaries between worlds have worn thin and the heroes must unravel the secrets of a deadly dungeon within its depths infused with the magic of many planes. Only by surviving its challenges can they open the magical portal and take the fight to the villains to end the threat to their kingdom once and for all!

*The Trail of the Apprentice* is an adventure saga taking characters from 1st to 5th level with a series of interconnected adventure modules for the 5th Edition of the world's most famous roleplaying game! These adventures, including *The Bandit's Cave*, *The King's Curse*, *The Thieves' Den*, *The Oracle's Test*, and *The Wizard's Dungeon*, can be played independently but are ideally suited as an epic series for fledgling heroes rising up to save the kingdom they call home. They can be further enhanced with the bonus campaign material in the appendices of this book and in other **Legendary Beginnings** products from Legendary Games, exciting adventures and accessories suitable for all ages, but specially designed for those new to roleplaying and those on the younger side. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, allowing you to enliven and enrich your campaign in amazing and exciting ways. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

- Jason Nelson



# FOREWORD

Welcome to the *Trail of the Apprentice*! What you're reading is the realization of a dream. It is the culmination of almost seven years of thinking, planning, and writing. To say that this has been a personal project for me really is an understatement.

You see, I've been a gamer—specifically, a roleplaying gamer—for as long as I remember. Actually, I've been a gamer for longer than I can remember, because there was a time when I didn't know what a gamer was. I don't remember exactly how old I was when I first encountered roleplaying games, but I think I was about ten years old. Since both of my parents worked, in the afternoons, I would hang out with a family up the street until my folks picked me up. It was kind of a baby-sitter situation, but I was there with several kids and we spent the afternoons playing games and pretending the woods behind the house were faraway places, like the jungles of South America or Dagobah.

One afternoon, my friend suggested that we play this game called Dungeons & Dragons. He brought out this boxed set (I honestly don't remember the color) and we played an adventure in which we killed a dragon. I remember seeing these cool maps with hexes on them and wondering what secrets my friend knew about the world that I didn't because I was just a player. Later on, we played different kinds of games, like Boot Hill, Top Secret, Star Frontiers, and Car Wars. The thing I remember most was the sense of possibility I got from those games—the idea that I could do or be anything I could imagine. No other game gave me that kind of freedom.

For some reason, I never bought or asked for the games, myself, so when my family moved away from that neighborhood, I left them behind. But it didn't take long before I found RPGs again. In 1989, TSR published the second edition of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons. My friends and I had been experimenting with a set of rules we'd found in a book by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, but we instantly jumped

into AD&D and spent the rest of high school taking over a certain popular campaign setting.

Those are my earliest memories of gaming. Even though my parents worried that I was spending too much time with my head in these games, RPGs were a critical part of my formative years. They allowed me to explore ideas, encouraged me to research new topics, and introduced me to people I would never have met anywhere else. And, ultimately, RPGs have given me the opportunity to write things that people like you are reading and, hopefully, enjoying.

When I became a father in 2002, I knew that I would introduce my little girls to RPGs as soon as I could. We have played different games over the years, but when we started playing Pathfinder, I decided that I wanted to write something that might allow my daughters, and other people's daughters and sons, to experience roleplaying the way I did when I was a kid. I wanted to present adventures where the player characters are clearly the heroes facing off against bad guys and monsters. Eventually, I found myself on this trail.

*Trail of the Apprentice* is a story about heroes taking up a call to action because it's the right thing to do. There are challenges, with the successes and failures that come with them, and not all of those challenges require strength of arm to overcome. There are chances to work together with friends and opportunities to put a single character's abilities in the spotlight. If they succeed, the player characters can track down a villain and protect a kingdom from terrible danger.

That kingdom, Threll, and the surrounding area are drawn from my own childhood. The woods, rivers, and other places your characters will travel are influenced by places where I spent many hours. I am excited and grateful to be able to share this world with you. In turn, I hope that you will enjoy sharing it with your friends and family, too.

*Trail of the Apprentice* is dedicated to my wife, Helen, and my daughters, Tatiana and Natasha, who inspire me to always look for the hero inside.

Paris E. Crenshaw, III



1



**M**olly dodged one orc's clumsy swing and raised her shield to fend off another's blade. The force of the strike made her teeth rattle. She clenched her jaw and growled. "You can blast them anytime you're ready, Tyrea!"

"I can't use that spell! I'd risk hitting you!" The elf scanned the room, judging distances between her, her opponents, and her allies.

"Probably wouldn't hurt more than all of that pottery falling on me. Besides, we need to even these odds or getting singed will be the least of our worries."

Tyrea heard thudding footsteps in the tunnel behind her and spun to one side, smacking the charging orc on the back of his head as he rushed past. The brute went sprawling and crashed into a comrade. They stumbled together toward the middle of the room, away from Molly. "Right!"

The wizard extended her hands outward, spreading her fingers wide, and spoke ancient words of magic. Brilliant flames suddenly lit up the room and the orcs howled in pain. Two of the bandits fell to the ground.

"There now," said the warrior as she hefted her sword. "I like these odds a little better."

# THE BANDIT'S CAVE

# What You Will Find Inside The Bandit's Cave

The people of Corbin Village are hardy folk, familiar with the dangers of the region. But when a band of orcs raids the village, Sheriff McBride realizes she has more troubles than she can handle and calls on a group of heroes to bring the orcs to justice. To complicate matters, the orcs have stolen an item of great historical value from the local sage, and he wants it back. Can the PCs survive the dangers of a nearby marsh and locate the bandits' hidden lair? If they do, can they take down the orc raiders and recover the sage's precious statue?



# THE BANDIT'S CAVE

*The Bandit's Cave* is a short adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 1st-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into two parts, and each part is designed to be run within a few hours. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 2nd level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

*The Bandit's Cave* is the first adventure in a mini-campaign entitled *Trail of the Apprentice*. A campaign is a series of adventures that are connected by a larger plot. You might think of a campaign as a television series, in which each adventure is like a different episode of the series. This campaign will play out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level. Game Masters can use this adventure on its own, as the beginning of *Trail of the Apprentice* or to kick off their own campaigns.

The story is set in the area around the village of Corbin. In the assumed setting, Corbin is part of the kingdom of Threll, located on the Terrallien continent of the planet Aeva. This module provides enough information to run the entire adventure, but is designed to be portable. As the GM, you can use it “as is” or set it in any setting you choose.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Moresby County, in the kingdom of Threll, rests on the northern banks of the Imlenite

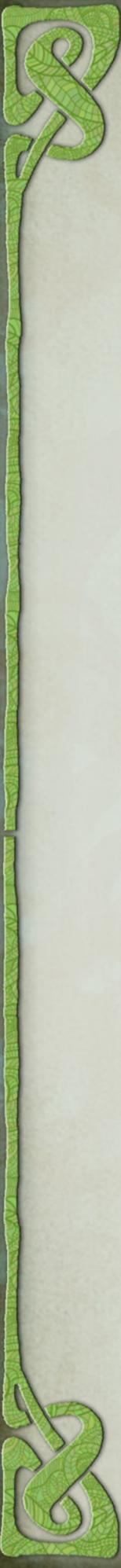
## FAMILY GAME NIGHT

One design goal for the *Trail of the Apprentice* adventures is to provide modules that an adult can quickly and easily prepare for use in a “family game night.” The adventures are designed to be appropriate for younger audiences, and our hope is that families will use these games to run at home, just as they would play board games or card games.

The adventures contain more straightforward plots with clear objectives. Killing monsters and fighting “the bad guys” is a big part of most fantasy RPGs, so we didn’t take that out, but we’ve kept the themes lighter and presented situations in which the player characters are heroes facing enemies who are obviously bad guys. The adventures’ challenges also present opportunities for teamwork and for individual players to shine.

Throughout the module, sidebars like this will give advice on running this adventure and on how to use the ideas presented here to build adventures of your own. Together with the presented combat maps and simplified stat blocks, this advice should make it quick and easy for the Game Master to prepare and start running each *Trail of the Apprentice* adventure.

River. The people of Moresby County are mainly farmers who sell their goods in the surrounding communities or to merchants who use the river to transport them elsewhere. The most active river port in Moresby County is the village of Corbin.



Several months ago, a group of orcs traveled out of the Westwatch Mountains and settled into Moresby County, where they have conducted occasional raids on merchants passing through the area. The county government knows about the bandit activity but has not yet put a stop to the raids.

The orcs attack at dusk, so word doesn't get to a town's sheriff until long after the bandits are gone. They also don't conduct attacks very often and don't always attack in the same area. Although people have been hurt in these bandit raids, the orcs don't seem to have a very large force, so the king's advisors don't see them as dangerous enough to assign a large team of soldiers to the task of stopping them. The lack of action, however, has allowed the orc threat to become even more serious.

An evil wizard named Belazeel contacted the orcs' leader, Gorocs, and hired the bandits to steal something from the sage who lives in Corbin Village. Gorocs is not very creative, even for an orc, and has decided to raid the town, let his bandit bandits take what they can, and steal the item from the sage during the chaos created by the raid. Belazeel offered the orcs a lot of money for the the item, so Gorocs decided the risk is worth the reward.

The sage, Ithamar Ruggles, is a wizard and a historian. He possesses a strange artifact believed to be from Threll's ancient past: a statue of green jade carved to look like a snake whose twisted body looks something like a corkscrew resting on a flat base. On the outer edges of the spiraling crystal are carved runes in a language Ithamar has yet to decipher. Belazeel wants that statue for his own purposes, and he has paid dearly to get it.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins in the village of Corbin, where the characters might be resting at the local inn. They might instead be village locals who have yet to start their lives as adventurers. However they come to be there, the heroes are in Stone's Ordinary, the village tavern, when the orcs attack the village. Springing into action, the player characters must defeat one group of orcs before the rest of the raiding party withdraws from the town, taking their stolen prizes with them. The PCs are asked to track down the bandits and put a stop to any further raids. The local sage, Ithamar Ruggles, also asks them to recover the Green Serpent, a statue that was taken from his house.

The characters must follow the orcs' trail, which leads them into the swamp known as Tiller's Marsh. After braving the dangers of the swamp, the heroes find the orcs' hideout. Inside a hidden cave, the PCs must overcome the remaining orc bandits, traps and other dangers before facing Gorocs in his lair. If they succeed, the heroes can recover many of the town's lost possessions and end the threat the bandits have posed to travelers in Moresby County. Both of these accomplishments earn them rewards and praise from the leaders of Corbin.

The heroes will not be able to find Ithamar's statue in Gorocs' hoard, though, because the orc handed over the package to Belazeel's hawk familiar in accordance with the wizard's instructions. Instead, the PCs discover the gold that Belazeel paid the bandits to get the statue. The treasure chest also contains a note explaining the orcs' mission, signed only with a mysterious letter "B."

The PCs can learn from Ithamar Ruggles that the Green Serpent's sister, a nearly identical statue called the White Serpent, is held in the private collection of a nobleman living in the nearby city of Port Fairglade. If this mysterious "B" person wants one statue, it is likely that he will try to get the other, as well. This knowledge could set the characters on the course for an urban adventure, in which they might learn more about their hidden foe and why he wants these statues.

### STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players have created their characters, are gathered around the gaming table and are ready to begin, start by reading the text below. When you've finished reading, set up the first combat area, either by hand-drawing the scene on a battle mat with dry- or wet-erase markers or using a printed copy of the combat map.

*As you are enjoying each other's company in the common room of Stone's Ordinary, your conversation is interrupted by the sound of a bell ringing outside in the village square. The bell rings for a few moments, followed by a man's voice shouting a warning.*

*"To arms! To arms! Raiders inside the palisade!" The man repeats his warning, then begins ringing the bell again.*

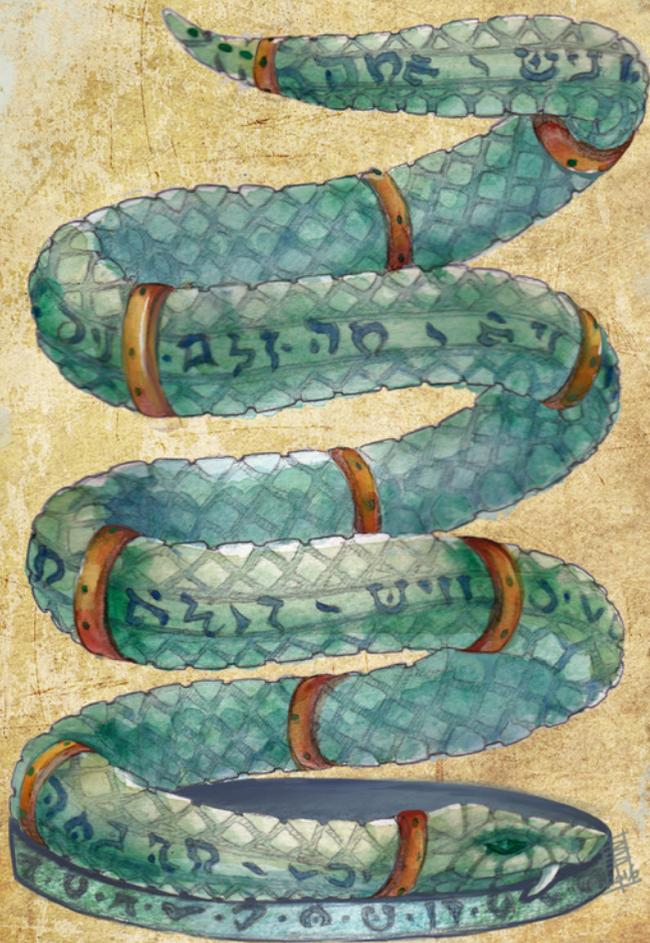
*While the elders and the children in the Ordinary move to the back of the common room, away from the door, many of the villagers move toward the door, preparing to defend themselves and the village from the raiders.*

Once the PCs move outside, continue describing the action in the town square:

*To the east, the village's main gate would normally be closed to fend off an attack like this. Now, it is wide open and blocked by a covered wagon with several arrows sticking out of its side. A few villagers are trying to shove the wagon out of the way so they can close the gate, but they are not having any luck.*

*They aren't getting any help, either, because most people are busy running for their lives or fighting bravely against several big, green-skinned humanoids. The sight of these man-like creatures with their yellowed tusks jutting up from their lower jawbones, quickly reveals what is happening.*

*Corbin village has been invaded by orcs!*



Players can attempt a **Intelligence (Nature)** checks to determine what they know about orcs. Succeeding on a DC 8 check tells the players that orcs are brutish humanoids who have darkvision. They are rarely found within Threll's borders but are more common in the nearby Westwatch Mountains. Characters with proficient in **Intelligence (Nature)** whose check result is 13 or higher also know that orcs are ferocious fighters who are mobile and ferocious in a fight (explain to the players that orc's aggressive special trait allows them to maneuver around the battlefield very quickly).

### FIGHT!

Although you can spend as much time as you like letting the players introduce their characters and speak with some of the town's other residents, starting an adventure with an initial combat scene is a good way to get everyone involved. A combat encounter tells the players right away that it's time to settle down and focus on the game.

## PART I: ATTACK ON CORBIN VILLAGE

While the town's militia fights off most of the orcs, the heroes must prevent a group of the bandits from breaking into the weapon smith's shop and stealing high quality swords and other weapons that would make them stronger in a future raid.

By the time the PCs arrive on the scene, militia members are already starting to engage the enemy. The characters can see a

wagon just inside the northern gate. Start by describing how a battle rages through and around the town: Militia members are fighting two orcs near the cart, and there are several orcs menacing other villagers along the road to the village square. Most of the villagers are common laborers, simple men, women and children with no weapons or other means to defend themselves. These folk run away from the orcs until armed militia members arrive to help defend them. Militia members have some training and can manage most of the bandits, but it should be clear that the PCs need to help.

### 1A. WEAPON THIEVES (300 XP)

The PCs soon see three orcs heading for the weaponsmith's shop:

*Across the square, three orcs are trying to force their way into a house that is also the shop of Edwin Pierce, the village weapon smith. One orc is hacking at the door of the house with his axe, while three other orcs stand by, looking around for any villagers who might try to attack them. But it doesn't look like the town militia is coming any time soon.*

If the PCs do not recognize the danger, point out to them that the smith probably has good quality weapons stored in his shop. The bandits could use them against the villagers or anyone else in Moresby County if they aren't stopped. That should get them moving.

If it doesn't, tell the players that their characters can hear cries for help coming from inside the house. The smith locked his family inside to keep them safe while he went to fight with the militia. It's up to the PCs to defend the family from the orcs!

## ORC BANDITS (3)

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 13 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 15 (2d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the ore can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

### ACTIONS

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

### HOW TO BE AN ORC

There are two main things that everyone needs to remember when playing a tabletop RPG. First, you're playing a character in a make-believe world. Second, you're playing a game that's supposed to be fun.

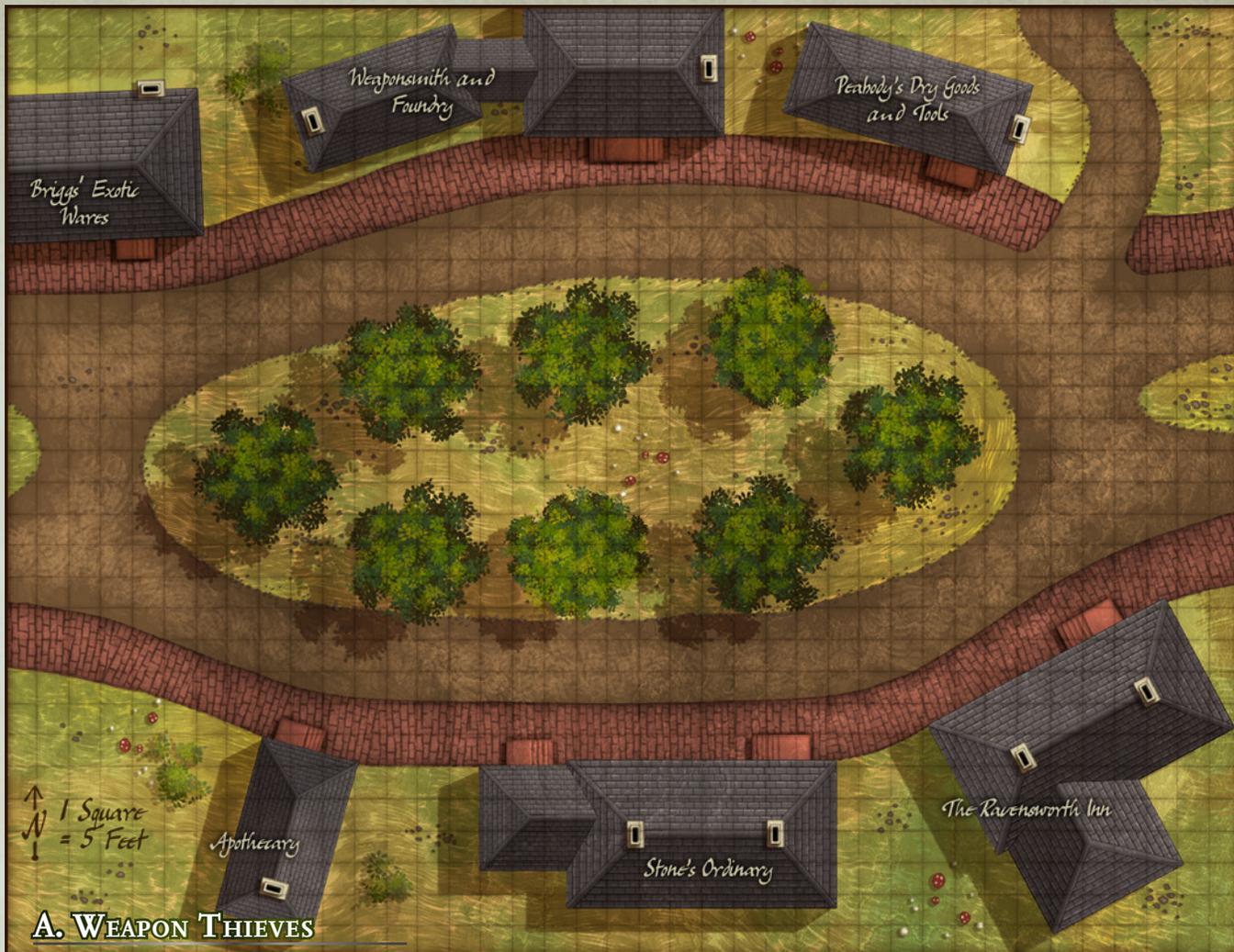
Many people who play RPGs want to portray a fantastic setting with an intricate plot and characters with deep motivations and a compelling back story. For gamers who have a lot of interest and experience in creating those elements, it is a big part of what makes playing RPGs fun. Other players may be more interested in developing and displaying tactical and strategic skills, but very few people start playing RPGs with that kind of experience. You need to keep that in mind, particularly if you are running games for young players.

In general, kids will respond more to a story if they are engaged in what is going on. Not every child—or adult, even—is going to enjoy listening to a long description of the scene. But most everyone will respond to a memorable, vividly portrayed character. Bringing those characters to life in a recognizable way is both a talent and a skill that good GMs develop over time.

An easy and fairly quick way to do this is to pick a single characteristic or mannerism that defines a character. Ithamar Ruggles may speak with an “old man’s” voice, while Sheriff McBride might have a much lower voice than most women. It’s up to you. Just do whatever is fun for you. If you’re having fun, the players will have more fun, too.

Gorocs’ orcs are big, mean, green-skinned brutes who take what they want and don’t think very much about anything. It’s okay for you to play them up as dumb and angry. You can even make it comical, switching from scary roars as the orcs attack to whimpers and cries as the PCs beat them up. The orcs don’t have to say anything at all during the fight, but if they do, things like “Me smash!” or “OW! You hurt Grunk’s head!” (spoken in a booming voice, of course) are perfectly fine.

Junior players will get into the action if you portray the orcs and any other characters using voices, facial expressions and hand gestures that make them entertaining and easy to recognize. Don’t be shy or embarrassed to give your characters your all. Your players will give it right back, and you’ll all have more fun.



After the battle ends, read the following:

*As the last of the orcs in the town either run away or fall to the villagers' blades, a few cheers go up around the square. Several militia members rush toward the gate, chasing the surviving orcs out of the village. Archers on the palisade fire arrows after the fleeing bandits, but the orcs quickly disappear into the dense foliage of the surrounding marsh.*

*The villagers pull the wagon all the way inside the walls and close the gate. For now, everyone is safe from further attack. Now, there is time to figure out what has happened and who needs healing.*

### EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Trail of the apprentice works best we feel using the milestone method of rewarding experience and gaining levels. Instead of tracking each individual number, concentrate more on the story and just level up each character at the conclusion of each adventure. You are certainly welcome to reward experience points as you go, whatever you and your players will have more fun with.

**Treasure:** As soon as it is clear that the danger has passed, Edwin Pierce finds the PCs and offers them his deepest thanks to the heroes for saving his family and his shop from the orc attackers. Edwin has no gold or jewels to give them, but he promises to make four melee weapons of their choice for free. A weapon may be expensive, but he considers these gifts the least he can give in return for saving the lives of his wife and children.

**Development:** Give the PCs a chance to heal themselves. If they have money to purchase healing, they can visit Brother Cyrus Beckwith, the local priest and apothecary, who makes and sells medicines. Brother Beckwith is busy helping many injured villagers but can also help the PCs. He charges 50 gold for potions of healing (2d4+2 hit points) and 50 gold for a cure wounds spell (1d8+3 hit points for his casting).

Once the PCs have had a chance to recover from the attack, Sheriff McBride invites them to join her in her office at the village guardhouse. When they arrive, read the following:

*Sheriff McBride settles into her chair and leans back, putting her hands on the top of her head. She closes her eyes and sighs deeply. After a moment, she opens them again and looks at each of you.*

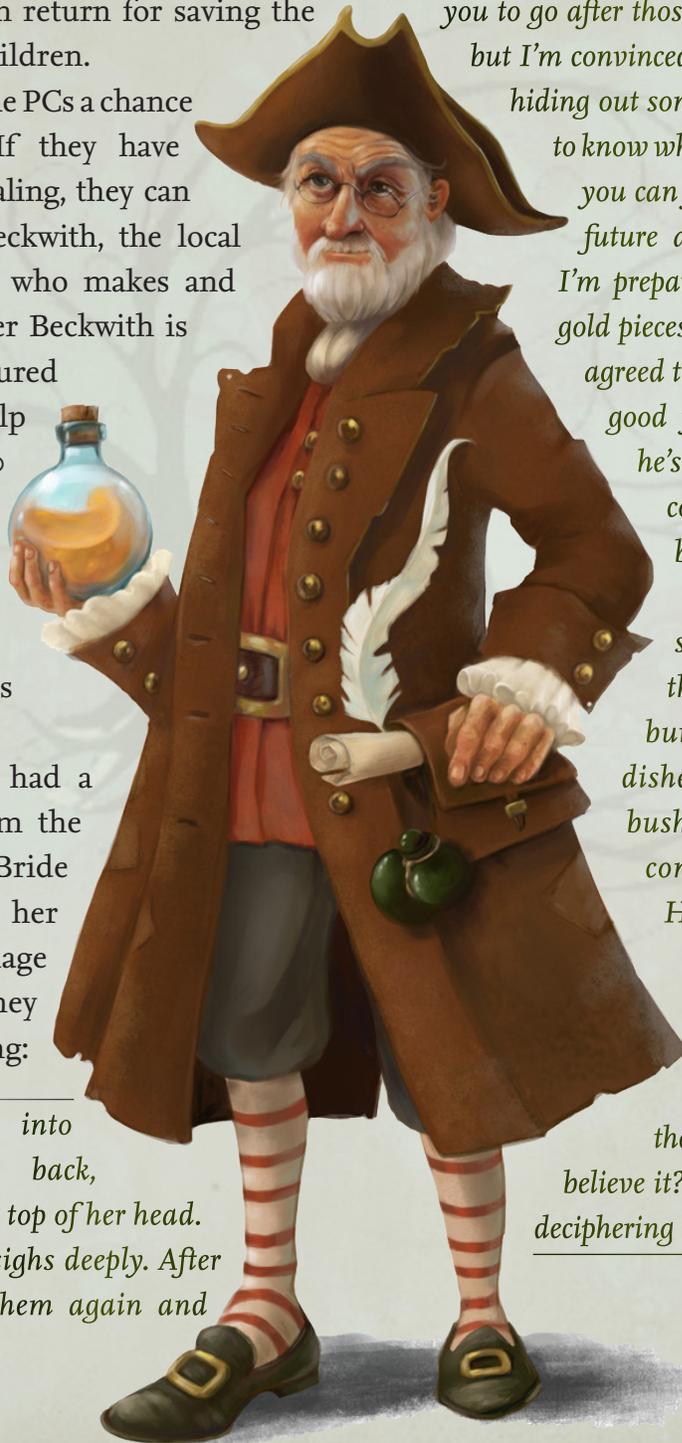
*“You all did very well, today. I am glad that you are friends of Corbin Village. Those orcs would have been harder to defeat were it not for you. The bandits could have stolen Pierce’s weapons, and who knows what would have happened to his family if you hadn’t helped.”*

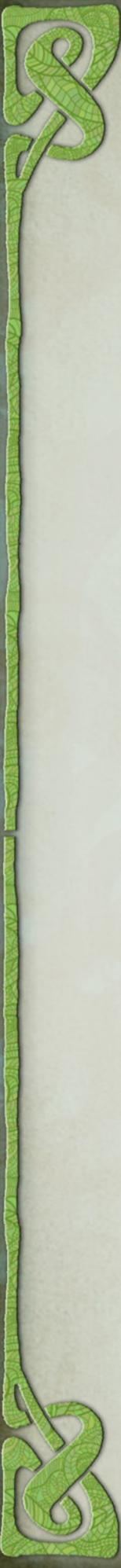
*The sheriff sits up and places her elbows on her desk.*

*“But now, I need to ask for your help, again. I want you to go after those orcs. We got some of them, but I’m convinced the ones who got away are hiding out somewhere nearby. I’d also like to know why they attacked the village. If you can figure that out and stop any future attacks in Moresby County, I’m prepared to pay each of you 100 gold pieces. Mayor Crump has already agreed to the reward. I told him how good you were in the fight, and he’s ready to pay you if you can come back with proof that the bandits have been defeated.”*

*The sheriff is about to say something else when the door to the guardhouse bursts open. A tall man with disheveled white hair and a bushy beard and mustache comes barging into the room. His long brown coat is covered in dust and what look like scraps of paper.*

*“Gone! It’s gone, Sheriff! Those brutes have taken the Green Serpent! Can you believe it? And I’m sure I was close to deciphering its purpose!”*





Once the man calms down, Sheriff McBride introduces him as Ithamar Ruggles, the town sage, who in turn explains that he was robbed during the raid. His house was ransacked and some items of value were taken. Although he would like to get back all of his belongings, he is most concerned that an item of particular historical importance was taken: a small, carved jade statue in the shape of a spiraling snake, with strange runes carved on the outer edges. He calls the statue the “Green Serpent.”

Ithamar has been trying to translate the runes for years. He always feels he is on the verge of discovering their meaning, but has yet to succeed. He still has his notes, including drawings of the statue, but they are worthless when compared to the statue, itself.

If the PCs ask for more information about the statue, Ithamar happily tells them that it seems to have been crafted by the people of an ancient civilization that once flourished in this part of the world. Oddly, the writing on the statue doesn’t match any known language, living or dead, that scholars have associated with the people of this continent. The exact meaning and purpose of the statue are unclear, but it was very intricately carved. It is obviously an item that some ancient, unknown civilization considered to be important, but he doesn’t know why. Ithamar can show the characters a picture of the statue, if they accompany him back to his home.

Sheriff McBride will interrupt Ithamar’s story and tell him that she was just offering the PCs the job of going after the bandits. Although she is mainly concerned with stopping any further bandit raids, she hopes that they can find the statue and the sage’s other belongings.

In return for recovering his belongings, Ithamar offers to cast spells for the PCs or to teach new spells to any wizards in the party. He is willing to cast or teach two 1st level spells or one 2nd level spell for each player if they bring back the Green Serpent and his other belongings.

When the party has finished negotiating with the Sheriff and Ithamar, they can move on to the next section. The party can rest for the night and start their search in the morning, after they have had a chance to recover their spells, if they wish. They will be better prepared to face the dangers of the swamp and will stand a better chance of surviving to find the bandit’s cave.

### TRACKING THE BANDITS

The first thing the PCs need to do is determine where the orcs went. The best way to do this is to follow their tracks back to their hideout. These orcs are not very smart and didn’t do a good job of covering those tracks, this time. The PCs might follow the trail the orcs left after raiding the town, but the orcs scattered after they got past the main gate. Finding the right tracks that lead into Tiller’s Marsh is difficult, requiring a DC 15 **Wisdom (Survival)** check.

If the PCs succeed in making this check, they can follow the tracks directly into the marsh and save valuable time. The PCs will still face the dangers of Tiller’s Marsh, but they might find the hidden entrance to the bandits’ cave before sunset. The orcs have darkvision, so they may have an advantage over PCs who arrive at night. If the PCs follow this trail, you can proceed to **encounter 1b**.

After each encounter in the swamp, the PCs must succeed on a DC 8 **Wisdom (Survival)** check to regain the orcs' trail. If they fail that check, add one hour to the time it takes to find the entrance to the bandits' cave. Keep track of how many hours have been added. If they are delayed by three or more hours, the PCs will arrive at **encounter 1e** after sunset.

If the PCs can't find the more difficult tracks, they still have a path to follow. The orcs stole the wagon they used to get into the town from a group of merchants. The PCs can follow those tracks to where the orcs attacked the merchants then pick up the bandits' trail into the swamp. Although following the wagon tracks requires only a DC 8 **Wisdom (Survival)** check, it will add a two hours to the PCs' journey, making it almost certain that they will arrive at the cave after nightfall.

The wagon trail leads a few miles down the main road to where the heroes find evidence of a battle.

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*The wagon's tracks change as you reach this part of the road. In places they become very deep, and veer off to one side, as though the cart stopped suddenly. The wheel tracks are surrounded by deep boot prints, like the ones made by the orcs' boots back in Corbin. There are also smaller tracks that seem very disorganized.*

---

Searching the area (and succeeding on a DC 8 **Intelligence (Nature)** check) reveals that the smaller tracks are probably those of the merchants who owned the cart. They appear to have survived the attack, and headed east, back toward Hagwatch Tower. If the players want to go after the merchants, inform them that even if the merchants are injured, they will be able to find healing and other

assistance from the knights who live at the Tower. The PCs should focus on following the orcs, instead.

The orcs' trail leads north, toward Tiller's Marsh. From here, the PCs will need to follow the tracks for about three miles through swampy terrain to catch the orcs. Along the way, the PCs must overcome a number of challenges before they find the bandits' hideout and take on the vicious orcs who attacked Corbin.

#### OVERLAND MOVEMENT

When your characters need to make a journey, you don't need to describe every step of the way. You don't even have to describe what happens on each day of the journey, if you don't want to. Going into that level of detail can get boring, even if you roll for random encounters at frequent intervals.

You can use challenges like the ones presented in this section to illustrate progress in an overland journey. Even if some encounters don't have anything to do with the reason for going on the journey, punctuating the trip with difficulties or events helps the players get a sense that the PCs are crossing great distances to achieve their goals. By giving them a few exciting or interesting things to do, the players will feel they're traveling without having to hear the mundane details of every step along the way.

## B. YOUNG ASSASSIN VINE



### 1B. YOUNG ASSASSIN VINE (200 XP)

The heroes first come upon an area overgrown with ivy (see the combat map provided). Hidden among the normal vines is a dangerous threat: an immature assassin vine. An assassin vine is a carnivorous plant that tries to strangle its prey. The vine can't move very fast, so it relies on its ability to magically animate normal plants and vines to entangle and hold its victims. This assassin vine is still young, so it doesn't have as many hit points, isn't as strong, and can't animate as many plants as a mature vine, but it can still be dangerous.

*The daylight dims as tree branches come together and form a canopy over the marsh. The air is filled with the smell of damp earth. At first, the only sounds are the creaking of branches, the rustling of leaves moved by a light breeze, and the buzzing of flying insects rushing by. Then, a soft splashing sound erupts nearby as a frog jumps into a pool of water.*

**Movement:** Walking through Tiller's Marsh isn't easy. Patches of land are covered in shallow bogs, which sometimes grow into deeper bogs. Bogs count as difficult terrain (moving through one square of bog costs 2 squares of movement). The PCs have to pick their way through the swamp along patches and pathways of dry ground to make progress.

Even dry ground can be difficult to pass when they become covered in thick undergrowth.

After you have given the players a sense of the creepiness of the swamp, have them roll **Wisdom (Perception)** checks. If one of the PCs overcomes the assassin vine's passive Stealth DC of 15, he will spot the dangerous plant, hiding among the normal vines. Check the results of the players' rolls, but don't tell them what they've seen, yet. First, read the following:

*A thick patch of ivy grows over the path, here, where the higher, dry ground passes between two old trees. The vines climb up the tree trunks, covering them in deep green leaves, just as they cover the ground at the base of the trees.*

PCs who succeed on the check see a thick vine, about the size of a child's arm, among the ivy. This vine's leaves are shaped like hands, and it twitches slightly, even though it should be

protected from any breeze that might move it. Allow players proficient in **Intelligence (Nature)** to attempt another check to identify the plant.

If they do not recognize the threat, or don't see the vine at all, the vine will attack the first character to pass through the patch of ivy between the two trees:

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*The leaves and vines around you suddenly begin squirming, twisting and thrashing. Some of them wrap around your legs, trying to grab you and pull you down. As you watch, one of the vines, thicker than the others, begins to wriggle and squirm toward you!*

---

The assassin vine begins by animating the surrounding ivy and trying to make passage difficult for its chosen prey. The plant is mindless, so it only knows that the first character is a potential food source. Any PC in the ivy patch sees the plants moving and must spend two squares of movement to move through one square.

The assassin vine will attempt to grab and strangle the first PC caught in the vines. If that PC gets free, it will pursue any other PC caught in the vines or the nearest PC that is not entangled. If it can get within 15 feet of a character, it will use its entangle ability on vines and even roots in the ground, to try and hold him. The vine isn't very fast, but the entangling vines around it can make this a challenging encounter.

### **ASSASSIN VINE CHALLENGE 1**

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Assassin Vine

Medium plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 25 (5d8 + 6)

**Speed** 5ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 12 (+1) 16 (+3) 1 (-5) 11 (+0) 6 (-2)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** blindsight 60ft.

**Condition Immunities** blinded, frightened, paralyzed, prone

**Damage Vulnerability** fire

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal vine.

**Animate Plants.** As a bonus action the assassin vine can animate normal plants within a 15 foot cube originating from it causing the area to become difficult terrain.

### **ACTIONS**

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**Constrict.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one

Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the assassin vine can't constrict another target.

**Treasure:** Half-buried in the dirt at the base of the tree lies a small silver statue of a Knight of Hagwath Tower, worth 20gp.



## ASSASSIN VINE TACTICS

The assassin vine can't move very fast and most characters who are paying attention—and make their Perception or Knowledge (nature) checks—can easily stay out of its way and either move past it or kill it with ranged weapons. However, don't forget that the plant can use its entangle ability as a free action **every round**. That means that it can move toward the nearest PC and then use its ability to move the area affected by its ability. By doing so, there's a chance that it can catch an unwary PC and hold him long enough to move over and try to strangle him.

## 1C. SWAMP GAS (100 XP)

*The ground in this part of Tiller's Marsh is uneven and scattered with muddy patches that sink down to form shallow pools of black water. The usual, earthy smell of the swamp is replaced by the unpleasant odor of rot. Thin, straight pine trees rise up from the ground and spread their roots through the earth. The trees that stand in the pools are either sickly or completely dead, drowned by the same water that once gave them life.*

Start this encounter by drawing or laying out the "Swamp Gas and Lizardfolk Attack" combat map and have all the players place their characters on the bottom of the map near the square marked with an X.

If you wish, you can scare the players a little by having them attempt DC 12 **Intelligence (Nature)** check to realize that this place would

be a perfect home for a black dragon. There is no dragon, of course, but the players don't know that.

**Hazard:** As the characters make their way through the swamp, a cloud of poisonous gas bubbles up from the muck. The cloud bursts through the surface of the pool at the spot on the map marked with a triangle and spreads to fill a 30-foot cube. The fumes are so strong that any creature in the cloud must succeed on a DC 12 **Constitution saving throw** or become poisoned.

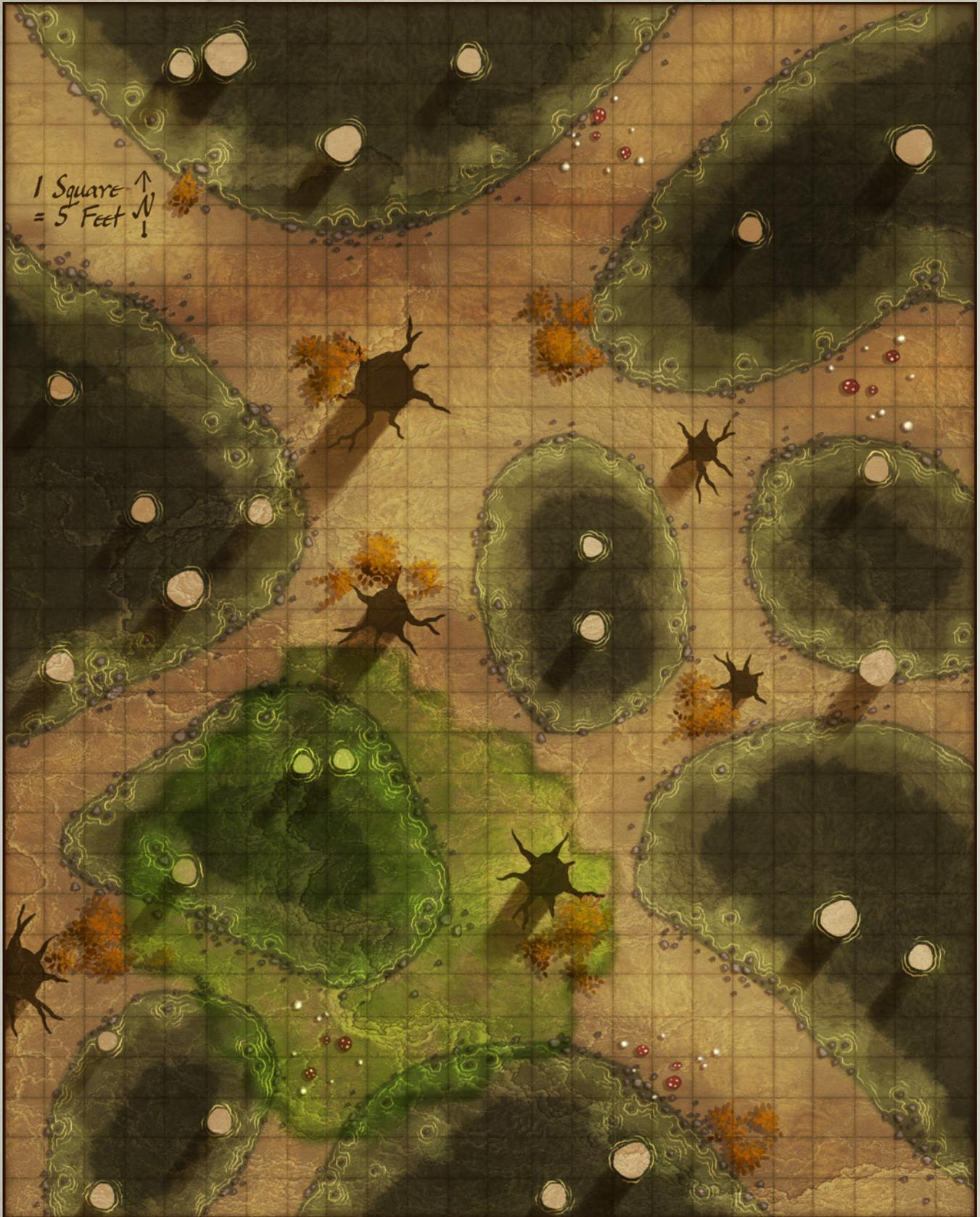
This condition lasts as long as the character is in the cloud and for 1d4+1 rounds after he leaves. (Roll separately for each poisoned character.) Any character that succeeds on his save but remains in the cloud must make a new Fortitude save each round on his turn. This is a poison effect. The cloud remains for 5 rounds before it naturally disperses and is no longer dangerous—although it still smells terrible.

PCs can make DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** checks to detect the terrible smell of rot and decay before they enter the cloud. Any PC proficient in **Intelligence (Nature)** can attempt a second DC 15 check to realize that the smell comes from poisonous gases and that the party should wait until the fumes have dispersed.

**Experience Award:** After the PCs have encountered the swamp gas hazard, divide the experience among the players, even if they were poisoned by the gas.

**Development:** If the PCs don't avoid the hazard, they might be at a disadvantage when they are discovered by the lizardfolk patrol in the next encounter.

C. SWAMP GAS AND LIZARDFOLK PATROL



PART 1: THE BANDIT'S CAVE



### 1.D. LIZARDFOLK PATROL (200 XP)

A small party of lizardfolk hunters is exploring Tiller's Marsh, hoping to start a new colony on the shores of Corbin's Creek. These lizardfolk are members of a cruel and evil tribe who would plague the people of Moresby County with great troubles if they establish a foothold in the area. They also know that anyone who finds them in the swamp may spread word of their presence and ruin their shaman's plans to take over the marsh. The hunters try to kill anyone they meet.

Unless the PCs were trying to be stealthy, the hunters noticed them just before the swamp released its gas cloud. Even if they were trying to be stealthy, the PCs' reaction to the poisonous fumes gave the lizardfolk plenty of clues about

their presence. Lizardfolk are familiar with the hazards of swamp gas. They hope that the PCs were poisoned by the cloud and plan to attack them in a moment of weakness, but they are nervous and will wait 1d6 rounds before attacking the party. Their hesitation may give sickened PCs a chance to recover before the lizardfolk attack.

*Suddenly, hisses and shrieks erupt from across the marsh. Two figures rise up from behind a small mound of dirt. They appear humanoid, but their skin is covered with dark scales highlighted with yellow stripes and blue patches, their long faces have mouths with sharp teeth and they have long, whip-like tails. They raise wicked-looking throwing spears and unleash more of their challenging shrieks as they prepare to attack!*

**Creatures:** The hunting party consists of 2 lizardfolk. PCs can identify these creatures by surpassing a DC 11 **Intelligence (Nature)** check. Characters who succeed know that lizardfolk are reptilian humanoids who have a tribal way of life and that they are known for eating their enemies. A check result of 15 or higher reveals that most lizardfolk tribes live far to the south and there are no tribes known to dwell in Tiller's Marsh. The real reason for the lizardfolks' presence here is a mystery the PCs may wish to investigate later.

### **LIZARDFOLK (2)**

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30ft., swim 30 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

15 (+2) 10 (+0) 13 (+1) 7 (-2) 12 (+1) 7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spiked Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** Each lizardfolk has a belt pouch containing crystals and semi-precious stones worth a total of 15 gold pieces.

**Development:** If the lizardfolk escape, they will return to their shaman with news that Tiller's Marsh is heavily defended by local settlers. The shaman may choose to investigate another swamp, or she may decide that she needs to build her tribe into a powerful army to take over the swamp by force. This could be the foundation for later adventures in and around Corbin.

If the PCs are heavily wounded after this fight, let them have a short or long rest. It is more important that they have fun than it is to impose a time limit on the adventure. If they do rest, however, the PCs arrive at the bandit's cave at night and will have to wait until morning if they wish to approach during the daytime.

### **1E. SAVING MALVIN DICKERSON (50 XP)**

The heroes come upon a local hunter named Malvin Dickerson, who fell into quicksand while following the tracks of a large boar. If the heroes save him, he can share useful information about the area.

The map shows the area around the quicksand, which is located in a deep ravine that was once the bed of a flowing creek. Over the years, the slow-flowing stream deposited silt into the ravine, creating an area of fine mud that can easily trap a person's feet and drag them down if they are not careful. Unfortunately, Malvin was paying more attention to the boar's tracks and thinking too much about the large meal he would have when he caught it. He stepped too close to the edge of the ravine and fell in.

The PCs arrive on the scene via the trail at the southern end of the map. Malvin is trapped in the mud in the square marked with a triangle.

## SCALING ENCOUNTERS

Although the Swamp Gas and Lizardfolk Patrol encounters represent two separate events, the effects of the gas can overlap with the lizardfolk attack. Combining a trap or hazard with a fight can add excitement and danger to an encounter, but it might also be too much for an inexperienced party or one that has been weakened by previous attacks.

As the GM, your job is to present challenging and entertaining encounters for your players. Sometimes, that requires adjusting an encounter “on the fly” to prevent a “total party kill” (TPK, for short). Since you don’t “win” the game by killing off all the player characters, you might want to scale this encounter to make it a little easier. Scaling an encounter means adjust how challenging it is, so the party has a chance to overcome it. Using options to scale an encounter in the middle of the game helps you keep it fun for everyone.

Before starting the lizardfolk attack, check to see how many characters are poisoned and how long those effects will last. Also think about how many hit points the characters have and how likely they are to defeat the lizardfolk in their current state. Do the PCs have good stats that would normally give them an edge over the lizardfolk? Are there more than four PCs? Have they shown a good use of tactics in previous fights? Factors like these can offset the effects of the swamp gas and make for a challenging, but not impossible, encounter.

However, if your PCs have been weakened by previous battles, their key ability scores are not very high, or most of them failed their saves and are poisoned, hitting them with a full-on attack might be too much for them. In that case, you can delay the lizardfolks’ attack until the PCs are closer to recovering from the gas. You might even decide the lizardfolk have been affected by swamp gas, too, and give them the poisoned condition.

On the other hand, if you think the encounter will be too easy for the PCs, you can add one or more lizardfolk to the encounter. For defeating 3 lizardfolk, the party should receive 300 XP. For defeating 4 lizardfolk, the reward is 400 XP.

---

A narrow animal trail passes through thick undergrowth in this part of the marsh. Up ahead, the pathway opens into what may be a clearing. A thin breeze blows through, carrying the rustling of leaves and small branches, but also the faint sounds of a man’s voice.

“Help! Please, can anyone hear me? Please help! I’m sinking!”

---

The PCs need to move forward to the edge of the ravine to investigate.

---

*The animal trail doesn’t open into a clearing. Instead, it branches to the left and right, along the edge of a ravine that is perhaps twenty feet deep. The sides are very steep and look slippery. A pool of muddy water lies directly below where the trail branches, but most of the ravine is filled with dark brown mud.*

*In the ravine, a man is up to his chest in the muck. He struggles weakly to free himself, although he doesn’t seem to be sinking very fast. He sees you and waves his arm.*

*“Oh, thank goodness!” he cries. “Please help me. I’ve been here for hours, already. I can’t feel my legs, and it’s getting hard to breath.”*

---

Malvin has been in the quicksand with the mud squeezing his legs for so long that they’ve gone numb. He cannot get out on his own. The PCs need to help him, but have to figure out how. Let the players improvise and come up with ideas of their own, but if they need some help, you can suggest some of the options below, most of which require the PCs to get to the other side of the ravine, first.

**Crossing the Ravine:** If the PCs need to jump or make some kind of bridge to get across the ravine, there is a chance they will fall into the mud, as well. Jumping across requires a DC 15 Dexterity (**Acrobatics**) check, because the

## D. SAVING MALVIN DICKERSON



undergrowth prevents the PCs from getting a running start of 10 feet. The PCs can spend a minute to clear enough of the bushes for a 10-foot running start. Another option is to throw a grappling hook to the other side and try to snag a bush or tree. Let the players talk through a solution. Malvin definitely needs help, but the PCs have a little time to figure things out.

**Toss a rope and pull him out:** If they have a rope, the PCs can tie one end into a ball and throw it to Malvin by making a ranged attack roll against Armor Class 5 to get the rope to Malvin's. If they miss the end of the rope is out of his reach. If they succeed the rope lands beside or in front of Malvin and he can reach

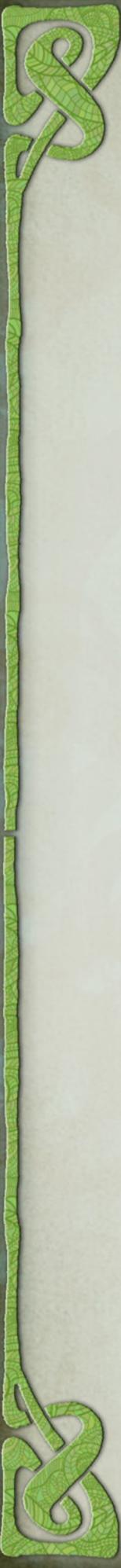
it. They can always pull the rope back and try again.

Once the Malvin has the rope, the PCs need to make a DC 13 **Strength** check and Malvin needs to make a DC 8 **Strength** check to pull him 5 feet closer to the edge of the ravine. Malvin has a Strength score of 12, giving him a +1 modifier to his check.

Unlike the rules for normal quicksand, Malvin does not sink beneath the mud. Instead, he gets a little more stuck, adding +2 to the DC of the next **Strength** check. These penalties add up, so failing too many times will eventually make it impossible to get Malvin out without help from the villagers. If the players think to have Malvin tie the rope around his chest, he cannot fail his **Strength** check and does not risk getting more stuck.

If the PCs can get Malvin to the edge of the ravine, they can pull him up the cliff. Malvin needs to make a DC 10 **Strength (Athletics)** check. Because he is weakened from his long stay in the mud, he has disadvantage on the check. If he fails the check by 5 or more, Malvin falls back into the mud and gets stuck, again. If Malvin has the rope tied around his chest, the PCs can just pull him up the cliff with another DC 15 Strength check.

**Lower a long branch so Malvin can pull himself out:** This only works if the PCs first cross the ravine. In this case, the PCs need to make a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find a branch that is strong enough to pull Malvin out of the mud. Using the branch



follows the same rules as if the party were using a rope, except that Malvin cannot tie the branch around himself.

**Forming a chain of people to reach him and pull him out.** As with the branch, the PCs need to cross the ravine for this method to work. The PCs must hold hands and lower their companions one by one down into the ravine. The cliff is 20 feet high, meaning that four medium-sized characters are needed to form a chain long enough to reach Malvin.

Each PC needs to make a DC 13 **Strength** check to hold onto his companions. This DC increases by +2 for each character beneath the PC. So, the PC pulling on Malvin must make a DC 15 **Strength** check, while the PC at the top of the cliff needs to make a DC 21 **Strength** check. A PC who fails the check by 5 drops all the characters below him. Obviously, this is the most dangerous method because most of the PCs risk getting stuck in the mud. At least one of the PCs (the one at the top) should still be able to go get help, but this will cause a serious delay in finding the bandits' hideout.

**Development:** If the PCs can't get Malvin out on their own, they must send someone back to Corbin to bring more help. The PCs can toss down a couple of small logs to help keep Malvin from sinking completely. Malvin won't drown by the time the PCs get back with help, but if the PCs get help from the village, they should only receive 25 XP—half the normal experience award for this encounter. If the villagers also have to rescue the PCs, they should receive only 25 XP.

Once Malvin is free, he is very grateful to the PCs, even if they had to get help from the villagers. He gladly shares what he knows about the area, giving them valuable information about the dangers ahead.

Malvin tells the PCs that he was particularly interested in catching the boar whose tracks he was following, because it was bigger than most of the wild pigs he's seen in this area. It would have been a good catch for him. Malvin doesn't know it, but the boar he was tracking is actually Gorocs' pet, Longtusk. The PCs should be able to recognize the boar's tracks when they see them in the bandits' cave.

Malvin has seen the orcs' tracks, himself, and thinks he knows where they went. The problem is he also knows that a giant grass spider has taken up residence in that area. The hungry spider attacks any who disturb her lair. He guesses that the orcs have a hideout near the spider's lair, using the monster to keep intruders away. However, he also knows that the orcs must have a way to get past the beast without being eaten. He tells the PCs to be on the lookout for clues that will tell them how they're getting past the spider.

**Treasure:** As a reward for helping him, Malvin offers the PCs his magical +1 longbow, saying that it has served him well in the past and that he hopes it will help them in their quest.

## 1F. GIANT GRASS SPIDER (200 XP)

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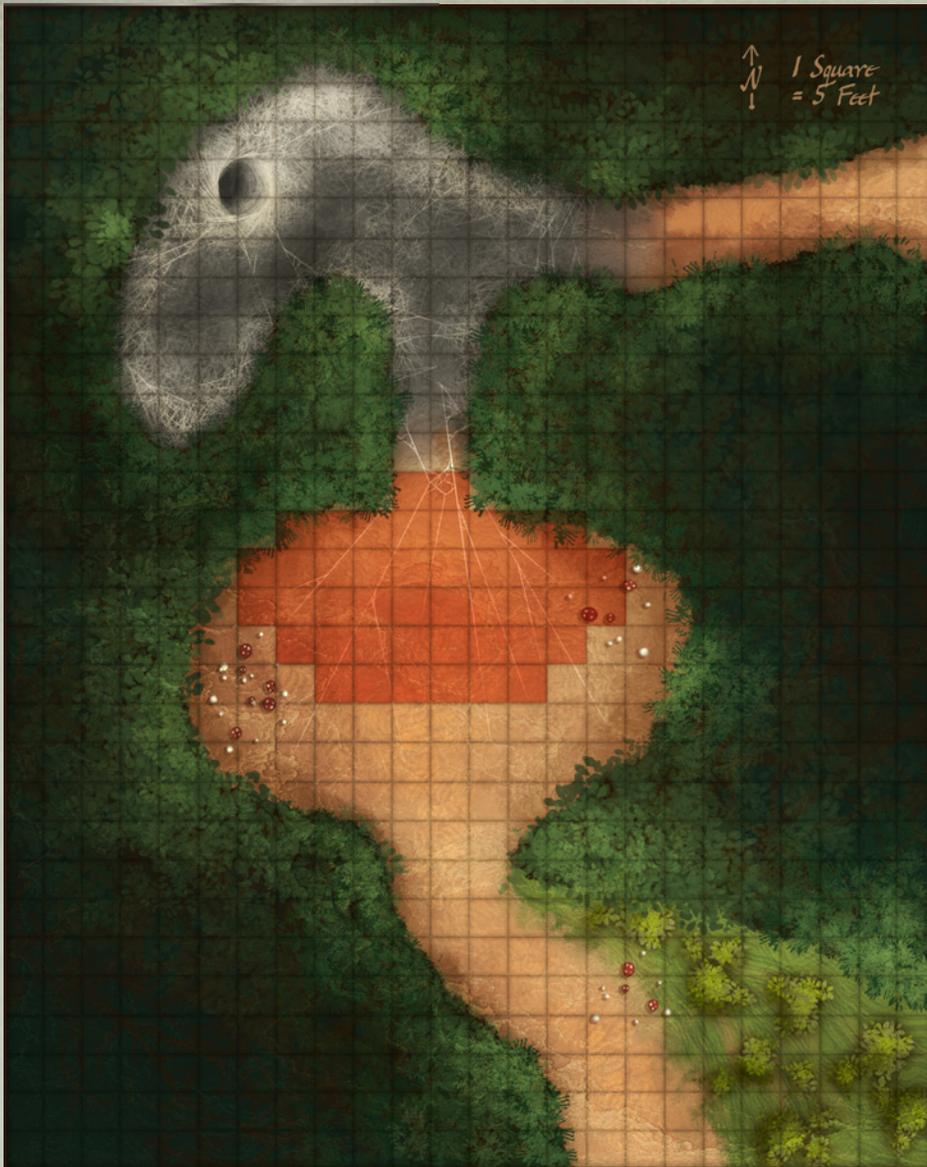
*The swamp is even darker here, and the trees grow closer together and take on a blacker hue than the plants closer to Corbin. Although weak light still filters through the trees, the scene ahead could easily make you wish for darkness to cover it.*

*The orcs' trail leads into an area where the trees and bushes are completely covered by a thick layer of webs. A web-shrouded tunnel seems to be the only exit from the clearing, but that way does not look at all inviting.*

*Scattered around the mouth of the tunnel are the bones of several small animals, still neatly wrapped in silk—the grisly remains of a feast for what must be a very large spider.*

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## E. GIANT GRASS SPIDER



This narrow path is the only way to get to the bandit's cave. Unfortunately, the tunnel is the home of a large, hungry spider. The orcs have figured out that they can throw rabbits or other small animals into the creature's web to distract it while they pass through. They use the spider's escape tunnel at the other end of its lair and quickly head down the trail toward their cave. The orcs make sure to keep a few animals on hand at the cave to feed the spider when they need to leave their hideout, as well.

Observant characters recognize the evidence of the orcs' tactic scattered around the area. There are just too many animals here for all of

them to have wandered in by themselves. Characters who study the bones can attempt DC 11 **Intelligence (Nature)** checks to identify the animals. If the result of the roll is 13 or more, the PC know that many of these animals are not even swamp-dwellers, meaning that someone had to bring them to the spider's web.

**Creature:** If the party misses these clues or decides not to use the orcs' methods, they have to fight the spider. The spider is a giant grass spider, which builds its web in a funnel shape and covers the area around the funnel in sheets of webbing. Aside from the way the web is built, this spider has the same statistics as a giant spider.

Have each of the PCs roll a DC 17 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. If they succeed, they notice the spider hiding just inside the mouth of the webbed tunnel. If the PCs fail the check, they are surprised when the spider attacks.

Refer to the combat map provided for this encounter. The first PC to step into any of the red shaded squares sends vibrations through the spider's web, alerting it to the PC's presence and causing it to attack that character. The spider uses its action in the surprise round to move up to the unfortunate character. Clever PCs may choose to throw a large rock or other

item onto one of these squares, first, causing the spider to move to that area, instead. The spider loses its surprise action but turns to attack the nearest PC on the first round.

On the other hand, if the PCs throw a small animal or some other morsel of food big enough to interest the large spider (the GM can decide if the food is big enough), it spends 1d4+1 rounds wrapping the prey in its silk before it attacks anyone else. The PCs can use this time to get into the tunnel and through the web. If the PCs stop to explore, the spider catches them in its lair. If they attack the spider while it is wrapping its prey, the spider will defend itself.

## GIANT GRASS SPIDER

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4)

**Speed** 30ft., climb 30ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 16 (+3) 12 (+1) 2 (-4) 11 (+0) 4 (-3)

**Skills** Stealth +7

**Senses** blindsight 10ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

*Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed *save*, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Web** (*Recharge 5-6*). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage). To snare its prey, a giant spider spins elaborate webs or shoots sticky strands of webbing from its abdomen.

**Treasure:** If they manage to kill the spider, the PCs can search its lair, which has a few items of value mixed in with the remains of previous meals. Some time ago, an adventurer learned about the giant spider and came here hoping to kill it. He was unprepared to handle the beast on his own, however, and became its meal. His belongings include a few items that would have helped him against the spider, but he never got the chance to use them. Mixed among the remains are a shortsword, small wooden shield, leather armor, a scroll of lesser restoration, four potions of healing, two scrolls of shield of faith, and a leather pouch containing 25 gold pieces.

**Experience Award:** The PCs do not have to fight the spider to earn experience for this encounter. However, if they do not kill the spider this time, they have to either fight it or sneak by it again when they leave the bandits' cave. The PCs should not get any extra XP for defeating the spider a second time.

**Development:** The spider is a dangerous foe and it is possible that one or more PCs will die during this fight. If this happens, you may consider replacing the four healing potions with a scroll of raise dead. Although the scroll's value is much higher than what would normally be found by a low-level party, it may be better to let them have it so players can continue with the adventure. If the party has no cleric—or the cleric is killed (and no other character has the spell *raise dead* on their spell list)—the PCs will need to return to Corbin Village and ask Brother Beckwith to use the scroll for them.

### APPROACHING THE BANDIT'S CAVE

Once they get past the spider, the PCs can quickly move down the trail and make the approach on the bandit's cave. The orcs' tracks are easy to follow, here, and it is obvious that the bandits are not concerned about being found. Their hideout must be close by.

If the PCs left the spider's web after sunset and don't have the ability to see in the dark, they need to use torches to see. Approaching the cave while carrying torches ruins any chance the PCs have of surprising the orcs. It is also likely that many of the PCs' depleted many of their spells or other resources on the journey here, making an attack on the caves as soon as they arrive a dangerous proposition.

Let the characters rest, if they wish, even if they rested after fighting with the lizardfolk. The orcs have plenty of food and are still enjoying the thrill of their raid on Corbin, so they will not leave their cave for another day or so. The PCs can still approach the cave on the following morning without losing the benefit of surprise.

On the other hand, if the PCs choose to return to Corbin and come back later, there are things to consider. If they snuck past the spider, the PCs won't alert the orcs to their presence. They can get back to Corbin and return to the cave with no problems, although you may choose to add a few random encounters for their journey through the swamp.

If the PCs killed the spider, remind them that the orcs might find its body and will know that someone killed it. The orcs will be expecting an attack when the PCs return.

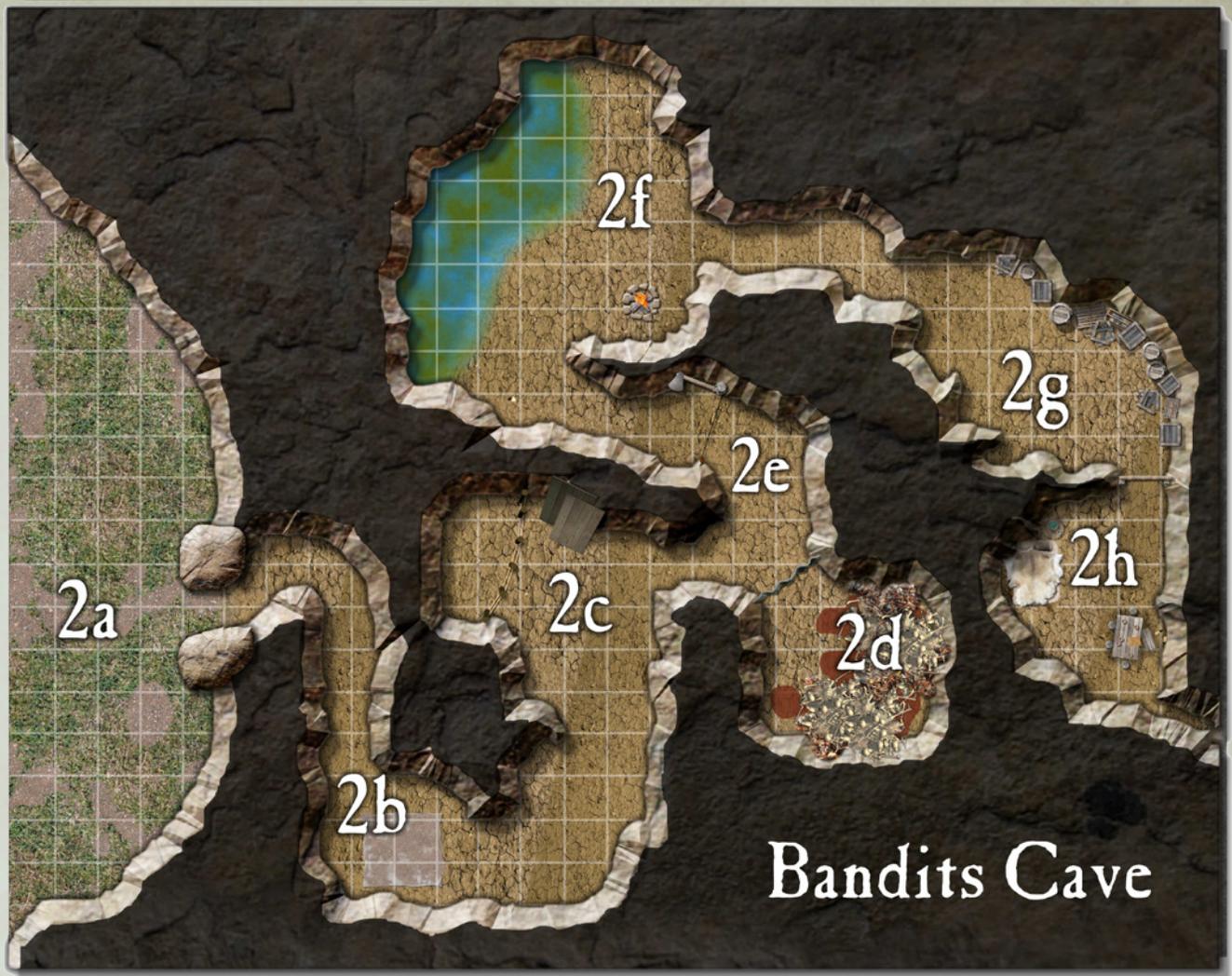
If they choose to go back to Corbin, anyway, Gorocs finds the dead spider and stations his wolf, Bloodbite, at the cave entrance, along with a fourth orc (remove one orc from **encounter 2F** and remove the wolf from **encounter 2H**). This makes it even more difficult to get into the cave without alerting all the orcs inside.

### PART II: INTO THE BANDIT'S CAVE

Now that they have found the bandits' hideout, the PCs have to figure out how to get in without alerting all the orcs there. Including Gorocs, there are 14 orcs in the cave, plus their pets, Longtusk the boar and Bloodbite the wolf. The orcs have a few other surprises for intruders, as well, and even have some uninvited guests who might cause problems for the PCs.

The cave in which the orcs are hiding is mostly a natural formation, created by water eroding a limestone deposit long ago. The cave opens to the surface as a low, narrow crevice in the side of a hill beside the creek. The floors of the cave are stone, covered with a thin layer of hardened clay and mud. There are no lights inside the cave, except for the campfire in **area 2F**, because the orcs have

## F. THE BANDIT'S CAVE



darkvision. Gorocs does have a few candles in his quarters in **area 2H**, but he only lights them when he needs to read or write, which is very rarely.

Except for Gorocs, all the orcs in the cave use the same statistics as the orc bandits in **encounter 1A**.

### 2A. CAVE GUARDS (300 XP)

*A group of three orcs stands guard next to a ten-foot wall of earth where collapsing dirt has created a small cliff about thirty feet away from water's edge. Two boulders lean together at the base of the cliff, forming a gap that looks like the entrance to a*

*cave. One guard mills about the clearing between the cave and the water, while the others lean against the cliff wall.*

If the PCs arrive at the cave without alerting the orcs, they stand a pretty good chance of getting inside without giving themselves away to every bandit in the place. The area around the cave mouth has bushes to hide behind and the orcs on guard here are not very alert. The PCs can sneak up to within 30 feet of the orcs if they each succeed on a DC 12 **Dexterity (Stealth)** check.



### A SIMPLE MAP

In groups of younger players or those just learning to play roleplaying games, it is often helpful to have tools that keep the players focused on the mission. Older and more experienced players learn to handle distractions that pull them away from an adventure's main objective, so they can deal with "side quests" and still get back on track.

But side quests may pull novice gamers too far off course. While it's always possible for any group of players to latch onto a distraction and take the game in a wildly different direction than you had intended, adventures that present the players with many choices increase the chances of that happening.

The map of the bandit's cave presents one simple way to control the flow of an adventure, limiting player choices while still presenting them with interesting challenges. It strongly encourages the players to handle each

challenge in a specific order. At 1st level, the characters do not have any abilities that allow them to skip these encounters or go straight to the end, so they start outside the cave and finish in the chamber where Gorocs is waiting.

Clever players may see the cave and wonder if there is a way to get in from somewhere else, but even if the PCs find the other end of Gorocs' escape tunnel they couldn't be certain that it connects to the cave they are interested in. Therefore, the structure of the map keeps the encounters in order.

As players gain experience with 5th Edition or other roleplaying games, dungeon maps and adventures can become more complex, with branches and optional encounters that add interest to a location or story but may not be directly connected to the adventure's final objective. To start with, though, it's usually best to keep things simple.

## BANDIT TACTICS

The encounters in this part of the adventure can be challenging for 1st level characters. The orcs are a fairly even match, but on a lucky roll, they can knock a PC unconscious with a single hit. Grouping them together can cause serious problems for an inexperienced group of players, especially if the dice rolls turn against them. The game should be challenging, but if all of the encounters are too difficult, then the players aren't going to have much fun.

In order to offset the challenges, you can adjust the orcs' tactics. You can have the orcs divide their attacks, rather than ganging up on a single character. You can also have them choose to fight the PCs with the toughest armor, making it less likely that they will knock out weaker PCs, first. Although, if the orcs do fight in a group, it can give spellcasters with area effect spells like burning hands opportunities to use them.

Another challenge is the orcs' aggressive ability, allowing them to move around the battlefield with extra movement. On the other hand this can also help the PCs, if they frequently do this against a foe that hasn't dropped to 0 hit points, that character will get an opportunity attack against it as it moves away.

If the PCs are doing especially well, you can allow the orc to alert his allies before he falls unconscious. Just pay attention to the group's status and their resources so you can be reasonably sure that the final battle will be harrowing, but winnable.

However, if the PCs arrive at night and are using torches or other lights to see by, they receive a -20 penalty to their Stealth checks, making it almost certain that the orcs see them.

The PCs might also choose to sneak around and climb on top of the cliff above the cave entrance. As long as the orcs don't see them, they can jump down next to the orcs leaning against the wall to initiate combat. This jump counts as a PC's action during the surprise round.

**Creatures:** The orcs attack as soon as they see any of the PCs. At first, all the orcs attack together, but if they do not defeat the PCs in the first round, one of the orcs tries to flee and get help from its companions in area 2F.

## ORC BANDITS (3)      CHALLENGE 1/2

**100 XP each**

Male orc

**Hit Points 15**

**Development:** If one of the orcs escapes, it takes him three rounds to reach the orcs in area 2F. On the fourth round, he informs those orcs of the danger, then spends three more rounds moving to Gorocs' chamber to make his report to the boss on the eighth round. All the orcs in the cave will be ready to respond to an attack on the tenth round (one minute after the orc escaped).

The orcs do not rush out to meet the PCs, however, because they hope to take advantage of the cave's natural and other defenses, first. The PCs may not face a horde of orcs all at once, but they probably won't be able to surprise any orcs and those in nearby rooms will be ready to respond to a call for aid.

## 2B. PIT TRAP (40 XP)

*The narrow entrance widens to reveal a larger chamber. The ceiling is only about six or seven feet high. You feel a little cramped but can easily move around. The cave's stone floor is covered in dry dirt. A draft of air blows from a wide passageway on the opposite side of the chamber, carrying a variety of smells, most of them unpleasant. These caves must be well lived in.*

The orcs took advantage of a natural hole in the floor to devise a simple trap.

**Trap:** The floor of this room hides a 20-foot deep pit, covered by a tarp and disguised with a thin layer of dirt. PCs who look for signs of danger and succeed on a DC 11 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check notice boot prints and boar tracks on the ground. The tracks lead up to the edge of the covered pit and seem to disappear. (The orcs just jump over one corner of the pit. They put pieces of wood over that corner when Longtusk walks over it.)

If the PCs do not detect the trap, the first one to step on the tarp must succeed on a DC 11 **Dexterity saving throw** or fall through and take (7) 2d6 points of damage. If two PCs are walking side-by-side, both must save or fall.

Remember that the PCs gain experience by simply surviving a trap. They do not have to detect or disarm it in order to gain the experience award for overcoming the obstacle.

## 2C. LONGTUSK THE BOAR (100 XP)

*Wooden stakes have been pounded into the floor and tied together with rope to make a simple fence in this chamber. The reason for the fence becomes clear as an angry boar charges out of its pen to attack!*

### DETECTING TRAPS AND HIDDEN SECRETS

Traps and other hidden objects in the game can be challenging for a GM to manage. Players want their chance to find these secrets, especially if those secrets can hurt their characters, but part of the fun is not knowing when a trap will spring or where a secret is hidden. Giving too much information away at the wrong time can ruin the surprise. Sometimes, even asking a player to make a Perception check is enough to tip them off that something might be hidden nearby.

One way to handle this is to make some of the rolls, yourself. The players don't need to know why you are making a roll or who you are making it for. You can even take note of important modifiers from each player character, like Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Insight) skills, and saving throws. This is a quick way to handle such checks, and if you do it often enough—sometimes, just so the players hear your dice rolling—you can keep them on their toes without alerting them to an important secret.

On the other hand, some players really want to roll all of their checks. In those cases, you can use your records for important modifiers and just ask the player to roll a d20. You don't have to tell the player what the roll is for because you'll be able to use their result and add the modifier, yourself. This is a useful technique for maintaining suspense.

Give these options a try and see which one works best for you.

The orcs brought Longtusk with them from their home in the Westwatch Mountains. While they are out on raids, they set the boar free to forage in the swamp. He returns to the cave, when the orcs come back from their raiding. They bring Longtusk in with them and put him in his pen, though they often leave the gate open. The boar tolerates the orcs, but attacks intruders with great fury and fights until slain.

There is no treasure in the pen, but two wide, flat pieces of wood are propped against the wall. The orcs use these to get Longtusk across the pit in **area 2B**.

### **LONGTUSK THE BOAR**

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 40ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

14 (+2)   11 (+0)   12 (+1)   2 (-4)   9 (-1)   5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Charge.** If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Relentless** (*Recharges after a Short or Long Rest*). If the boar takes 10 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

### **ACTIONS**

**Tusk. Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

**Hit:** 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

## **2D. MIDDEN (100 XP)**

*A heavy curtain covers the entrance to this chamber. The curtain hides the room from view, but does nothing to contain the smell. The stench of rot curls around the drape's edges, promising something even more disgusting inside. Scratching sounds come from somewhere beyond the curtain. Someone, or something, is hiding in the chamber.*

If the PCs enter the room, read the following:

*On the far side of the room, a heap of garbage rises almost to the ceiling. Rivulets of reddish-brown liquid flow out of the bottom of the pile, forming small pools on the floor. At first, there is no sign of who or what might have been moving in the room. Then, the pile of bones and other trash comes alive as four filthy rats, each the size of a small dog, erupt from beneath its surface. They rush toward you with red eyes and bared teeth.*

This room is where the orcs throw their trash, which mainly consists of the refuse from meals, although it is probable that the lazy orcs have used the place as a latrine, as well. It smells terrible. That doesn't seem to bother the orcs, because they spend very little time here. The curtain keeps most, but not all, of the smell from spreading into the rest of the cave.

**Hazard:** Inside the room, the smell of the garbage is dangerous. Anyone in the room must make a DC 13 **Constitution saving throw** each round or gain the poisoned condition from the stench. Holding one's breath before entering can prevent this effect. The poisoned condition lasts until they character exits the room and for 1d4 rounds afterward.

A creature can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to I + its Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). When a creature runs out of breath, it can survive for a number

of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1 round). At the start of its next turn, it drops to 0 hit points and is dying.

**Creatures:** The powerful smell of garbage has drawn a family of four dire rats to this room. They are not affected by the stench and have chosen to stay because the orcs constantly provide them with more food. The rats jealously guard their home from any intruders who are not orcs. All of the rats climb out of the trash heap and attack at once, fighting to the death.

### **GIANT RAT (4)**

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

7 (-2)   15 (+2)   11 (+0)   2 (-4)   10 (+0)   4 (-3)

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The rat has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rat's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### **ACTIONS**

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** Characters brave enough to search the midden can roll a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find a satchel that the orcs threw away before they properly searched it. Inside are three vials of healing potions. The satchel protected the bottles from being contaminated by garbage.

### **2E. SWINGING AXE TRAP (40 XP)**

As they pass through this corridor, the PCs risk setting off another of Gorocs' defenses

**Trap:** This trap consists of a spring-loaded arm attached to two large axe heads. The trap is triggered by a tripwire that runs along the floor. When intruders step on or pull the wire, the arm swings out and attacks each character in the two squares indicated on the map, making a melee attack with a +6 bonus against the PCs' AC. The trap deals 1d8+3 points to each character it hits. The PCs can find the trap with a DC 11 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. Characters proficient with their's tools can disarm the trap with a DC 10 Dexterity check.

### **2F. COMMUNAL CHAMBER (400 XP)**

*The passage ahead opens to a larger chamber, where the ceiling climbs to almost fifteen feet. The light of a torch or small fire from around the corner reflects on the surface of a pool of water that covers half the space. The sounds of movement and the rough voices of orcs echo through the chamber.*

This large chamber holds a pool of fresh and relatively clean water and serves as the resting and dining area for the orc bandits.

**Creatures:** When the PCs arrive, only a few orcs are here. If they have managed to avoid alerting the bandits, there are four orcs lounging in this room. If the PCs catch them by surprise, the orcs spend the first round picking up their weapons before they can properly fight.

If the orcs were warned by a guard from **area 2A**, they are alert and ready for battle. If the bandits discovered that the giant spider has been slain, there are only three orcs here, because one of them has already moved to help guard the cave entrance.

## ORC BANDITS (4)

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100 XP each

Male orc

Hit Points 15

Challenge 2

**Development:** The guards in **area 2G** hear the sounds of battle in this room if they make a DC 7 **Perception** check. Two of those orcs arrive to help on the third round of combat.

## 2G. GUARD ROOM (400 XP)

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*Stacks of small crates, boxes and barrels—obviously the spoils of the orcs' previous raids—line the far walls of this chamber. Some of the crates have been smashed open and their contents, removed. Inspection of the other items is impossible, however, as the orcs standing guard on the other side of the room shout out challenges and attack!*

Four guards stand uneasy watch in this room. They have been given specific orders not to interrupt Gorocs' meeting with his two favorite advisors. (The three orcs are working out how to divide the payment their mysterious employer sent. They want to keep the biggest shares for themselves without creating a mutiny among the other orcs.)

**Creatures:** If the guards failed to hear the battle in **area 2F**, the PCs may be able to surprise them, or at least gain initiative. If they did hear the sounds of battle, the two guards who remain outside of Gorocs' quarters throw their javelins at the first PCs they see, then pound on Gorocs' door to warn him of intruders before moving forward to engage their foes.

## ORC BANDITS (4)

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100 XP each

Male orc

Hit Points 15

Challenge 1/2

**Treasure:** This room contains all the belongings taken from Corbin village during the raid, and the villagers want their valuables back. The orcs also have things they have stolen in previous attacks: wine and ale casks, some dry goods, and other materials left over. Most of these are too bulky for the PCs to carry, themselves, but if they tell the Sheriff about them and arrange to get them back to the village, the Mayor will reward each PC with an additional 50 gold pieces for helping to return the lost goods to local merchants.

**Development:** If alerted, Gorocs and his lieutenants spend two rounds preparing for battle while his guards keep the PCs busy. When they are ready, the orcs burst out of his chamber, with Gorocs' lieutenants and his wolf, Bloodbite, leading the way. See the statistics for Gorocs and Bloodbite in the description for **area 2H**.

## 2H. GOROCS' CHAMBER, (700 XP)

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*Beyond the makeshift door at the entrance, you find a chamber that is richly appointed, compared to other parts of the cave. A thick bed of furs lies in one corner, next to a small table holding a pan of water and a pitcher. Opposite this sleeping area is a small table with short wooden logs surrounding it for use as stools. A crude map of Moresby County rests on the table, along with wooden cups and a few empty wine bottles.*

This room is where Gorocs and his two trusted companions divide the spoils of past attacks and plan future raids. It is also Gorocs' private chambers.

**Creatures:** Gorocs and his advisors remain here, unaware of the danger until the sounds of battle and cries of orc fury prompt them to act.

When he fights, Gorocs immediately starts raging and shouts dire threats at his enemies. Most of these threats are in the orc language. When he speaks the Common language, he still has a heavy orcish accent. The PCs don't need to be able to understand his words to know that he's saying things that aren't very nice.

If he hasn't already sent Bloodbite to help stand watch at the front of the cave, Gorocs orders the wolf to attack and then does his best to maneuver his bandits and himself into flanking positions.

### **GOROCS ORC BOSS**

*Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 42 (5d8 + 20)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

18 (+4)   12 (+1)   18 (+4)   12 (+1)   11 (+0)   12 (+1)

**Skills** Intimidation +5, Survival +2

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, Gorocs can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** Gorocs makes two handaxe attacks.

**Handaxe.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

### **AN EPIC BATTLE**

The final battle with Gorocs and his minions should be a very challenging fight, the kind of battle that players most often remember. After all, the climactic encounter with the story's main villain in his lair is a mainstay of fantasy adventure. Now is the time to pull out the stops and really let your PCs have it. Or is it?

The PCs are probably low on resources after fighting their way through the rest of the cave. They aren't at full hit points and have fewer spells or limited-use abilities left. On top of that, Gorocs can dish out quite a bit of damage on his own. It is even possible that he could knock out a PC in a single hit. Just as you did with the fight against the lizardfolk, you need to determine if the fight ahead will be too challenging for your players, and you decide if you need to adjust this encounter to avoid a TPK.

If they have already dealt with Bloodbite, then a party of four PCs will outnumber Gorocs and his two lieutenants and should be fine. If you have fewer than four PCs or if Bloodbite is still with Gorocs, you can even the odds by removing one or both of the lieutenants. A powerful enemy and his wolf companion can still make for a battle worthy of retelling over a few mugs at the tavern.

However, the module assumes that the PCs face all of the enemies presented. As with the lizardfolk encounter, removing foes reduces the amount of XP they can earn, so they may not rise to 2nd level by the end of the adventure. There is no requirement to have the PCs "level up" at the end of an adventure, but it can be a satisfying reward for completing a quest. Random encounters, or even bringing in the two remaining orcs after the main fight is over, can provide those final experience points, if necessary.

## BLOODBITE THE WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 40ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

12 (+1) 15 (+2) 12 (+1) 3 (-4) 12 (+1) 6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Development:** Once the battle ends, the PCs can search the room to find the treasure the orcs were paid for raiding the village, as well as clues to the reason behind the attack.

**Treasure:** If they succeed on a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check or just do a thorough search of the room, the PCs can find a small wooden chest, hidden in the back of the room

under some of the animal furs. The chest contains hundreds of coins and a smaller box with five vials of liquid (400 gold pieces, four *healing potions* and one *potion of hill giant strength*).

The chest also contains a letter, which you can read aloud or print and hand to the players as a handout. As the letter says, Gorocs delivered the Green Serpent to Belazeel's hawk familiar immediately after the raid, so the statue is not among Ithamar's belongings in the cave. However, the letter is an important clue. If the PCs give the letter to Ithamar when they return to town, he will take this evidence as proof that they tried to find the statue and will honor his agreement with the PCs.



Searching the room also uncovers a very narrow tunnel leading from the back of the cave. This tunnel is only big enough for a small creature to move through it at full speed. A medium-sized creature must squeeze through it, while any larger creature cannot fit through at all. Gorocs would have used this escape tunnel if he had expected that the PCs could actually defeat him.

### PLAYER HANDOUT: LETTER

#### TO THE BANDITS

GOROCS,

Greetings, honored son of the Dread Lord! Here is the agreed payment for retrieving the serpent statue from the Corbin sage's home. I hope that these coins, along with the spoils of your raid, will serve you well.

I know that I can trust you to accomplish this task. That is why I have sent the payment in advance. Once you have the statue, take it to the appointed place, place it in the bag I have sent you and give the bag to my hawk, who will bring it to me.

Succeed in your mission—deliver the statue to my servant—and you can enjoy your treasure for as long as it lasts. If you fail or try to cheat me, however, I will know it, and even your orc god's fury will be nothing compared to the swift and terrible punishment I will unleash upon you.

— B (Print-friendly version on page 40)

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs defeat the bandits, they have officially reached the end of the adventure. If they survived all the encounters presented and found all the treasure, they should have enough

experience to become 2nd level characters.

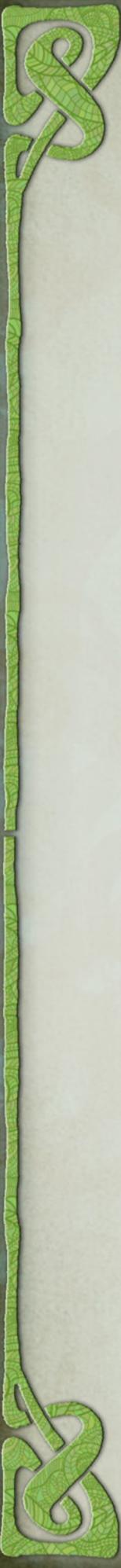
You can describe the return trip to town and how the villagers receive the PCs as heroes. Sheriff McBride gives pays them for ending the bandit threat, and they can arrange a meeting with Ithamar Ruggles to discuss what happened to the Green Serpent.

If the PCs have not reached 2nd level, and you were dividing experience points among the players as you go, you may include some random encounters with creatures or hazards of the swamp on the return journey. Be sure to consider the condition the characters are in after their fight with Gorocs and his gang. If they are too weak, they might be killed by a random encounter, which isn't much fun. Alternatively reward them a story award just enough to get them to 2<sup>nd</sup> level.

### CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

You should feel free to explore some of the story hooks presented in this adventure. The presence of lizardfolk in the swamp, the movement of orcs from the Westwatch Mountains into the civilized territories, or even the fear of hags returning to the Dread Marsh could all make for fun campaign arcs to explore with your players. However, *The Bandit's Cave* is also the first part of a 5-part "mini-campaign" entitled *Trail of the Apprentice*, which provides a ready-made campaign for you to run with your players.

The clues the PCs uncovered in Gorocs' cave tell the players that something bigger than simple thievery is going on. When the PCs meet with Ithamar to tell him that they could not recover the statue, the sage becomes concerned that the villain may try to steal the statue's twin, the White Serpent, which is



owned by Lord Samuel Wolfe and kept in his family's private museum.

The museum is on the Lord's estate in Port Fairglade, which lies on the banks of the Lashelenite River about a day's ride north. Ithamar encourages the PCs to hurry to Port Fairglade and do what they can to stop this mysterious "collector" from stealing the second statue. This sets the PCs off on a chase to recover the lost artifacts and stop a madman from unleashing an ancient and powerful evil upon the kingdom of Threll.

## **APPENDIX 1: THE VILLAGE OF CORBIN**

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Corbin is a large village resting on the shores of the Imlenite River. It is the primary waterfront community in Moresby County in the kingdom of Threll. Most of the overland travel that passes from the city of Port Fairglade to towns farther inland passes through Corbin.

A wooden palisade surrounds the village with a main gate controlling access to and from the east. Several piers allow river travelers access to the village from the northwest. The wall around the village is necessary because Corbin sits on a patch of dry land between Tiller's Marsh and the Dread Marsh. Both of these swamps are home to dangerous animals and monsters. The walls are sufficient to deal with most of these creatures, though this wasn't always the case.

The Dread Marsh is particularly infamous, for it was once the domain of a terrible coven of hags. Many years ago, the hags terrorized the people of Moresby County and all travelers on the Imlenite River. A group of heroes finally ventured into the swamp to defeat the coven.

Though they lost a good friend in the battle, they were able to free the region from the hags.

After the battle, one of the heroes stayed in Moresby County to oversee the construction of Hagwatch Tower. He petitioned the king of Threll to station several knights in the tower, and trained them to make sure they would always be ready to fight hags and their minions. To this day, the people of Corbin help the knights of Hagwatch Tower stand guard against the return of those horrible creatures to the marsh.

### **PEOPLE OF CORBIN**

The village holds almost 200 permanent residents and is actually on the verge of becoming a town as more people are drawn to this influential location. The population will soon reach a tipping point, and the village will have to grow beyond the palisade. For now, however, Mayor Crump prefers dealing with the minor problems of overcrowding over protecting citizens living outside of the village walls.

Corbinites are open to outsiders, because many in these parts have come from elsewhere, and they know what it is like to have to settle into someplace new. They also know that turning away a visitor means turning away business. Although there are few elves or dwarves living in Corbin, both races are well known to the villagers, who welcome them just as they would humans.

The villagers do tend to focus more on trade and commerce, which gives them a more business-like personality that some might interpret as stiffness or even greed. The villagers and those who truly know them, however, would disagree and assert that Corbin is a hub through which all manner of goods

must flow. They feel it is in the best interest of the kingdom that the people of Corbin pay attention to things that might affect that flow. Few can argue with that logic as Corbin villagers seem to thrive by applying it to their day-to-day activities.

### **GOVERNMENT**

Mayor Darius Crump is the official head of the government in Corbin. He also serves as the village harbormaster, however, and spends more of his time on the waterfront. He is a jovial man with a booming voice and is always ready to tell or hear a good joke. His focus on his business limits his political aspirations but allows him to keep his finger on the pulse of things so he can make the right decision when necessary. The mayor actually conducts official village business at the Merchants' Office, where he has a private room for such affairs.

### **CLERICS**

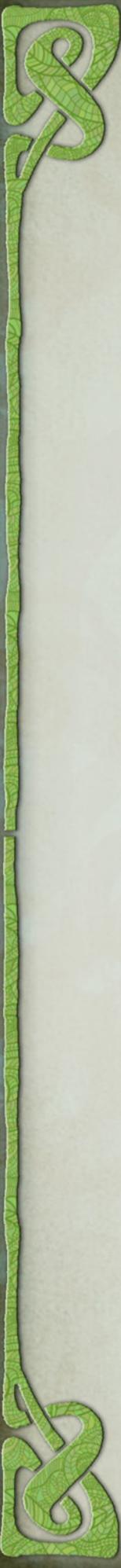
Brother Cyrus Beckwith mainly serves the town as an apothecary, selling medicines and occasionally treating those with illnesses or injuries. But as a 4th level cleric of Losinia, the moon goddess, whose religion is strong in Threll, he uses his divine powers to promote the health and well-being of all people in Corbin. Brother Beckwith keeps a small shrine to Losinia in his apothecary shop and holds weekly services for any who wish to worship with him. Normally quiet and reserved, Brother Beckwith reveals his true passion in the uplifting sermons he delivers at these services. A few other priests work out of small shops or street-side portable shrines, selling healing potions or offering prayers or spells in return for coins that will support their churches.

### **ROGUES**

Corbin is a prosperous village, so it attracts a certain criminal element, but there is no organized crime in the village to speak of, yet. To date, the most powerful rogue in town is Laura Briggs, owner of Briggs' Exotic Wares. Ms. Briggs is a 4th level rogue, a role she keeps secret from everyone except very select people (such as an apprentice rogue). Briggs is also a member of the Elverin Skulk, the most powerful thieves' guild in the region, but she will not even share this information with an apprentice until they have reached 3rd level. Laura is charismatic and possesses a wry humor that many people find attractive, though there is an obvious hint of mystery behind her deep green eyes. She is also a skilled merchant who is well-known for acquiring "hard-to-find" items.

### **FIGHTERS**

Sheriff Lucy McBride is the real law in Corbin. She works closely with Mayor Crump and respects his position, but has little patience for his limited involvement in governing the town. A driven and serious woman, she has appointed herself to take up the slack. This keeps her far too busy to undertake missions outside of town, so she often hires adventurers for special tasks. When not walking around the village keeping an eye on things, Sheriff McBride can be found in her office at the village guardhouse. It is also just a short walk from her office to the gaol, where lawbreakers are held until the county judge arrives for weekly court proceedings or until they can be sent to Port Fairglade for trial.



Sheriff McBride is a 4th level fighter and takes it upon herself to train the militia. This makes it even more difficult for her to ever leave town. Several other fighters live in the area and tend to come and go with the tides on the Imlenite River, but none are as powerful as Sheriff McBride, yet.

## WIZARDS

Ithamar Ruggles is a 4th level wizard who also serves as the village sage. Although there are one or two other practitioners of magic in Corbin at any one time, none possess the wisdom and knowledge that Ithamar possesses. What these lower-level wizards do possess is greater presence of mind and a willingness to leave their homes on a more regular basis. As such they may be more likely to make and sell potions or scrolls for the right price. For his part, Ithamar is always willing to help, if one can get his attention and hold it long enough. The best way to do this is to relate your request to some major historical event.

## SHOPPING

Aside from the characters listed above, there are several places that the PCs can go to get supplies and, perhaps, assistance. One of the most prominent is Edwin Pierce, Weapon Smith and Founder. In addition to making and selling melee weapons, Mr. Pierce crafts things from metal castings in his foundry, including parts for flint-locks and other guns, though the process is very difficult, making prices for these weapons too high for most folk to buy them. Mr. Pierce is not a highly skilled armorer, but he can make most of the types of armor and shields available in the rule book.

He cannot craft masterwork armor, though.

There is also Nathaniel Peabody, who operates Peabody's Dry Goods and Tools. Mr. Peabody is an unremarkable man who nevertheless manages to keep his store stocked with all the mundane items located in the Equipment section of the rulebook. He drives a hard bargain, but will offer special discounts to heroes who perform a particularly worthy service to the village.

Lastly, Michael Chapman is the village blacksmith. Although his skills are different from those of Mr. Pierce, he is still well respected throughout the village for the quality of his work. He crafts important things like nails and horseshoes and can sometimes be commissioned to produce specific items made of metal.

## STONE'S ORDINARY

Stone's Ordinary is the village's only tavern—Corbin just isn't big enough to handle more than one, yet. There are a few residents who open up a portion of their homes to visitors and sell food, beer, wine and spirits, but Stone's is the only true public house—a distinct, separate building where visitors can purchase a variety of beverages, as well as a meal. The owner, Melania Babcock, is a stout, matronly woman with a strong back and an iron will. Her cooking isn't the best that travelers on the Imlenite River have ever had, but it is hearty fare that fills the belly and rarely leaves one wanting for anything else.

## THE RAVENSWORTH INN

The Ravensworth Inn is a new addition to Corbin, but it serves an important purpose. Every year more people stop at the village, waiting for a ferry to Riverside or for an overland carriage to Port Fairglade. The Ravensworth gives travelers a place to stay and spend their money. Danforth Gibson and his family own and run the inn. The Ravensworth Inn has eight rooms that can sleep four comfortably, though “comfortable” in these times still means that two people share a bed. Mister Gibson also offers two “common” rooms where up to sixteen guests can sleep on the floor. During the day, the common rooms are cleared of people and aired out, for use as meeting rooms or fest halls, until the night falls and the inn’s staff lays out the mats and blankets on which the guests will sleep.

## HEALING

Brother Beckwith is the most likely—and reliable—source of healing in town. Other priests may be available to cast lower-level healing spells, but for really serious situations, the PCs will need to rely on Beckwith.

## MAGIC

The PCs can purchase most any scroll or potion for a spell of 2nd level or lower if you think it is appropriate to have magic items for sale. Some GMs find that offering magic items for sale reduces their special quality or meaning and should therefore only be found during adventures. If you do decide some minor magic items are for sale, see them DMG for prices based off an item’s rarity.

## APPENDIX 2: EXPANDED RULES

Although *The Bandit’s Cave* encounters present creatures in a simplified format for quicker play, you may wish to reference the full 5th Edition (5E) SRD for the challenges your PCs will face.

All of the creatures in this module use the standard entries found in the SRD and official monster books, with the exception of Gorocs and the young assassin vine. Full stat blocks for both the vine and Gorocs are provided here. If you are using the core rules for the other monsters in this module, in cases where the description of an ability contradicts what is written in this module, use the rules that apply to the core rules version.

## NEW DEITY: LOSINIA, GODDESS OF THE MOON

Many people in Threll worship Losinia, the goddess of the moon. The first settlers of Threll brought her faith with them when they travelled to these lands and those who live on the rivers and shores throughout the kingdom have a particular fondness for her. Additionally, as a deity who promotes order and good health, she is popular throughout the realm.



## LOSINIA

### Goddess of the Moon

**Other Names** The Pale Lady

**Alignment** Lawful Good

**Holy Symbol** White or silver disc with a woman's face

**Portfolio** Moon, Tidewaters and the Shore, Rhythms and cycles, Health

**Alignments** LG, NG, LN

**Suggested Domains** Knowledge, Life

**Favored Weapon** Spear

Losinia is the Threllish people's name for the goddess of the moon and for the moon, itself. She is one of the Five Celestials, the greatest and most ancient powers among Aeva's divine cosmology. The other four Celestials are the deities of the Sky, Sun, Time and Weather.

As the moon influences the ebb and flow of tides and currents in the waters of Aeva, it is Losinia who is associated with those roles. The cycle of the silver-white moon aids farmers and others who rely on timekeeping. Eshpa, the sun, is still the primary reference for Threll's calendar, but the moon aids in refining astronomical calculations, and many of the cycles on Aeva are seen to keep time with her, rather than the sun.

The church of Losinia is strong in the kingdom of Threll, due to the fact that the original settlers brought the worship of moon with them from their original homeland. Losinia is primarily worshipped by those who live and work on the shores of great bodies of water, such as oceans and large lakes and rivers, where the tides influence daily life. She is also worshipped by those who believe her influence on the water within living things affects mental and physical health.

Losinia is a foe of dangerous creatures and monsters of the night and a protector of those who worship her, but she is a stern and seemingly unemotional being, who often treats her followers as a strict mother would treat her children. Some who have studied the ancient, forbidden texts claim that she behaves this way because she harbors a dark secret.

These scholars claim that Losinia is actually a two-faced deity. The face known to Aeva is bright, caring and devoted to helping her followers and protecting them against sickness and destructive night creatures. But this hidden lore says her other face is dark and cruel, a being of madness and hatred that wishes to unleash undead and even more horrible beings on the world. Losinia continually struggles to keep that face hidden. According to such tales, the new moon is the time when moon goddess must hide herself from the world so she can renew the magic keeping the madness within her bound and the world protected.

No mortal can say if this legend is true, however, and Losinia's church leaders deny it. None of the gods speak of the darkened side of the moon or why its face never turns toward Aeva. But to many people in Threll, the legend gives one reason that Losinia directs her clerics to struggle against creatures of darkness and chaos and spread the light of order in the world.

## PLAYING A CLERIC OF LOSINIA

Players who create a cleric of Losinia gain proficiency with the spear and may choose any two of the following abilities:

### CALMING TOUCH (COMMUNITY) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use binding ties a number of times per day equal to your 3 + WIS. When you use binding ties, touch a creature to heal it of 1d6 points of nonlethal damage + 1 point per cleric level. This touch also removes the fatigued, shaken, and sickened conditions (but has no effect on more severe conditions).

### ICICLE (WATER) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use icicle a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use icicle, you launch an icicle from your finger, targeting any foe within 30 feet as a ranged touch attack. The icicle deals 1d6 points of cold damage + 1 point for every two cleric levels you possess. Activating icicle is a standard action.

### REBUKE DEATH (HEALING) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use rebuke death a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use rebuke death, touch a dying ally (at -1 hit points or lower). You heal the ally 1d4 hit points plus 1/2 your cleric level (minimum +1). Activating rebuke death is a standard action.

### TOUCH OF GLORY (GLORY) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use touch of glory a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use touch of glory, your hand shimmers with divine radiance. Touching a creature with this hand gives it a bonus equal to your cleric level on a single Charisma-based check or Charisma ability check. This ability lasts for 1 hour or until the creature touched chooses to use the bonus to a roll. Activating touch of glory is a standard action.

### TOUCH OF LAW (LAW) 3+WIS PER DAY

You can use touch of law a number of times per day equal to 3 + WIS. When you use touch of law, you can make a touch attack to infuse the target with the power of divine order. For the next round, the target treats all attack rolls, checks, and saving throws as if the natural d20 roll resulted in an 11. Activating touch of law is a standard action.



2



*Can't we talk about this? I'm sure we can work something...ow!" Birkett leaped backward as the other thief's blade lashed out. "Okay, so you don't want to talk."*

*The halfling's opponent rushed forward, driving Birkett back even farther until his back slammed into the edge of a table. The halfling winced, but the next time the man struck, Birkett slipped under the table, springing up on the other side with his bow drawn and aiming at the man's head.*

*"Sorry, darling. I'm not much for close dancing." Birkett smirked as the man faltered and tried to figure out which way to dodge. The halfling was about to let his arrow fly when the back wall of the room exploded inward.*

*Shards of glass and wood sprayed all of the room's combatants, forcing Birkett to turn aside and lose his shot. Just as the crash of the shattering wall died down, it was replaced by a horrendous roar, the sound of beating wings, and the scrape of stone-like claws on wooden floorboards.*

*"Well. It appears our minuet has become more of a reel." The halfling bowed slightly to his new opponent. "Shall we?"*

# THE KING'S CURSE

# What You Will Find Inside The King's Curse

With the heroes hot on the trail of the ruthless bandits that have stolen the priceless Green Serpent statue, they must venture to Port Fairglade where the Lord Mayor's fabulous private museum keeps its twin among a trove of ancient artifacts. It is there the thieves plan to strike next, but the heroes' warning comes too late! The resplendent White Serpent has already been taken, but even as the heroes investigate the crime the museum is robbed a second time, and suddenly the loss of two statues becomes the least of their worries, as it is more than just treasure that fills the halls of the museum by night!



# THE KING'S CURSE

*The King's Curse* is an adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 2nd-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into three main parts. Each part can be run within a short session or grouped together for longer play time. At the end of the adventure, the PCs should earn enough experience to reach 3rd level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

*The King's Curse* is the second adventure in the *Trail of the Apprentice* mini-campaign, which began with *The Bandit's Cave*, but GMs can use it as a stand-alone "one-shot" event or as a side-quest in their own campaigns. *Trail of the Apprentice* plays out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level.

This story is set in Port Fairglade, a river coast city located on the Terrallien continent of the planet Aeva. The module provides enough information to run the entire adventure in Port Fairglade, but you can set the adventure in any coastal city of any world you choose.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The wizard Belazeel spent many years seeking ways to increase his magical powers. He delved into the land's history and researched its legends, but he was never satisfied with what he found. Then, he turned to other sources of information, communing with entities outside the Material Plane. Eventually, one of these entities told Belazeel a story of another

wizard who learned terrible secrets that gave her great power. So strong was her magic that she could raise armies of fierce beasts and enthrall men's minds.

The wizard had made herself into a monster and wanted to rule her whole world. A group of sages, clerics, and wizards recognized the threat and gathered to find a way to defeat the wizard. After many failures, they found what they sought.

Together, they created the "Basilisk Shroud," a special prison to weaken and contain their enemy and her power for all time. The prison had a pair of keys, which they named the Serpent Keys. When they at last captured their foe, they separated the keys and scattered them. The sages then scoured the wizard's name from monuments and history books, hoping she would be forgotten. Her name was lost to the world, but her power was known in place beyond her own.

Belazeel is convinced that, if he can find this wizard's prison and free her, she will be grateful and teach him the secrets that made her so powerful. With the help of his otherworldly sources, Belazeel's obsession with gaining that power has at last met with success. He has collected both Serpent Keys.

It seems that the ancient sages were too thorough in wiping out the memory of their enemy. After millenia, those charged with keeping the Serpent Keys forgot their true purpose and eventually lost them before disappearing altogether. The keys are artifacts, preserved with powerful, hidden magic. They survived and when they were rediscovered, they were simply thought of as items of curiosity—religious items or simply artwork from a forgotten culture. Then they came to rest in the hands of two people with an interest in



ancient history: Ithamar Ruggles, the sage, and Samuel Wolfe, Lord Mayor of Port Fairglade.

Ithamar Ruggles' key, now known as the Green Serpent, was recently stolen by orc bandits, who raided his home in Corbin Village. A group of adventurers put the bandits to the sword, but they couldn't recover the statue. Instead, they discovered the bandits were hired to steal the statue by someone identified only as "B."

Ithamar suspects that anyone who would go to such lengths to steal one statue might want the second one, the White Serpent. He asks the PCs to go to Lord Wolfe's home in Port Fairglade, warn him of the danger, and prevent "B" from stealing the second statue.

Belazeel does plan to get the statue. This time, he has called upon the services of the Elverin Skulk, a notorious guild of thieves whose leader calls himself the "Fox Prince."

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive at Wolfe Manor, home of Lord Mayor Samuel Wolfe. After they present the letter of introduction from Ithamar Ruggles, Lord Mayor Wolfe reluctantly invites them in. He explains that the statue has already been stolen. He offers the PCs a tour of his family museum, which housed the statue and also holds the sarcophagus and burial offerings of King Udimu, a long-dead leader of the ancient desert empire of Akhutan.

The frustrated nobleman believed his museum's security measures were sufficient to prevent anyone from getting away with his valuable possessions. He asks the PCs to quietly investigate the theft. While scouring the city for information, they run afoul of local toughs and have to talk themselves out of trouble with the city guard, but their search reveals that someone contracted the Elverin Skulk thieves' guild to rob the museum.

The PCs return to Wolfe Manor to find that some terrible power has taken over the museum. No one has been able to get in or out, but the PCs' investigations also uncovered one possible entrance: the secret tunnel the thieves used. Lord Wolfe again asks the party for help. They must get inside, find out what is going on, and stop it.

The heroes brave the dangers of the sewers then enter the museum, which is cursed by King Udimu's spirit. The thieves disturbed the King's rest when they took a gem from his sarcophagus, and vengeful spirits of Akhutan responded with terrible magic. The frightened thieves dropped the items they stole and headed for the sewers.

King Udimu is still angry and will not rest until they replace the missing gem. The PCs must find the gem and put it back or destroy King Udimu before his curse spreads beyond the walls of the museum.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players are ready to begin, read the following:

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*Your journey brings you to the city of Port Fairglade, on the shore of the Lashelenite River. The sage, Ithamar Ruggles, asked you to visit Samuel Wolfe, Lord Mayor of Port Fairglade, and find out if he still possesses a special statue, which he calls the White Serpent. Ithamar recently lost the statue's sister, the Green Serpent, when a band of orcs raided Corbin Village. Ithamar fears the mastermind behind the theft will also try to steal the White Serpent. Ithamar gave you a letter of introduction to present to the nobleman in the hope that he will meet you and share information about his statue.*

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## EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Trail of the apprentice works best we feel using the milestone method of rewarding experience and gaining levels. Instead of tracking each individual number, concentrate more on the story and just level up each character at the conclusion of each adventure. You are certainly welcome to reward experience points as you go, whatever you and your players will have more fun with.

Wolfe Manor, the Lord Mayor's estate, has well-tended grounds, surrounded by a high brick wall with a large, iron gate. A guard stands just inside the gate and asks the PCs what business they have with Lord Wolfe. The guard seems nervous and first tells the PCs to



## PEACE-BONDING

Most Threllish cities, including Port Fairglade, require citizens and visitors to peace-bond their weapons, encouraging people to stop and think before drawing weapons against one another. The Threllish custom uses leather or strong cord to tie an intricate knot that keeps the weapon in its sheath or other carrier and clearly shows that the weapon's bearer intends no harm.

Characters with peace-bonded weapons must spend an action to free their weapons of the restraints before they can draw them. Characters may instead try to wrest the weapon out of the bond as they draw the weapon by succeeding on a DC 12 Dexterity check.

In some cities, guards at the city's gates seal the peace bonds with wax. Breaking or untying a peace knot destroys the seal. Those who have drawn their weapons must explain themselves when authorities find the broken seal.

come back some other day. When they present Ithamar's letter, the guard begrudgingly hands the letter to a servant boy who takes it to the house. A short while later the Lord Mayor's steward, Robert, comes out to meet the PCs at the gate.

Robert checks the wax seals on the characters' peace-bonded weapons, in accordance with the laws of Port Fairglade. The steward then escorts them into the manor and has them wait in the parlor until Lord Wolfe is ready to receive them.

The PCs wait for a short time before the Lord Mayor enters the parlor and politely welcomes them. He has read Ithamar's letter and knows why they are here. He tells the PCs that the

White Serpent was stolen on the night before the PCs arrived. The thieves took nothing but the statue, even though many of the items in the museum are far more expensive.

Lord Mayor Wolfe is an imposing man in his mid-forties. His family has been a powerful

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Starting an adventure session with combat can help get everyone's mind on the game, but not every story can start with a fight. Another good way to start things off is with a social encounter.

Many adventures start in taverns because public gathering places give opportunities to introduce NPCs with stories that grab the PCs and start off quests. Players can talk with the barkeep or the servants or listen to old-timers who sit in the corner and tell stories about ancient times. They can speak to city guardsmen, stopping for a bite to eat or to ask questions about a crime. They might encounter a traveler from a distant land with tales about places the PCs have never seen, giving you a way to share new information about your campaign setting without making it sound like a geography lesson.

Social encounters also give characters a chance use abilities outside of combat. Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Deception), Wisdom (Insight) and other social skills are sometimes useful in a fight, but they are mainly used when talking to NPCs. It's important to give players a chance to use those abilities. It helps round out the PCs and reminds players that the setting is inhabited by characters other than their enemies. (Although, bantering with a hated foe can also be quite fun.)

part of Threll's politics for generations. While he is always polite, he also doesn't let the PCs forget the importance of his title and position. He offers to give them a tour of the museum, but tells them that his guards could find no clues about who the thieves might be.

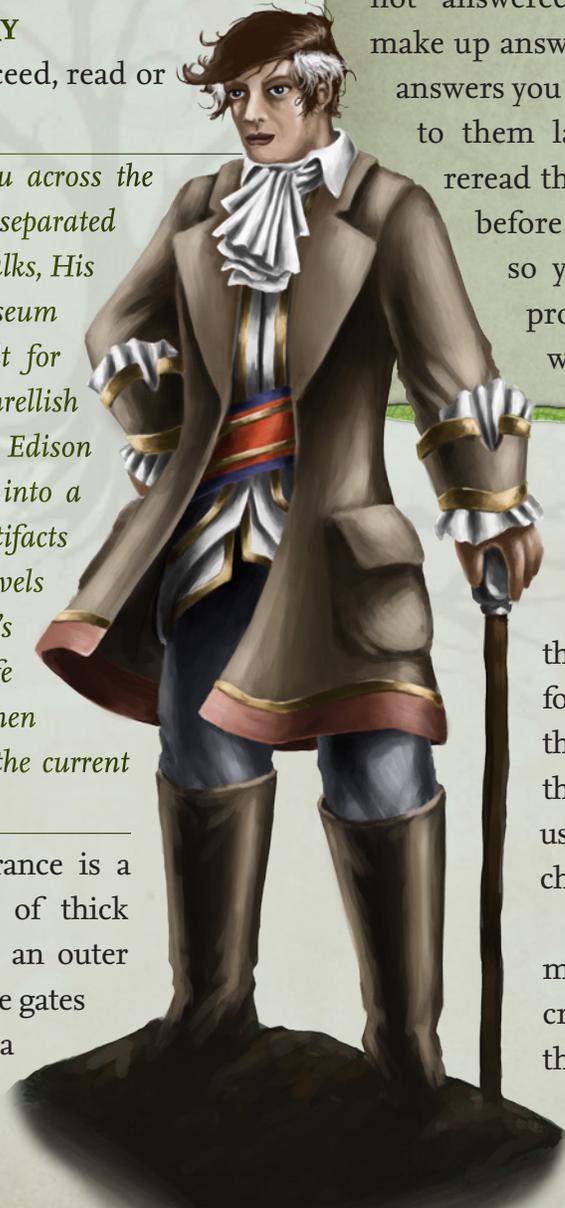
**Development:** Asking anything of Lord Wolfe other than to see the museum requires a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. His attitude starts off as Indifferent. During the tour of the museum, the PCs have opportunities to improve their chances of influencing him by demonstrating their appreciation and knowledge of its contents and earning his respect.

### THE MUSEUM ROBBERY

When you are ready to proceed, read or paraphrase the following:

*Lord Mayor Wolfe escorts you across the grounds to a large building, separated from the main house. As he walks, His Lordship explains that the museum was once a grand hall, built for holding lavish parties for the Threllish elite. His grandfather, Lord Edison Wolfe converted the building into a museum and filled it with artifacts he collected during his travels around the world. After Edison's death, Lord Mayor Collin Wolfe took over the collection and then passed it on to his own son, the current Lord Wolfe.*

The museum's main entrance is a large, double door crafted of thick darkwood and protected by an outer set of wrought iron gates. The gates are secured by a box with a single keyhole.



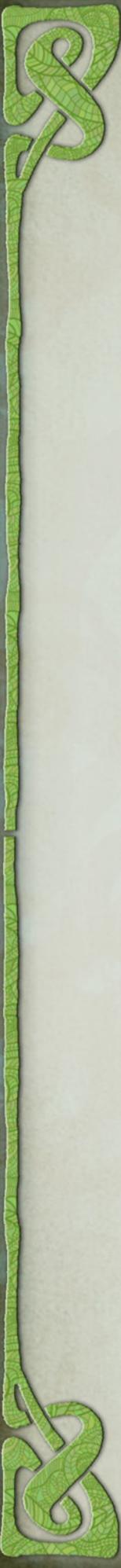
### EXPLORING THE MUSEUM

This part of the adventure lays the groundwork for later events. There are no combat encounters, now. The thieves took only the White Serpent statue and left no clues about the crime, but the PCs can use **Wisdom** and **Intelligence** skills to learn valuable information that may help them in the final encounter with King Udimu and his minions.

Encourage the players to ask questions and do your best to come up with reasonable answers for any questions not answered below. It's alright to make up answers, but take notes on the answers you give, so you can refer back to them later. You should quickly reread the section for each exhibit before you start describing it, so you can give the answers provided and improvise only when necessary.

Lord Wolfe draws a strange-looking key from a chain around his neck and inserts it into the hole. He maneuvers the key, turning it back and forth a number of times before the lock opens. Pushing on the heavier wooden door, he ushers the party into a dark, cool chamber.

The antechamber of the museum is decorated with crests and memorabilia from the Wolfe family's long history.



Wood-framed glass cases line the east and west walls and contain scarves, gloves, small pieces of jewelry and other trinkets. Suits of armor crafted in a style that has not been used for hundreds of years flank the doorway leading into the museum's main hall.

The main hall has a high ceiling, held aloft by six tall columns. A massive statue of a powerful-looking woman in flowing robes and holding a staff dominates the entryway. The museum contains an array of items from various places in the world and different periods of history. The whole collection is rather jumbled. This museum is more about indulging the family's wealth and power than actually furthering the study of history or anthropology.

There are five exhibits in the museum, with smaller artifacts on pedestals or in cases throughout the room. Although the PCs probably want to go directly to where the White Serpent statue was kept, the Lord Mayor wants the PCs to understand the strangeness of the robbery and escorts them through the downstairs exhibits, first.

He takes the PCs on a clockwise circuit of the room, starting in the southeastern corner. He spends a few moments describing each of his small exhibits and answers questions before moving on. Feel free to add descriptions of small items on your own, if you wish. Almost anything you would find in an ancient history museum might be in Lord Wolfe's collection.

Give the PCs time to examine the main exhibits; they may learn things they can use when they come back to the museum later in the adventure. If the characters do not have the skills

mentioned below, be creative about how they might use the skills they do have. If the players choose not to use skills at all, the battle at the end of the adventure will be more difficult.

### EXHIBIT A: STATUE OF LADY SUNNIVA WOLFE

---

The marble statue in the museum's entryway holds a beautiful staff, intricately carved from white ash and topped with a snarling wolf's head. The base of the statue bears the Wolfe family crest, a snarling wolf's head on a blue disc, along with the inscription, "A Light in the Darkness," written in old Threllish script. Lord Wolfe explains that the statue represents Lady Sunniva Wolfe, the family's founding matriarch. The inscription is the Wolfe family motto.

Lady Sunniva was a wise and powerful cleric of Losinia, the moon goddess, who aided the people of her father's lands while he was away laying siege to another warlord's fortress. Leading the commoners who would help her fight, she stood against an army of undead soldiers, raised by a necromancer who attacked when her father's army was no longer able to defend his lands.

Legend says that when the necromancer's troops drew close, Sunniva called upon the powers of Losinia and planted the staff in the ground. The staff shed silver light that weakened any undead within its glow. Sunniva and the villagers fought hard, and in the end, they prevailed. When her father returned from his war, he found his daughter had taken his place and was forced to yield to her.

**Development:** Lord Mayor Wolfe does not know that the staff is actually the one Lady Sunniva carried and still holds powerful

magic. PCs succeeding on a DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check notice that the staff's wolf head has a gem in each of its eyes. One of the gems is dark, while the other is clear blue and twinkles with a tiny spark.

PCs who worship Losinia and succeed on a DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** check feel drawn to the staff, as the moon pulls on the tide. A DC 12 **Intelligence (Religion)** check reveals that the symbol on the base of the statue indicates that the site has been dedicated to Losinia like a shrine.

### **EXHIBIT B: SIR DEVON'S TABARD**

Lord Mayor Wolfe shows the PCs a tall glass case holding fine silk tabard, embroidered with silver and gold thread. The tabard was worn by Sir Devon Freemantle, the knight who aided the first colonists to land on the shores of Threll.

Sir Devon is a legendary Threllish hero, a member of an order of holy knights, whose bravery and steadfastness enabled one of the first settlements to survive and eventually thrive. With his pure faith and unfaltering courage, he protected the people of that first colony, not only from hungry beasts and foul monsters, but also from disease and other dangers.

PCs who succeed on a DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check notice that Sir Devon's tabard is perfectly preserved. For example, the silver threads are only slightly tarnished, even though they must be hundreds of years old.

### **EXHIBIT C: SHAMANIC ARTIFACTS**

The mayor's grandfather brought this collection of primitive-looking tools, weapons, handmade containers and jewelry back from the mysterious Eskaenturu jungle.

He spent time with the elders and shamans of the Eskaenturu tribesmen and gathered samples of their art and craftsmanship. Wolfe is impressed by how these seemingly primitive people can thrive in such harsh places and craft such artwork. However, he doesn't know that some of the items in his collection are actually powerful medicines.

Several of the clay, wood, and bone vials have stoppers decorated with bright feathers and strings of colored beads. Most of the stoppers have come off, but a DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that three of the bottles are closed tightly and sealed with some kind of hard resin.

The jewelry is crafted from bright feathers and beads, too, woven into ornate designs, patterns, and symbols of great beauty and complexity. A DC 14 **Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals the plants and animal parts found in the exhibit thought to possess medicinal or healing properties. PCs succeeding at a DC 16 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check recognize the symbols on the jewelry as primitive versions of arcane symbols related to alchemy and herbalism.

### **EXHIBIT D: ANCIENT TEXTS**

This exhibit was Samuel Wolfe's first contribution to the museum. It is a collection of texts from ancient Akhutan, consisting of several papyrus scrolls and five large, clay tablets, inscribed with ancient writing.

Lord Mayor Wolfe explains that the people who predated the god-kings of Akhutan kept records on wet clay. He was told the tablets contain laws set down by a long-dead king. PCs who succeed at a DC 16 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check realize that the tablets are actually part of a ledger, recording a merchant's inventory

of livestock and textiles. If they tell Lord Wolfe, he finds the information amusing. He is also a businessman, so he respects the value of a solid ledger. Lord Wolfe appreciates PC's intelligence and honesty.

The papyrus scrolls are inscribed with hieroglyphics, pictograms commonly seen on artifacts from Akhutan. Wolfe states that they are texts on the ancient Akhutan custom of mummification. Although incomplete, the texts are incredibly valuable both as historical artifacts and as research material for those who wish to study medicine or necromancy. PC's who express interest in the medical applications of this knowledge gain Lord Wolfe's favor. Those who point out their value for necromantic purposes risk insulting him.

### **EXHIBIT E: AIR TEMPLE STONES**

This exhibit is actually part of an ancient temple devoted to spirits of the air. Edison Wolfe brought these pieces back with him from the great jungles of Eskaenturu, where he found a long-abandoned temple with beautiful carvings of winged beasts and other symbols related to the wind and the sky. Edison had several of the stones brought back to Port Fairglade, where they were fitted into the floor of his museum.

PCs can attempt a **Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice two things. Surpassing a DC 11 or higher reveals writing on the stones. On a result of 15 or higher, PCs notice that the air around this exhibit is fresh

and seems to rise gently, as though it is lighter than the air in other parts of the room.

Characters who understand Auran, the language of air elementals, can decipher the writing on the stones as references to ascension and communion with air spirits. If anyone mentions the air elemental motif or points out the strange feeling in this area, Wolfe smiles and winks before moving to stand over one particular stone.

The Lord Mayor speaks a word in Auran ("up" or "push") and rises off the floor, ascending several feet toward the ceiling. Lord Wolfe explains that the stone is able to cast a spell of levitation on the person above it who speaks the command word. He then repeats that word and descends to the ground. His children love to play on this exhibit.

The Lord Mayor gives his demonstration even if the PCs fail the skill checks, but is impressed by those who succeed. He lets successful PCs try the levitation effect. While held aloft, PCs notice that they could easily reach out and grab the nearby railing and pull themselves onto the second floor balcony. This trick may be helpful later.



## EXHIBIT F: BURIAL CHAMBER OF KING UDIMU

The final exhibit is Lord Wolfe's favorite, filled with items he personally acquired from Akhutan during his own expedition many years ago. The room is a replica of King Udimu's burial chamber, which Lord Wolfe's team discovered. Clay jars and statues are arranged along one wall, three simple sarcophagi lean against the opposite wall.

Two lavishly painted sarcophagi rest on either side of the sarcophagus containing the remains of King Udimu, himself. The king's sarcophagus is ornately carved and inlaid with semi-precious stones, as well as seven large gems. A fist-sized, blood-red ruby rests above the position of King Udimu's heart.

The two painted sarcophagi contain the remains of the king's wife and favorite bodyguard, while the lesser ones hold servants. Lord Wolfe says the king's sarcophagus is supposedly protected by an ancient curse that calls doom upon any who steal his treasure. The Lord Mayor took great care to ensure all the king's belongings stayed with him during the journey to Port Fairglade and are properly displayed in this chamber.

Lord Wolfe claims that he did this out of respect for King Udimu, but a successful DC 13 **Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that the stories of the curse make him a little nervous. If discovered, he merely jokes that he would be even angrier than King Udimu's spirit if any of the artifacts were damaged or lost.

PCs studying the sarcophagus can roll a DC 10 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check to identify necromantic symbols cleverly hidden among the images. These symbols actually connect in a mystical way, forming a magical field around the king's resting place. On a DC 15

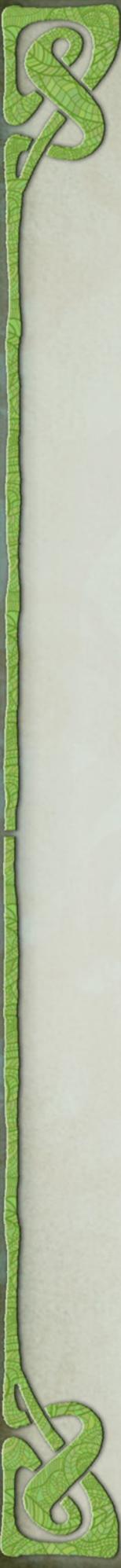
## PLAYERS VS. DICE

Rolling skill checks aren't always necessary, and sometimes devolve the game into endless dice rolling. Worse, some newer players may feel they need to roll dice for everything and if they have a poor score they won't even try to use it. As an example from above, if the character succeeds on one check, but then follows up by asking something specific question pertaining to the second skill check, it's OK to reward that character by just telling them the information.

**Intelligence (Religion)** check, characters recall that the Akhutani people believe their kings return from the afterlife to reclaim stolen treasures and that the vengeance of these angered spirits sometimes destroys the guilty and the innocent, alike.

**The White Serpent:** Lorde Wolfe also kept the serpent statue in the King's chamber, next to the canopic jars arranged on a table in the middle of the room. An empty pedestal rests where it that once sat.





Once the tour is complete, the Lord Mayor will discuss the statue. He produces a drawing and says the statue is carved from a single piece of pure, white quartz. It is intricately detailed, looking like a coiled snake. However, the snake's head is incorporated into the base of the statue, while the body is arranged more like a spring, with the tail spiraling up into the air. It is also marked with strange runes along the outer edge of the snake's body. Except for being crafted of a different material, the White Serpent seems identical to the Green Serpent that orc bandits stole from Ithamar Ruggles.

The runes on the statue are unlike any writing used by the people of Threll. The PCs have no chance of deciphering them. Several scholars have tried in the last couple of centuries without success. It was only through the intervention of otherworldly powers that Belazeel discovered the statues' purpose, and those powers have no intention of helping the PCs.

**Museum Security:** Lord Mayor Wolfe points out that the museum is quite secure. The main entrance is locked at all times and only Lord Mayor Wolfe has the key. Even having the key is useless unless one also knows the proper combination of left- and right-hand turns that must be made with it to open the lock. The lock is of master quality (AC 19, 8 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage) and without the key a creature proficient with thieves' tools can pick the lock with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

All the windows in the building are high on the walls, covered with glass, and reinforced with iron bars, allowing only light to pass through them. The doors and windows are protected by magical alarms that alert Lord Mayor Wolfe and his house guard of attempts to enter the museum. The alarm is renewed

## RECURRING ADVENTURE SITES

The events of *The King's Curse* revolve around the situation that eventually develops in the Wolfe family museum. In many adventures, the PCs discover a location's dangers when they explore it for the first time. In this adventure, however, the PCs first get to explore the museum while it is still safe.

During the course of a campaign, there are some locations that characters will visit many times. If one of these locations is important to the plot of an adventure, like the museum, each time they visit you can give your players an opportunity to gather information they can use during an encounter there, later. Players will enjoy recalling a detail or noticing that something has changed and using that knowledge to solve a puzzle or get the upper hand over an enemy.

daily by the house wizard, Cadmus Hearn, a good and honest man. The door's alarm is temporarily deactivated by the Lord's key. The window alarms are always active.

Despite these precautions, one of his possessions was stolen. The thieves, skilled enough to sneak into and out of the building without leaving a trace of evidence, stole only the White Serpent, which is clearly not the most valuable item in the museum.

Lord Mayor Wolfe lets the PCs examine as much of the museum as they wish. He even shows them the store room in the back of the building. Refer to page 38 for a description of what the PCs find there. The secret trap door

requires a DC 25 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find when closed, so the PCs shouldn't discover how the thieves got into the museum until later in the adventure.

After the tour and inspection, Wolfe escorts the PCs back to the manor house parlor and excuses himself. If the PCs impressed him with their knowledge and manners, he returns shortly to ask the PCs to investigate the crime and discover who has stolen the statue from him.

If the PCs failed to impress him or insulted him, he simply departs. The PCs have not made an ally of the Lord Mayor of Port Fairglade, but the house steward, Robert, knows how stubborn his employer can be and does what he can to help. After the Lord Mayor departs, Robert arrives with a tray of glasses and a pitcher of wine. He offers the PCs a drink before they leave. While the PCs are enjoying their beverages, Robert offers them the job.

He explains that the Lord Mayor is an intelligent and capable leader, but his focus is often on problems that exist outside of his home. For problems, or potential problems, within Wolfe Manor, His Lordship relies on Robert. While the Lord Mayor may not see their potential, Robert believes they can help catch the criminals.

Either Robert or the Lord Mayor will offer to pay the PCs 200 gold pieces each to find evidence that identifies who committed the robbery. The PCs may use **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception)** skills to haggle for more money, but both men are shrewd. Success against a DC 16 check raises the payment to 250 gold pieces per person. Players should be discouraged from using **Charisma (Intimidation)**, instead, because both men are powerful in their own circles. Even if they succeed, the later results could be disastrous for the PCs.

To earn their pay, the PCs must provide information that identifies the potential thieves, either by name or by the organization they work for. If asked for an opinion, both the Lord Mayor and Robert suggest going into town to see what they can find on the streets, especially the ones down near the Docks where the worst elements of society dwell.

Before the PCs leave, they receive clear directions to be discreet if they have not been so far. The Wolfe family is very powerful and well-connected, both financially and politically. If the PCs embarrass Lord Mayor Wolfe with their inquiries, the consequences will be dire. Even Robert is well known among the servants of the city. If the PCs bungle the investigation, they will not get paid and will find no warm welcome at any of the inns and taverns of the city—at least, not at any of the good ones.

This encounter gives the players an opportunity for roleplaying interactions with the people of Port Fairglade. You can spend as much play time as you like on the investigation, but it shouldn't take more than a day or so within the game. You can describe numerous social encounters, using the city description located on page 38 to set the scene before making the skill checks in Encounter 1A. If you need to save time or your players aren't interested in the social encounters, just have them make the rolls and move on to the next encounter.

## PART 1: EXPLORING THE CITY

After their meeting at the Lord Mayor's estate, the PCs are free to go to the Harbor Spring or another inn to rest, if they wish. The Lord Mayor wants them to begin their investigation as soon as possible, though, so they shouldn't waste too much time.

### 1A. THE INVESTIGATION

Port Fairglade has four major districts that the PCs can explore. Even though their employers recommend starting at the docks, let the players decide where in town they want to start their investigation. The choice they make sets the difficulty for finding the information they need and for keeping the Lord Mayor's secret.

The PCs must visit a district, spend an hour or more asking questions of the locals, and then make a **Charisma (Persuasion)** check to see if they gathered the required information. The four districts are the Docks (DC 14), the Merchant's Quarter (DC 17), the Artisan's District (DC 20), or the Government Quarter (DC 23). They only need one success, so the PCs have four chances.

The players should choose one person to make the **Charisma (Persuasion)** roll for the group, usually the player whose character has the highest **Charisma (Persuasion)** skill modifier. Other PCs can use aid another by spreading out and finding details that help the main investigator.

The PCs must also be discreet in their search. Choosing the wrong district increases the chances that a loose word reveals the PCs' mission and word of the slip makes its way back to Robert's ears. The PCs may make a "discretion check" using **Charisma (Deception)** or **Dexterity (Stealth)** to go unnoticed during the investigation. PCs can use the aid another action for this roll,

as well. The city can then oppose the PCs with a **Wisdom (Insight)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** check, depending on which skill it uses.

The city's "skill check modifiers" vary for each district: the Docks (+2), the Artisan's District (+4), the Merchant Quarter (+6), and the Government Quarter (+8). If the city defeats the party's check, Robert knows the PCs have drawn too much attention in that area and reduces each PC's payment by 50 gold pieces.

If they fail the Discretion checks in all four areas of the city, the PCs receive no payment from Robert and any goods and services in the inns and taverns of medium quality or higher throughout the city cost 10% more. On the other hand, if the PCs succeed at all Discretion checks by 5 or more, they receive a 10% discount on goods and services in Port Fairglade for a full year after the adventure ends.

Since the difficulty of both checks is lowest in the docks, the PCs have the best chance for success if they go directly there. But if they fail their rolls and cannot find any information there, they must go to another district.

If they fail in all four districts, all is not lost. Succeeding on any **Charisma (Persuasion)** check automatically triggers the next encounter, but failing all four **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks triggers the same encounter. They meet the same thugs, but for different a reason.

A successful party finds some street thugs who know that someone was planning a big heist. They don't mind sharing this information with the PCs, but plan on beating them up and robbing them, too.

If they are unsuccessful, the thugs hear about people asking dangerous questions and decide to rough them up and take their belongings as a lesson. When the thugs are defeated, they tell the PCs what they need to know just before the city guard arrives.

As the PCs make their way through the city streets, use the information in the description of Port Fairglade (see page 38) to give the players more details about the city. Describe the sights and smells around them, which will change, depending on where they decide to go:

- In the Docks, the smells of tar, stale water, and dead fish fill the air. Men and women lug heavy burdens to and from ships and boats tied to long piers jutting out into Thompson's Creek. A caller shouts out ship arrival and departure times. Others advertise for the town's inns and taverns. Dangerous-looking characters lurk in the shadowed alleyways, offering goods and services that decent folk avoid.
- In the Artisan's District, the PCs find the equally unpleasant smells of glues, dyes and other chemicals. The air is filled with smoke, the ringing of hammers on forges, and the clattering of looms.
- In the Merchants' Quarter, things smell slightly better unless the PCs pass the fishmongers' or butchers' stalls. However, the air is filled with the din of hawkers, each trying to shout over the others to draw customers. The clinking of coins changing hands mingles with the conversations about rising or falling prices on cotton, cattle, and grain, and the sharing of rumors.
- The only quiet district is the Government Quarter, in which dignified men and women, all smelling of fine perfumes and dressed in expensive clothes, move about silently or in quiet conversation, usually gossip about this or that lady or lord who has fallen on hard times or who recently gained title or holdings elsewhere in the kingdom. Even if you decide to resolve the investigation

with dice rolls, take some time to describe the districts and tell the players about the most important laws of the city, such as the requirement to peace-bond weapons. The PCs later learn that the city guard means business when it comes to enforcing the law.

The guard patrols every district. Port Fairglade's guards take their work seriously. The guards in the Government and Merchants' Quarters have a more superior attitude than those in the other districts. If the PCs antagonize the city guard, word of their lawlessness reaches Lord Mayor Wolfe and the city's Lord Marshall.

### 1B. STREET THUGS (100 XP)

After the PCs' conclude their investigation read the following aloud:

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*As you stand at the side of the road, piecing together the information you've managed to collect, you hear a hiss, and a man's voice calls from a narrow alleyway nearby.*

*"Oy! You there! I hear yer lookin' fer somethin'! Come 'ere. I can tell ye what ye want to know."*

*The man ducks back around the corner and back into the alley, apparently waiting for you to go to him.*

---

The man in the alley is a small-time criminal. He knows what the PCs are looking for, and he has the information they need, but he and his gang plan on robbing them.

**Creatures:** When the PCs round the corner, they find the man and three more thugs in the alley. The men attack the PCs as soon as they are in the alley, even if one or more of the PCs waits outside on the street. The thugs' weapons are not peace-bonded, which may initially give them an advantage.



## HUMAN STREET THUGS (4)

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

11 (+0) 12 (+1) 12 (+1) 10 (+0) 10 (+0) 10 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

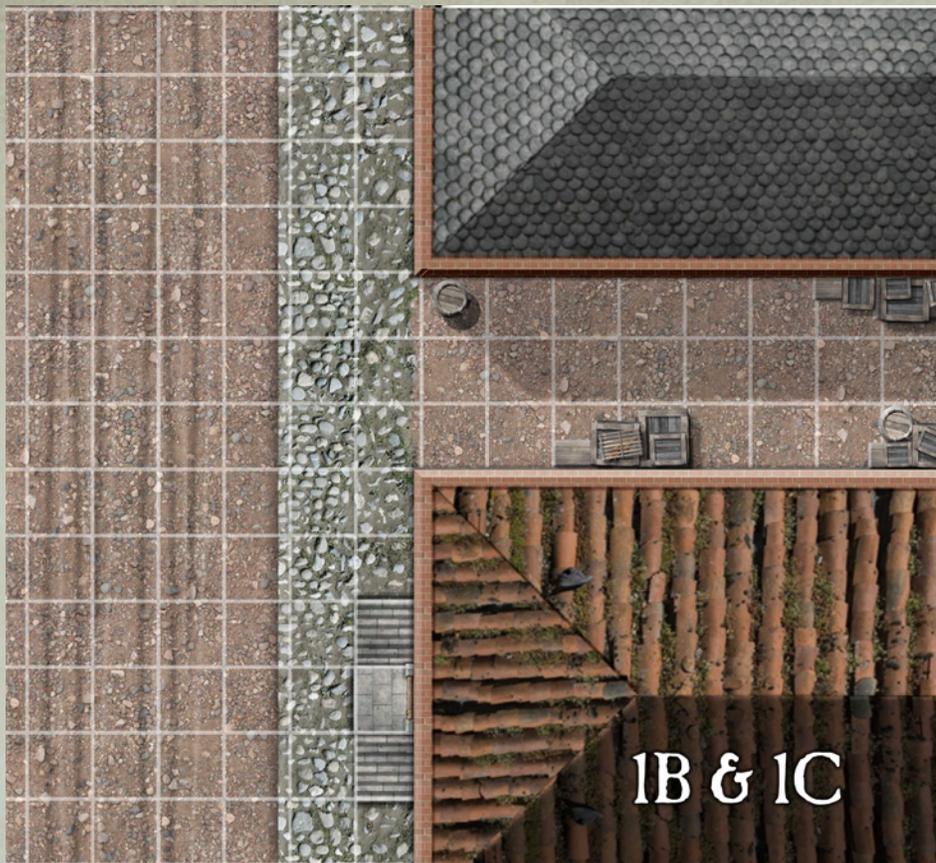
**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

**Daggers (3 each).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20ft./60ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

**Treasure** Each thug has a pouch containing 2d10 gold coins.

**Development:** The thugs fight until only one remains standing. The lone thug drops his weapons and begs for mercy. He tells the PCs that the city's low-life are spreading a rumor that someone hired the Elverin Skulk, an infamous thieves' guild, to pull off a major heist against one of Port Fairglade's most powerful citizens.

The thug doesn't know who the Skulk's target was supposed to be or who hired them, but he says he knows where some Elverin Skulk members might be. He gives them the address of a house near the docks. Just as he finishes giving the PCs this information, the city guard arrives.



### 1C. CITY GUARDS (100 XP)

The city guard happens upon the scene immediately after the PCs finish talking to the remaining street thug. Unfortunately, the guards aren't interested in hearing the details of the PCs' investigation.

*The sound of boots on gravel draws your attention to four well-armed and armored men wearing the livery of Port Fairglade guardsmen standing at the mouth of the alley. One of the guards steps forward and places his hand on his sword hilt.*

*"Is there a problem, here?"*

The guardsmen's first impression is that the PCs are just as guilty as the men who attacked them. The PCs need to talk to the guards and explain themselves or they may even face murder charges for killing the thugs.

They can deal with the guards by using

**Charisma (Persuasion), Charisma (Deception)** or both. The guardsmen are willing to listen to reason, but they must be convinced. A skill check can resolve this encounter, but encourage the players to talk things out with the guards. If the players make good arguments, give them each a +2 circumstance bonus to their rolls.

#### **HUMAN CITY GUARDS (4)**

*Medium humanoid (human), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

13 (+1) 12 (+1) 12 (+1) 10 (+0) 11 (+0) 10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

#### **ACTIONS**

**Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20ft/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

**Treasure** Each guard has a purse containing 2d6 gold coins and each one has a lantern, a vial of oil and rope

If things go very badly, the guards try to take the PCs into custody. If the PCs agree to go quietly, Robert bails them out. He gives them another chance to find out what is going on, but cuts their promised pay in half.

If the PCs fight the guards and win, they can track down the Elverin Skulk and proceed to the end of the adventure before the law catches up with them. However, the Lord Marshall arrests them unless Lord Mayor Wolfe intervenes. If the PCs attack the guards and lose (the guards simply elect to knock out the PCs instead of kill them when they reach zero hit points), Robert still bails them out of jail. He threatens to throw them in prison unless they finish the investigation without payment.

### 1D. THE ELVERIN SKULK SAFE HOUSE

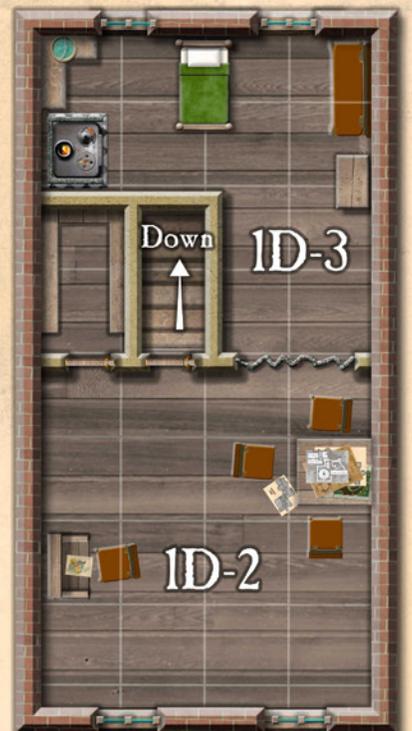
The Elverin Skulk safe house sits on a lonely street near the docks and harbors. The team sent to rob the museum is out preparing an audacious operation, but four junior guild members return to the safe house shortly after the PCs arrive.



First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor

## Elverin Skulk Safehouse

*This narrow road leading away from the river. Its sidewalks are deserted, and the normal bustle of the streets fades into the background. The late afternoon sun casts long shadows. Rounding a sharp corner, you see the building that the street thug described wedged in between two other buildings.*

*The narrow house has a small front stoop off to one side. Six windows face the street, two on each of three floors. The roof is angled sharply, forming a narrow point like a chisel. Four stone statues of winged monsters adorn the building's corners. The building's windows are dark.*

As the PCs look around, have everyone make **Wisdom (Perception)** checks and answer the players' questions about their surroundings. There are alleys and doorways on either side of the street where the PCs can hide. If they succeed on a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check, PCs notice that the afternoon sunlight glints off of something hanging from the neck of one of the statues on the roof—Spike the gargoyle's trinket. This may give the PCs a clue that there is more to that "statue" than meets the eye.

Eventually, four Skulk members arrive at the house. PCs succeeding on a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check can hear footsteps coming down the road. They have one round to take actions before two men and two women round a corner and go to the safe house door. Unless the PCs interrupt them, they all go inside.

This scene can play out in different ways. The encounters are presented in their most likely order. Whatever scheme they try, they must defeat the thieves and deal with the gargoyle. After the fight, they can talk to the surviving thieves or search the safe house to get the information they need.

### 1D-1 POISONED DART TRAP (100 XP)

The entrance is a simple wood door with a basic lock (AC 15, 5 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage) and without the key, a creature proficient with thieves' tools can pick the lock with a successful DC 12 Dexterity check. When they open the door, the PCs see one of the thieves running up the stairs to the second floor. The thief hopes to lure reckless PCs into a trap.

**Trap:** The Elverin Skulk rigged a poison dart trap at the entrance. A tripwire runs across the entry hall to a launcher near the ceiling. The thieves know to jump over the tripwire, but unless the PCs succeed on a Wisdom (perception check to discover the trap, the first person who steps through the door is targeted by a poison-coated dart. The dart makes a ranged attack with a +8 bonus against a random target within 10 feet (vision is irrelevant to this attack roll). A target that is hit takes 2 (1d4) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute.

### 1D-2 ELVERIN SKULK MEMBERS (100 XP)

The thieves run up the stairs to the top floor and wait for the PCs to come to them. The information the PCs seek is on the third floor. The location map shows the layout of the second floor in case the PCs decide to explore the lower floors.

**Creatures:** On the top floor, one thief stands opposite the door as bait while an additional thief stands on each side of the door, waiting to sneak attack the first PC to charge into the room. The fourth thief hides behind the curtain, waiting to help.



The thieves don't know why the PCs are here, but they fight bravely to protect a pouch of gems they recently stole. During the fight, they try to set up flanking situations so they can use their sneak attacks.

After two thieves fall, one of the remaining two withdraws and blows on a whistle that seems to make no sound.

### **ELVERIN SKULK THIEVES (4)**

*Medium humanoid (human), any non-lawful alignment*

**Armor Class** 12 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10(+0)	10(+0)	10(+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** any one language (usually Common)

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### **ACTIONS**

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** Each thief has a purse containing 1d6 gold coins. One of the thieves carries a small pouch of diamonds and sapphires worth 1,000 gold pieces. If the PCs turn these over to Lord Wolfe, the party earns a 250-gp reward from the stolen gems' original owner, and Lord Wolfe gives them an additional 750 gp as a bonus for their honesty.

**Development:** The thieves fight until they are all defeated. However, 2d4 rounds after the thief blows his whistle, a massive creature that looks like a winged statue crashes through the building's rear window and joins the fight, either on his own or alongside the remaining thieves.

### 1D-3 SPIKE THE GARGOYLE (450 XP)

*A dark figure suddenly crashes through the window at the back of the building, sending splintered wood and glass flying. It unleashes a terrifying roar, then rises up and unfurls a pair of wings that have the same stony, gray appearance as the rest of its skin. A sparkling green trinket dangles from a silver chain around the creature's neck. The monster bares its fangs and leaps forward to attack.*

Spike serves as a guard for the Elverin Skulk safe house. He has a birth defect that makes his skin slightly softer than that of other gargoyles and would not have survived elsewhere. He is unfailingly loyal to the guild.

**Creatures:** If the PCs are inside the house when he attacks, he will fight to the death to drive his boss's enemies out of the house.

### SPIKE THE GARGOYLE

*Medium elemental, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d8 + 21)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

15 (+2) 11 (+0) 16 (+3) 6 (-2) 11 (+0) 7 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons that aren't adamantine

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Terran

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The gargoyle makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

### DAMAGE RESISTANCE

Damage resistance can be a challenging part of the rules for any player. Successfully rolling to hit an enemy but then having half of the damage negated can sometimes be frustrating for younger players.

If your players are going to be facing many enemies with damage resistance, consider placing one or two items that overcome it in the adventure for them to find.

However, challenges like this also encourage players to change up their tactics. When you first introduce an enemy with damage resistance, let them experience the initial frustration, but then encourage them to think about other ways to deal with the enemy.

Spike's damage resistance can usually only be overcome by magic weapons, we lowered it to adamantine to ensure that he is not an insurmountable challenge. Some players still may have trouble doing much damage to Spike, but they can try to subdue him in other ways. They might be able to use the curtain as a makeshift net or try use some other method to bring him down.

If any creature's damage resistance is ruining the fun of the game (or you think it will), you can just ignore it and reduce the creature's challenge by 1.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

**Treasure:** The pendant on Spike's silver chain is a crystal vial protected in a mesh of silver and containing an emerald green liquid. This is the glittering item that the PCs may have seen when they approached the building. Spike likes the way it sparkles and doesn't know or care that the vial contains a *potion of remove curse*.

**Development:** After the fight, Spike or one of the Skulk members can tell the PCs that the guild just finished something big. The thieves who fought the PCs know that the Fox Prince sent a team of "specialists" into town for an important mission, and they planned their operation in this safe house.

If the PCs succeed on a **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Intimidation)** check against a surviving thief, he tells them that the team is already gone, but they might have left some kind of information in the apartment. The thieves are initially Hostile, but the PCs' victory over them gives them advantage on their skill checks. If the PCs subdue Spike without killing him, they can ask him some questions, too.

The PCs learn that the other Skulk members came to the safe house several days ago. They didn't discuss their plans much, but they planned to steal a single object. One of the thieves was very angry that they were not allowed to take other valuable items from the site of the robbery.

If the PCs search the top floor of the building, they find papers outlining the Skulk's plan. They also find a map of the city with rough lines drawn on it that connect a certain street corner with a building located on the grounds of the Wolfe estate. The line is labeled "tunnel," which explains how the thieves got into the museum and gives the PCs a way to get in, when things go wrong later in the evening.

## INTERMISSION?

If the fights with Spike, the thieves, street thugs, and maybe even the city guard took a lot out of the party, it is wise to give the PCs a chance to have a short or long rest and recover their spells and other abilities. Although the journey through the sewers and the fight in the museum are more dramatic if they take place at night, there is no reason they can't happen during the day.

The thieves' notes prove the Skulk was responsible for the theft. The PCs can deliver this information to collect their pay.

## PART 2: TROUBLE IN THE MUSEUM

The PCs are able to deliver their evidence to Robert shortly after nightfall. When they arrive at Wolfe Manor, servants rush them through the house and into the parlor, where the Lord Mayor paces the floor, wearing a worried expression. He lets Robert explain what has happened.

*"Whatever you have found, I'm sorry to say that you are too late. Someone broke into the museum, again!" Robert lets this information sink in before continuing.*

*"The alarm spells went off about an hour ago, but the guards saw no one on the grounds and the museum door was still locked. We have no idea how the thieves got in. Guards were posted inside, but we've heard nothing from them. We were going to send more guards in, but the doors slammed shut. We've tried everything to open them—even battering them down, but they haven't budged."*

The Lord Mayor asks the PCs to go into the museum, find out what is happening, and put a stop to it. He would rather not involve the city guard. If the public found out that intruders had entered his home twice, they might question his ability to protect the city. More importantly, explaining everything to the city guard takes time and whatever is in that museum must be dealt with quickly.

If the PCs ask for payment, Lord Mayor Wolfe ruefully nods to Robert, who groans and offers to pay them 200 gp each for their help. He calls them mercenaries and is especially upset if he just bailed them out of jail.

The PCs first need to get into the museum. The magic of the curse sealed the front door and strengthened the walls and windows. The PC cannot to break through them, but there is another way in. The map in the thieves' safe house showed the PCs that a tunnel to the museum runs beneath the streets of Port Fairglade.

When Wolfe learns of the map, he is surprised and angry. He says that he remembers childhood stories of nobles attending parties who used a hidden tunnel to leave the grand hall unnoticed to attend secret meetings or conduct other private business. He curses himself for not remembering sooner.

Wolfe asks the PCs to follow the tunnel and try to get inside the museum. The map leads them to a nearby sewer entrance. From there, they must delve beneath the city and find a way to stop the mysterious curse.

## 2A. THROUGH THE SEWERS

Port Fairglade's system of sewers carries waste and storm water safely below the streets and into the Lashelenite River, removing a source of disease and other problems normally associated



with city life. The sewers are large enough to stand up in, but they are unlit. During the day, dim light filters in from the streets. At night, they are completely dark. Robert provides each PC with a torch, if necessary.

### 2A-1 THE RAT LORD (500 XP)

City workers use special entry points to go below and maintain the tunnels. However, this particular entry is rarely used, because of its proximity to Port Fairglade's wealthier homes. Sewer workers try not to disturb the citizens here. In the workers' absence, another denizen has claimed the space as his home.

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*The light of the full moon fades as the stone stairs descend into a dark room that smells of mold and old decay. The air is damp and cool and clings to your skin. The sounds of clawed feet scrabbling on stone accompany the movement of large, rat-shaped shadows.*

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## Through the Sewers

This square room holds little more than a pile of rags and old blankets (Damir’s bed). Some small items rest on a shelf sticking out of the north wall. Damir frequently uses the heavy door in the east wall, so it is unlocked.

**Creatures:** Damir Sirola is a wererat who lives alone, with only a few of his giant rat friends for company. He sells trinkets he finds in the sewers for food or for baubles that only he finds valuable.

When the PCs reach the bottom of the stairs, Damir hisses at them from the shadows and shrieks, “Thiss iss my home! Get out!”

Damir is neither smart nor brave but claims this entrance to the sewers as his. The Elverin Skulk paid Damir for permission to pass through. Damir’s initial reaction to the PCs is more bravado than a real threat. He fights if necessary but hopes he can just scare them away.

If the PCs do not immediately attack, they can try to speak with Damir to get past him. Damir’s initial attitude is Hostile. A DC 20 **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception)** check changes his attitude to Indifferent, and he lets them pass. If the PCs change his attitude to Friendly (With

a second DC 20 **Charisma (Persuasion)** or **Charisma (Deception)** check), Damir warns the PCs about the pit trap in **area 2a-2**, and tells the PCs that the thieves warned him about an angry water spirit near the bridge (see **area 2a-4**) and gives the party the items on his shelf.

If the PCs cannot change Damir's attitude, he and the dire rats attack and fight to the death.

## DAMIR SIROLA

CR 2

### WERERAT ROGUE

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR** DEX **CON** INT **WIS** **CHA**

10 (+0) 15 (+2) 12 (+1) 11 (+0) 10 (+0) 8 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non magical weapons that aren't silvered

**Senses** darkvision 60ft. (rat form only), passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common (can't speak in rat form)

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The wererat can use its action to polymorph into a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Keen Smell.** The were rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** The wererat deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the wererat that isn't incapacitated and the wererat doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** The were rat makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.

**Bite (Rat or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1 d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.

**Shortsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Hand Crossbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.



Bob Gougeon

## GIANT RATS (2)

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

7 (-2)   15 (+2)   11 (+0)   2 (-4)   10 (+0)   4 (-3)

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages**-

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Keen Smell.** The rat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The rat has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rat's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** Damir sometimes keeps treasures he finds and stores them on his shelf. It currently holds a *wand of magic detection* and a *scroll of cure wounds*.

**Development:** If the PCs talk to Damir, he tells them that a group of Elverin Skulk members came through the sewers earlier in the evening and left a little over an hour before the PCs arrived. This same group used the tunnels on the previous night, but when they left, then, the thieves had a bundle with them. This evening, however, they carried nothing and seemed like they were in a hurry to get out of town.

### 2A-2 TRAPPED TUNNEL (50 XP)

Small amounts of water seep through the walls, here, and the floor is damp.

**Trap:** To protect himself from unwanted visitors, the wererat took advantage of a

## LYCANTHROPY

The curse of lycanthropy is a tricky element for GMs and players. Changing into a dangerous beast on nights of a full moon can be an interesting part of a character's story, but what the PC does when he becomes the monster is out of the player's control. PCs become a danger to others and must either hide their curse or find a cure for it. These elements may not be right for every group.

A PC won't know he has contracted lycanthropy, right away. Most people know that were-creatures can pass on the affliction through a bite (DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) or Intelligence (arcana) check), but bitten characters don't automatically know they have been cursed. The tension of waiting for the next full moon can be fun, but if you'd rather not deal with that, there are ways to quickly remove the curse as a story element.

In this adventure, the PCs can find Spike the gargoyle's *potion of remove curse*. If they don't find the potion, Lord Wolfe helps by asking High Priestess Lillian Barringer of Losinia's church in Port Fairglade to break the curse. Lord Wolfe considers the cost of her services an investment in the city's safety. Of course, the High Priestess may also demand a favor—to be repaid later—in return for casting the spell.

sinkhole that formed in the floor. He spread a thin layer of canvas over the hole and carefully placed stones over it. The floor looks solid, but will collapse under more than a few pounds of pressure. A successful DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check discerns an absence of foot traffic over the section of floor that forms the pit's cover. A successful DC 15 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check is necessary to confirm

that the trapped section of floor is actually the cover of a pit. When a creature steps on the cover, it collapses, causing the character to spill into the pit 30 feet below for 3d6 damage.

### 2A-3 GIANT CENTIPEDE (200 XP)

The door from the trapped tunnel opens into a broad intersection with an arched ceiling just high enough to allow all but the tallest characters to stand. Walkways on either side of these tunnels are 5 feet wide. A 5-foot-deep stream of filthy water sluggishly flows a few inches below the level of floor. The bars at each end of the tunnel keep larger, dangerous creatures from moving around the sewers and make it clear to the PCs that they must move west, since they cannot go north or south.

Any PC making a DC 13 **Wisdom (Perception)** check notices that the walkway immediately north of the doorway was recently splashed with water. Passing the DC by 5 or more reveals damp footprints made by several pairs of feet. The footprints lead to the door and disappear. The thieves left these when they fled from the water elemental in the tunnel to the west.

A large stone from the ceiling rests in the middle of the tunnel. Damir placed long planks down to help him cross the stream. Under normal circumstances, walking across the planks is relatively easy (DC 10 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check).

**Hazard:** Any PC falling into the water in must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Additionally, the PC must succeed on a DC 11 on a Constitution saving throw or contract sewer plague (DMG).

**Creatures:** The bars in the sewers are wide enough to allow one predator to move freely through the tunnels. A giant centipede is on the hunt for dire rats when the PCs arrive. The aggressive bug attacks, making the task of crossing the disgusting sewer water more difficult.

When the first PC is halfway across the makeshift bridge, read the text below. The centipede can come from either end of the tunnel, depending on how close you want it to be when you start the encounter. If possible, the centipede attacks a PC who is alone on one side of the tunnel.

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*A strange skittering, scratching sound echoes through the tunnels. Looking over your shoulder, you see a long, sinuous form emerge from the darkened tunnel beyond the iron bars. The creature scurries on dozens, perhaps hundreds, of legs, crawling over the floor and wall with equal ease. When it sees you, it emits a hiss and charges forward, its fangs dripping a thick, greenish liquid.*

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### GIANT HISSING CENTIPEDE

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 40 (10d6 + 10)

**Speed** 30ft., climb 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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5 (-3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)
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**Senses** blindsight 30ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until it finishes a short or long rest.

## 2A-4. WATER ELEMENTAL, 700 XP

This section of the tunnel holds a resident that not even the Skulk thieves expected.

**Creatures:** Although portals from the elemental planes can spontaneously appear anywhere, such occurrences are very rare. Still, a water elemental somehow found its way into the sewers. It is confused and greatly angered by the amount of filth and impurities in the water, here. It lashes out at anyone who passes by.

On their way into the museum, the thieves fended off the creature's attacks long enough to escape. The second time, they knew what to expect and didn't even try crossing the bridge at the far end of the tunnel. Instead, they ran and jumped across the sewer toward the exit. One of the thieves missed the jump and landed at the edge of the water. His companions pulled him out quickly, and they all escaped through Damir's chamber.

The curved section of walkway ahead is broken by a very shallow stream of water running down from a ditch up above. The PCs can easily walk through the stream, but when the first PC reaches it, the elemental rises up and attacks.

*The surface of the water suddenly forms a dome, as though some force is pushing it up from below. The dome rises higher, becoming a column of water about the size of a person, then grows arms. Bits of flotsam and clouds of murky sewage pass into and out of the creature's form. Holes suddenly open where a head might be, forming a terrible face and unleashing a scream that sounds like a crashing wave as the monster attacks!*

## WATER ELEMENTAL

*Large elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 114 (12d10 + 48)

**Speed** 30ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Aquan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Water Form.** The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Freeze.** If the elemental takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Whelm** (*Recharge 4-6*). Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If it is Large or smaller, it is also grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the elemental's space.

The elemental can grapple one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at one time. At the start of each of the elemental's turns, each target grappled by it takes 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. A creature within 5 feet of the elemental can pull a creature or object out of it by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength and succeeding.

**Development:** The elemental fights until destroyed, but will not leave the water to follow the PCs.

### 2A-5. COLLAPSED TUNNEL, 400 XP

This room was once the intersection where the Wolfe family's party guests headed into a secret network of tunnels leading to select taverns and salons nearby. The tunnel collapsed several years ago, when workers were building an addition to one of those old taverns. Although the collapse didn't give away a Wolfe family secret, the event was a matter of curiosity among the city's social elite. This section of tunnels was filled in so that further work could continue on the tavern, but no one bothered to explore the matter further.

*The passageway opens into a rectangular room with two passages leading away to the north and east. The stench of rotting meat and something worse fills your nose as two man-like figures lurch forward out of the darkness. Their pallid skin and long, rasping tongues clearly mark them as anything but human.*

**Creatures:** What none knew at the time of the collapse was that two men, servants from Wolfe Manor, had robbed the Lord Mayor and were escaping through the tunnel. The falling debris killed them and their bodies were never discovered.

### UNDEAD FOR KIDS?

The living dead are common foes in roleplaying games and popular media. Most adult gamers enjoy duking it out with the walking dead, but they can be a pretty scary concept for some young players. Even though an animal might enjoy eating one's character just as much, the idea of facing a flesh-eating ghoul can be far more powerful and terrifying. One must tread carefully when presenting elements like this to kids.

One way to take the edge off of these encounters is to use what might be called the "Scooby Doo method." The Scooby Doo cartoon show often uses undead monsters like zombies, ghosts, vampires, and ghouls. The creatures in that show can be pretty scary looking and dangerous, too, but the show's comedic elements make it easier for younger viewers to watch and enjoy the story without getting too scared. GMs can use the same method in their games.

It's easier to take this approach if you already allow for some humor in your games, especially during combat. A bit of camp in your battles with the undead can help. Skeletons that lose their heads and have to catch them, ghouls being startled by the PCs' sudden appearance, or other antics can help remind young players that this is a game and reduce the risk of bad dreams when the game is over.

Being so close to the museum, the vengeful powers of Akhutan have touched their unhallowed grave, transforming them into ghouls. They have just crawled out from under the rubble at the end of the hall and entered this room when the PCs arrive. Their unearthly hunger drives them to attack immediately.

## **GHOULS (2)**

*Medium undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

13 (+1)   15 (+2)   10 (+0)   7 (-2)   10 (+0)   6 (-2)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

## **ACTIONS**

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Treasure:** One of the ghouls carries a pouch containing a small, primitive-looking statue carved from obsidian with onyx gemstones for eyes. The statue is only worth about 100 gp, but Lord Wolfe will recognize it as a piece that his grandfather reported stolen decades ago and pays 400 gp for its return.

## **2A-6. TRAPPED DOOR, 100 XP**

At the end of a long, winding tunnel, the PCs find a small, square room with a ladder on the west wall that leads up to a square hole in the ceiling. Pieces of stone lie at the bottom of the ladder—the shattered remnants of what was once a finely crafted trap door. A DC 13 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals black scorch marks on some of the pieces of stone, as though something had burned them. Although the door no longer covers the hole, the opening is still magically trapped, making it dangerous for anyone to simply climb through it.

**Trap:** Those who detect the trap see a row of tiny arcane runes carved into the stone surrounding the opening. To pass safely, the PCs must speak the correct password or a creature proficient with thieves' tools can disable it with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. A successful *dispel magic* cast on it destroys the trap (the effect is considered 3<sup>rd</sup> level).

Breaking the magical barrier without doing one of those things sets off a magic fire trap. The runes are permanent and reset the trap one minute after it discharges.

The Elverin Skulk thieves temporarily dispelled this trap, but it is active when the PCs arrive. If the PCs found and identified Damir's *wand of magic detection*, they may discover the trap revealing an aura of evocation magic. If not, they must find a way to discharge the trap without getting burned. They can toss a piece of the stone door through the hole while staying out of the spell's area of effect (a 15-foot cone of fire. Each creature in the fire must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (5d4) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Development:** After the PCs pass through the secret entrance, the growing power of King Udimu's curse magnifies the trap's effects. For each hour that passes, raise the damage by 1d4 (max 10d4) and the DC of the Dexterity save by 1 (no maximum). When the curse is lifted, the trap returns to its original state.

### SECOND INTERMISSION?

If the PCs are low on resources as they prepare to enter the museum, allow them to rest here. The guards are in some danger and the curse may be growing stronger, but if they want to be cautious, that's fine. If the team works together, remembers the clues in the museum, and figures out what they need to do to end the curse, they stand a good chance of succeeding. However, if the players choose to face King Udimu and his servants head on, they will need all of their resources to win.

If the PCs rest and enter the museum in the morning, remember to change the descriptions of the exhibits to take the sunlight into account. All other effects stay the same.

## 2B. THE CURSED MUSEUM

The inside of the museum is quiet and dark. Though it was inviting and interesting in the daylight, it is now a creepy place where every shadow could hide something awful. By this point, the PCs have already encountered strange and terrifying foes. They are about to face a dark force from the ancient past.

### 2B-1. DANGEROUS ROOM

*This appears to be a storeroom where Lord Mayore Wolfe keeps items that are not yet ready for display. Boxes and containers occupy a few shelves along one wall and a massive, humanoid stone statue stands in the far corner, opposite the open trap door. The statue's vacant glass eyes look menacing.*

Lord Mayor Wolfe uses the room as a workshop where he can examine his historical artifacts. A nearby table is scattered with a few trinkets, as well as a magnifying glass, a few brushes and small picks, and a blank notebook. A heavy mallet leans against the table, as well. The place is obviously well-used, but it is also dusty and dirty.

The PCs can easily see footprints in the dust on the floor. A DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Survival)** check tells the PCs that the people who made these footprints moved away from the trap door slowly, but ran toward it on their way out. During their first foray into the museum, the thieves used simple magic to hide their footprints before closing the secret trap door. This time, they were too busy fleeing for their lives.

The first PC entering the room notices something shiny on the floor next to the table. The object is a massive ruby. This ruby is the gemstone that rested in the spot corresponding to King Udimu's heart. Allow the PCs a DC 8 **Intelligence (Arcana)** or **Intelligence (religion)** check to remember what the Lord Mayor said about the dead king's curse. Putting the gem back where it belongs will put the king's spirit to rest, as long as no other objects were stolen. If the players don't realize this on their own, give this information to PCs who rolled a result of 15 or higher on the knowledge check.

The PCs' challenge is getting the ruby to the king's exhibit. The curse has taken hold in the building and its power grows. Already, the dark spirits have extended their reach into the storeroom and seek to punish the latest interlopers.

**Creature:** Lord Mayor Wolfe recently acquired a magnificent stone statue that possesses special qualities. He believes the statue can be animated and plans to use it as a guardian for his home, but has not yet been unable to activate it. The fell powers that awakened King Udimu have managed to do what the Lord Mayor could not. The statue moves to attack any PC who gets within 10 feet of it.

### ANIMATED STONE STATUE

*Medium construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 91 (14d8+28)

**Speed** 25ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

14 (+2) 11 (+0) 14 (+2) 1 (-5) 3 (-4) 1 (-5)

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 60ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The statue is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the statue must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

**False Appearance.** While the statue remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal statue.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The statue makes two melee attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Development:** The creature will not pursue anyone who leaves the room. If the PCs destroy the statue, Lord Mayor Wolfe will be unhappy. Even though he understands that the curse is to blame, the construct was very expensive. He may ask the PCs to compensate him for his loss by performing some task or favor in the future.

### 2B-2. REVISITING THE EXHIBITS

When the PCs are ready to move from the storeroom into the museum, read the following aloud:

*The museum looks very different at night. The high windows that once shed bright sunlight throughout the vast chamber now admit only the pale blue light of the moon. Though Losinia's brilliant white face hangs full in the night sky, her light cannot cast aside the shadows here, and every dark space seems to hide danger. Several feet away, a strange-looking cylinder lies in the middle of the floor.*

The cylinder on the floor is a canister that once held a sleeping gas, which the thieves used to knock out the guards. This alchemical item has the same effect as a *sleep* spell, but cannot be dispelled by magic. The thieves quickly passed the unconscious guards and went upstairs to take the treasures denied them on the night before. Unfortunately, the king's curse was more than just a superstitious warning.

When the foolish thieves removed the large ruby from Udimu's sarcophagus, his bodyguard, Sehetep, immediately rose as a skeletal champion, bursting from his own

sarcophagus to defend his master. The thieves dropped what they had taken and bolted out of the museum before Sehetep could even gather his wits about him.

### MUMMY LORE

The PCs may guess that they are about to face a risen mummy. Since the coming battle may be very challenging for them, allow the players to go with that assumption and determine what they know about mummies by making a **Intelligence (religion)** check. Higher levels of success reveal all the information from the lower levels, as well.

**DC 5:** A mummy is a powerful undead creature believed to guard ancient tombs, especially in Akhutan.

**DC 10:** Mummies are known to carry a terrible disease and can fill their victims with paralyzing fear and dread.

**DC 15:** Mummies are very resistant to physical damage of all kinds

**DC 20 or higher:** Mummies are particularly vulnerable to fire.

With enough information, the players can prepare a plan to defeat or bypass the mummy and end the curse.

King Udimu's curse sealed the exits from the museum, but the thieves used a large mallet to smash through the stone covering the trap door. The falling pieces of stone triggered the magic fire trap, but the thieves survived and escaped. In their fear and haste, they dropped the one item they'd held onto: the ruby.

King Udimu's queen, Mereret, and three servants reanimated shortly after Sehetep. The skeleton servants found the unconscious guards and dragged them upstairs to the exhibit hall. When the guards awoke from the sleeping gas, they found themselves face to face with Sehetep and passed out from fear. They are unconscious in the upper chamber when the PCs arrive.

As the PCs move through the museum, describe the exhibits they saw earlier in the day. Some of the exhibits contain items that might help them, if they remember the clues.

### EXHIBIT A: STATUE OF LADY SUNNIVA WOLFE

*Passing beneath Lady Sunniva's gaze, your eyes move from her strong, kind features to the wolf's head on the staff she holds in her hand. While the one gray gem in the wolf's eye is dark, the blue gem glitters brightly. You feel a sensation, like someone tugging on you, drawing you closer to the staff, as the moon calls to the tide.*

When the dark gods of Akhutan manifest their curse through Udimu, a portion of the magic that helped Lady Sunniva all those years ago has flared to life in her staff. By taking the staff and calling upon the power of Losinia a good-aligned cleric can cast the *hallow* spell once per week. Once the spell is cast, the staff and its 60 ft. radius cannot be moved without ending the spell's effect.

### EXHIBIT B: SIR DEVON'S TABARD

*From within the glass case, the gold and silver threads of Sir Devon's tabard shine brightly in the pale moonlight. Just looking at the tabard seems to strengthen your resolve.*

Just as the magic awoke within Lady Sunniva's staff, Sir Devon's pure spirit awoke within the tabard he once wore. That spirit grants a measure of power to any good-aligned character who dons his mantle. The mantle acts as a *cloak of protection +1* until Udimu is laid to rest. The wearer can choose to expend the power within the tabard to gain the ability to touch a single character and cast *lesser restoration*. The wearer automatically learns about these powers as soon as he puts on the garment.

### EXHIBIT C: SHAMANIC ARTIFACTS

*Moving past the display of tribal fetishes, you recall Lord Wolfe's stories of the old shamans' wisdom and healing powers.*

The sealed vials in the display contain a powerful medicine. Drinking the thick, black liquid grants the imbiber advantage to all



saving throws for 1 minute. There are 3 of these vials.

### EXHIBIT D: ANCIENT TEXTS

The ancient texts possess no magical properties, but the papyrus scrolls might help PCs who lack information about mummies.

PCs who can read the hieroglyphics can make a new **Knowledge (Religion)** check with advantage to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a typical mummy.

### EXHIBIT E: AIR TEMPLE STONES

*A beam of moonlight pierces the darkness of the museum and passes over the magical stone in the air temple exhibit. Small motes of dust rise through the ray of light, buoyed up by the ancient magic.*

Clever players may use the stone's magic to lift them up and away from the undead's attacks. Standing on the stone and speaking the command word in Auran creates the effect of a *levitate* spell cast by a 5th level wizard. The spell lifts a single PC and gear with a total weight of up to 500 pounds. The PC can move up or down at a rate of 20 feet per round as a move action and is stable enough to use ranged weapons while levitating.

If the PC makes a DC 15 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check, she can jump to the balcony outside of King Udimu's exhibit without using the stairs.

### 2B-3. SERVANTS OF UDIMU, 650 XP

The power of Udimu's curse first raised his bodyguard, Sehetep, from the dead. Udimu's queen, Mereret, and three of their servants soon followed. Though Sehetep was a powerful warrior in life, he possesses only a fraction of the power he once held. The longer he remains animated, the more powerful he will become. The queen and the king's servants will grow in power, too, unless the PCs can put a stop to the curse. All five of these servants are now standing sleepless watch at the bottom of the stairs—Sehetep flanked by the four skeletons—waiting for King Udimu to gain his full measure of power from the dark gods, so that he can take revenge on all who have defiled his ancient tomb.

Unless the PCs are trying to be stealthy, Sehetep hears them as soon as they enter the exhibit hall. When he does, he dispatches Mereret and the other skeletons in an attempt



to flush out the intruders. Sehetep believes the dark gods have made him invincible and is somewhat reckless in his tactics until the first time he is injured.

When you are ready to introduce the PCs to Sehetep, read the following:

*The withered form of a man stands before you, clad in ancient funeral garb and an ornate breastplate. His headdress bears the symbol of a roaring lion. On one arm, he carries a shield etched with the symbol of a scarab. He raises a bony hand, points at*

you, and speaks in an ancient language with a voice as dry and rasping as the desert sands. He seems to wait briefly for an answer from you before drawing a scimitar that looks very old but very sharp.

If any of the PCs understand the language of ancient Akhutan (unlikely, but possible), they know that Sehetep has ordered them to kneel and show their loyalty to King Udimu. When they do not, he and the other skeletons attack.

There are lots of ways the battle can play out once the PCs have entered the main hall of the museum. If the PCs cannot return the gem to the king's sarcophagus, they have to defeat him in battle, which is very challenging. They can make things easier for themselves if they have noticed the useful items scattered throughout the museum.

### **SEHETEP, SKELETAL CHAMPION**

*Large undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (chain mail)

**Hit Points** 67 (9d10 + 18)

**Speed** 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** ancient Akhutan

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

#### **ACTIONS**

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

**Treasure** Golden chain of office worth 50 gp

### **SKELETONS (4)**

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (armor scraps)

**Hit Points** 13 (2d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

#### **ACTIONS**

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range of 320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** One of the skeletons wears what was once a fine white linen dress, marking her as the king's wife. She wears a brooch of shielding.

### **2B.4. THE ANGRY KING AWAKENED (700 XP)**

King Udimu rises from his sarcophagus and exits his chamber 2d6+2 rounds after the fight with Sehetep and the skeletons starts. If the PCs are lucky enough to defeat Sehetep before the king leaves his chamber, they may have time to prepare a plan. If not, they have to figure things out as they go. The easiest option is to draw the king out and distract him while one of the PCs goes to his sarcophagus and replaces the ruby.



## KING UDIMU, MUMMY

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 20ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Wis +2

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** ancient Akhutan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

## ACTIONS

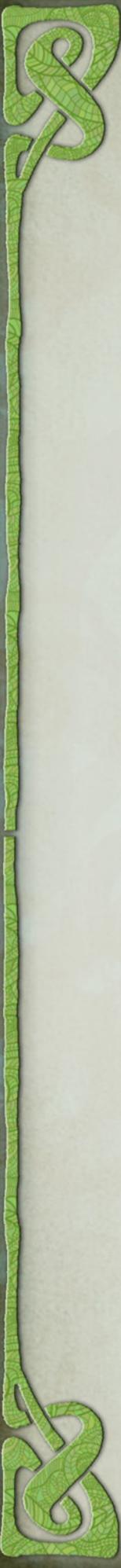
**Multiattack.** The mummy can use its Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with its rotting fist.

**Rotting Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or other magic.

**Dreadful Glare.** The mummy targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the mummy, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of the mummy's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of all mummies (but not mummy lords) for the next 24 hours.

**Development:** As soon as the PCs return the ruby to the sarcophagus, the dark gods' powers are sealed once more, and the mummy's aura of despair immediately fades. The king knows what has happened and speaks to them in the language of ancient Akhutan. Although the PCs probably won't understand him, he thanks them for their help.

The king removes the golden band from his forehead and the scroll case and gemstone from his chest cavity and places them on the floor in front of him. He then returns to his sarcophagus to resume his eternal rest. If the PCs do not replace the gem, but instead defeat the king in combat, these treasures simply fall to the ground when he is destroyed.



## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs either defeat the king or return him to his rest, the curse on the museum is lifted and the front door flies open, allowing the nervous Lord Mayor and Robert to enter. Their reaction to the scene inside depends on how much damage the fight has done to the museum. Lord Mayor Wolfe is not pleased to see the PCs using items from the exhibits, but once they explain what happened, he is more understanding. He does, however, ask for the items to be returned.

With the lifting of the curse, the magic in Sir Devon's tabard goes dormant, if its power has not already been expended. Lady Sunniva's staff also returns to its previous state, unless the PCs used it to cast *hallow*. If so, both eye gems now appear to be gray. The magic of the Air Temple remains unchanged, as do any unused vials of medicine.

Despite any damage to display cases and such, Lord Mayor Wolfe is pleased with the PCs' work. If the PCs had to defeat the mummy in combat, the Lord Mayor finds the gemstone during a quick search of the area and should be able to work out why King Udimu and his servants returned.

Lord Wolfe allows the PCs to keep Udimu's magic items. He considers those justly won, especially since King Udimu may have personally given his items to the party. He also offers the party an additional 1,500 gp for the recovery of the other valuables.

If the PCs insulted or failed to impress the Lord Mayor earlier, their insults are forgiven. Robert provides any payment he promised during a private moment later. If Lord Mayor Wolfe promised the payment, however, he gladly hands it over.

If the PCs agreed to help end the museum's curse without asking for payment, Wolfe instead rewards the PCs with 300 gold pieces per person.

Having provided a great service to Lord Mayor of Port Fairglade, the PCs can spend their gold in some of the finest establishments the city has to offer, as long as they are on the right side of the law. If not, Lord Wolfe does what he can to reduce or remove the charges against them, but he cannot openly support those who flout his authority.

Award each of the PCs experience in story awards if you are not using the milestone method of advancement. You can give special rewards to players who performed exceptionally well (perhaps solving a puzzle more quickly or coming up with a very creative solution to a problem). You can also give awards to players who acted boldly to help their team members or who portrayed their character particularly well. Try to award similar amounts of extra XP to each player, to avoid having one character advance faster than the others.

At the end of this adventure, PCs should have earned enough experience to rise to 3rd level. Instead of awarding experience, you could simply allow all the PCs to advance to 3rd level as the story award. This is a simple way of allowing characters to progress so that they are ready to take on the next adventure in their campaign, in which they will face even greater perils.

## CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

*The King's Curse* be used as a stand-alone adventure, but it presents a number of other options for the GM and players to continue the campaign.



- If the PCs fought the city guard, they may be on the run from the law or might need to perform some service for the city to clear their names. Their task may be to determine where the two ghouls in the sewer came from and if there are more undead lurking beneath the city.
- The PCs may wish to return the pouch of gems stolen by the junior Elverin Skulk members. The search for the rightful owners gets complicated when two different gemcutters claim the gems belong to them.
- The PCs may want to find out how the water elemental got into the city sewers. Is there a portal to the Plane of Elemental Water near the city or is a wizard performing dangerous experiments?
- If the power of the dark gods' curse called the ghouls to the museum, perhaps it called other, more terrible creatures to Port

Fairglade. Any manner of foul beasts might be heading directly for the city.

The most likely continuation—and the one we hope you choose—is in the next chapter of the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign: the PCs must track down the elusive Fox Prince, leader of the Elverin Skulk. Lord Mayor Wolfe wants revenge for the break-ins at his museum. Both he and Ithamar Ruggles want their statues back. The PCs need to force this “prince of thieves” to reveal the name of his mysterious client if they want to find out who seeks to reunite the White and Green Serpent statues. Once they know who it is, perhaps they can begin to figure out why. Time is running out for the heroes as they attempt to follow Belazeel’s tracks and put a stop to his mad plans.

## APPENDIX: THE CITY OF PORT FAIRGLADE

Situated on the south shore of the Lashelenite River, Port Fairglade is a small city, but it is still large enough to provide many resources and hooks for adventure. The information below gives you the most important information you need to run this adventure and perhaps others set in the city.

### PORT FAIRGLADE

LG Small City

**Qualities** Academic, Prosperous, Strategic Location, Tourist Attraction

**Government** overlord (Lord Mayor Wolfe)

**Population** 9,000 (7,500 humans; 500 dwarves; 500 halflings; 250 elves; 250 other)

**Notable NPCs**

**High Priestess Lillian Barringer** (NG female human cleric 13)

**Lord Marshall Marcus Devonsen** (LN male human fighter 11)

**Harbormistress Temara Wiley** (LG female half-elf expert 10)

**Guildmaster Apolos Trimble** (NE male human rogue 3/expert 8)

**Lord Mayor Samuel Wolfe** (LG male human aristocrat 10)

## GEOGRAPHY

The Lashelenite River begins in the Sunstone Peaks to the west, flows east through the northern portion of Threll, and empties into Elverin Bay. Lying downriver from the Threllish capital of Solaerin, Port Fairglade benefits from the traffic to and from the capital, and the trade that comes from lands as far south as the Artisuss River and all the way from Elverin Bay to the Westwatch Mountains.

The river is brackish, a mixture of the fresh water from the mountains and the sea water flowing in from the bay. It is home to a variety of fish and other sea life that provide food and other products for those living near the water. The surrounding land consists of rolling hills farther inland, but becomes flat closer to the water. The coastal land has rich soil for growing crops and the whole region possesses abundant forests that yield both hard and soft wood and serve as habitats for game.

Port Fairglade is tucked slightly inland, away from the main portion of the river. Ships access its docks via a relatively narrow channel through Thompson's Creek into the mouth of the port. Lashelenite River's banks are fairly steep for most of its length, with only a few regions of sandy beach and many places where the land becomes marshy. The high banks of the river and dense pine forests on land provide good defenses against invading forces. The city's natural defenses are supported by a strong wall that also marks its original landward boundaries.

The city is divided roughly into four main quarters. The Docks make up most of the western side of the city. As the land rises away from Thompson's Creek, it is divided into the Merchant's Quarter and the Artisan's District. The Artisan's District lies to the south and has expanded beyond the original city wall, as more craftspeople moved in to produce goods from the raw materials arriving in the city.

North of the Artisan's District, the Merchant's Quarter wraps around the Government Quarter and takes up a large portion of the city. Although many merchants live in this quarter, the wealthiest residents here are actually the masters of the various artisans' guilds. Guilds work together to maintain control of prices throughout throughout Northumberland, Moresby and Prince Turmlin counties.

The Government Quarter lies in the heart of the city, but also extends north to encompass the strip of land between the Lashelenite River and Thompson's Creek, known as the Seawall. Newcomers get disapproving looks if they point out that the wall is not next to a proper sea. The tip of the Seawall houses a watchtower which serves as both a lighthouse and a vantage point from which the city guard observes traffic on the river and defends the port. Wolfe Manor is located very close to the center of the Government Quarter. The manor is the Lord Mayor's home, but his official offices are in the County Seat, located a few blocks away.

## PEOPLE OF PORT FAIRGLADE

Port Fairglade has a population of about 9,000 permanent residents, most of whom are human. As a waypoint on the journey to and from Solaerin, the city is welcoming of strangers, but the occasional threat of monsters from beyond the Westwatch Mountains or even from the deep forests and marshes in Threll keeps people from being too quick to trust anyone.

Port Fairgladers are generally happy folk who have benefited from three generations of rule under the Wolfe family. The steady flow of goods generates a level of economic security that buoys spirits, despite the occasional mishap or natural disaster.

Exposure to travelers from many places taught Fairgladers to enjoy interacting with outsiders and show genuine interest in tales from distant lands. This trait is tied very closely with the founding of King's College, the prestigious university in the Government Quarter, and to the Wolfe family's interest in studying the far-off jungles of Eskaenturu and the ruins of ancient Akhutan.

### GOVERNMENT AND LAW

Lord Mayor Samuel Wolfe inherited rule of Port Fairglade from his father, Collin Wolfe, who inherited it from the first Lord Mayor, Edison Wolfe. Samuel Wolfe is a decent man who strives to enforce the King's Laws and maintain peace in his lands so that the people here can prosper. He is supported by the city guard and, usually, by the Council of Masters.

The Council of Masters is a relatively new creation—an advisory body made up of the masters of the city's most powerful guilds: masons, carpenters, longshoremen, furriers, smiths, coopers, entertainers, and woodcutters. These eight individuals speak for all members of their guilds in matters pertaining to the city. The guilds are already powerful, but when they gather as a unified body, they rival the king of Threll in their ability to sway the Lord Mayor's decisions. Of course, the council is rarely that unified.

The two most prominent members of the council are Guildmaster Apolos Trimble, the headstrong and self-serving master of the woodcutter's guild, and Harbormistress Temara Wiley. Guildmaster Trimble, also the

current Chairman of the Council of Masters, frequently attempts to undermine the authority of both the Lord Mayor and the rest of the guilds and uses the fact that his guild provides one of the most vital resources in the city to protect himself.

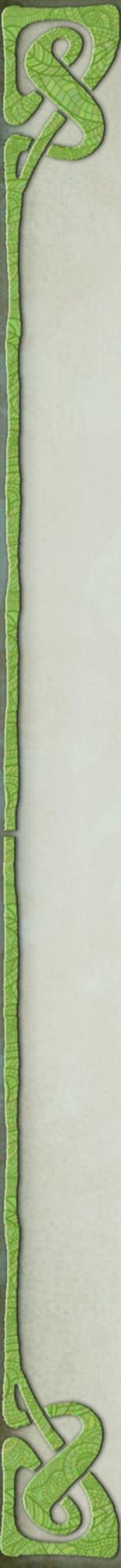
Harbormistress Wiley is the only person who has yet to match Trimble in both influence and force of personality. The Harbormaster is well-loved by the members of the Longshoremen's Guild and by many merchants. She manages operations at the Docks with ruthless efficiency, a quick wit, and a sharp tongue. She respects Lord Mayor Wolfe a great deal. He likes her, as well, though his social station prevents him from showing it in public.

Laws in Port Fairglade are straightforward. In order of decreasing severity, the major crimes are murder, arson, theft/robbery, assault, and damage to property. Anyone accused of these crimes is taken into custody and held in the local jail where they can wait up to a week for trial. Those found guilty of murder and arson face either the death penalty or exile from Threll. Lesser crimes carry penalties of either a fine, payment of restitution, or a period of service to the city, usually as a worker in the city sewers.

One law is of particular importance to every visitor to Port Fairglade: all weapons carried within the city must be peace-bonded. In theory, peace-bonding prevents murder or assault with deadly weapons by making it more difficult for a person to draw such weapons. The rules for peace-bonding are found in the sidebar on page 6. Failing to peace-bond one's weapons carries a fine of 50 gold pieces and three days in the city jail.

### CLERICS

Port Fairglade is large enough to have a number of churches that practice the most common faiths in Threll. Most of the faiths were brought here hundreds of years ago by settlers from the old world. However, the methods of



worship and even the pantheon have changed over the past few centuries, creating a religious and spiritual culture that is unique to Threll.

The most powerful faith in Port Fairglade is that of Losinia, the moon goddess. High Priestess Lillian Barringer of Silverhall is the current head of the church of Losinia for all the lands around Port Fairglade south of the Lashelenite River. In Losinia's church, she is second in power only to the Archprelate in Solaerin.

## ROGUES

The people of Port Fairglade are generally honest, so crime doesn't thrive here as it does in other cities. There are small gangs of thugs and pick-pockets scattered throughout the city, ready to take the coins from unwary travelers, but organized crime is not a big problem. The most prominent thieves' guild in Port Fairglade and Northumberland County is the Elverin Skulk, and the Skulk keeps its headquarters outside the city walls.

The guild's leader is a figure known as the Fox Prince. The Fox Prince has a reputation as being both a wanted criminal and a sort of folk hero, not because he breaks the law, but because he has been known to do it with style. There are many humorous stories about how the Fox Prince was able to escape the clutches of the city guard or the Threllish army.

## FIGHTERS

The most prominent fighters in the city are the higher ranking members of the city guard. A few notable adventurers can be found, but most of these fighters are not permanent city residents. The most powerful fighter who lives in the city is the Captain of the City Guard, Lord Marshall Marcus Devonsen. The Lord Marshall's family line goes back to Sir Devon, the hero who protected the first settlers on Terrallien. He is very proud of his heritage and serves the city through strict adherence to the law.

## WIZARDS

The most powerful wizard in Port Fairglade is Eamon. He is a 13th level wizard, capable of casting arcane spells of up to 7th level. There are several other wizards of lesser power throughout the city, many of whom work in or around King's College. If the PCs are looking for a wizard to scribe a scroll or cast an arcane spell of up to 7th level, they can probably find someone willing to cast it for the right price.

## SHOPPING

Among the many shops in Port Fairglade, PCs can expect to find any mundane or masterwork item they are looking for at the prices listed in the rulebook. Some magic items are available for sale, but not all items are available all the time. PCs can usually buy items worth less than 6,200 gp or can order them from larger cities in about a week. See the city stat block for details on how many of those items are available at any one time.

## LODGING

Inns and taverns are available in every part of the city. Prices for a single night's stay vary by location. Most inns are categorized as poor (2 sp per day), modest (1 gp per day) or comfortable (2 gp per day). The services they provide increase with the cost, but few inns serve meals to their guests. Most are connected to a tavern or ordinary (a simple restaurant) where customers can buy a meal: poor (1 sp), common (3 sp) or good (5 sp). Beverages like ale or wine cost extra.

The two best known inns are the Harbor Spring (modest) and the Wainwright (comfortable). Some of the more popular taverns are The King's Arms, The Broken Rudder, and Elsenora's.

# Legend:

## Government Quarter

1. Silverhall (Church of Losinia)
2. Lord Mayors Manor
3. County Seat
4. City Guard Barracks
5. The King's Arms Tavern

## Merchants Quarter

6. East Gate
7. Monument Circle
8. House of Masters (Council Hall)
9. Kings College (university & magic school)
10. The Wainwright Inn

## Artisans District

11. South Gate
12. The Harbor Spring Inn
13. Elsenoras Tavern

## Docks

14. Port Authority Building
15. The Broken Rudder Tavern

Lashelenite River

The Seawall

Thompsons  
Creek

Port Fairglade





3



*S*uren's world snapped into focus. Her ears filled with a roar that made her flinch. In a moment, she recognized the sounds of cheering, whistling, clapping, and stomping. She looked up to find a throng of people packed into a gallery at the edges of a large room. The spectators above hung dangerously over the railing to get a better view. She realized they were cheering for her and her companions at the same time she realized her boots were full of water. Following the others, the alchemist slogged to the edge of the shallow pool and climbed over the edge.

Before them, on a raised platform, stood a tall, wizardly looking fellow and a shorter figure in a fox mask that almost looked real. A comically large crown rested on the animal's head. Suren couldn't see what kept it from tumbling to the floor. The masked man raised his hands and the crowd grew quiet. Then, he executed a low bow as he met their gazes.

Suren smirked and muttered to herself. "Of course. 'The Fox Prince.'" Then she caught her breath. Had that mask just winked at her? And had it always been smiling like that? Then it spoke.

# THE THIEVES' DEN

# What You Will Find Inside The Thieves' Den

Lord Mayor Wolfe of Port Fairglade has discovered that someone hired the notorious thieves' guild, the Elverin Skulk, to steal a valuable statue from his private museum. The nobleman wants to know who the guild's client is, but the only person who knows the secret is the guild's leader, the infamous Fox Prince. The heroes must venture into the monster-infested UMBERWOOD to locate the hidden entrance to the guild's headquarters, but once they find it and try to sneak into his lair, they find that few things are what they appear to be. Can the heroes survive a deadly gauntlet of traps and win the Fox Prince's favor and the help of the prince of thieves?



# THE THIEVES' DEN

*The Thieves' Den* is an adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 3rd-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

This story is set in the wilds of northern Threll, a kingdom located on the world of Aeva. The module provides enough information to run the entire adventure in this setting, but you can set the adventure in any gameworld location where a forest is near a swampy area.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into three main parts. Each part can be run within a session or grouped together for longer play time. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 4th level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

*The Thieves' Den* is the third adventure in the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, which began with *The Bandit's Cave* and continued with *The King's Curse*, but GMs can use it as a stand-alone "one-shot" event or as a side-quest in their own campaigns. The *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign plays out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After years of searching, the wizard Belazeel finally possesses the Green Serpent and White Serpent statues. Stolen by hired agents, the statues are the two keys necessary to release a spellcaster of legendary power from her eons-long imprisonment in the Basilisk Shroud.

Belazeel is certain that when he completes the ritual, the spellcaster will take him as her apprentice and teach him the secrets that once made her enemies fear the very utterance of her name. If Belazeel is not stopped, it is a name that will eventually be uttered in hushed, fearful tones by the people of Threll.

While Belazeel makes his final preparations for the ritual to lift the Basilisk Shroud and free his nameless mistress, more noble-minded souls suspect a sinister plan is in the works. Heroes in Threll's northern counties have tried to stop bandits and thieves from getting their hands on the serpent statues. They tracked down a marauding band of orcs who stole the first statue from the village of Corbin. Then, in Port Fairglade, they faced the vengeance of a long-dead king from the empire of Akhutan after thieves disturbed his rest. In both cases, the heroes brought villains to justice and performed valiant deeds in service to the people of Threll, but they could not keep either statue from falling into the hands of the mysterious person they know only as "B."

The heroes discovered that the criminals in Port Fairglade are members of a notorious thieves' guild, the Elverin Skulk. The guild runs operations throughout northern Threll from the capital city of Solaerin all the way down the Lashelenite and Imlenite Rivers to the Elverin Bay.

The thieves were told to steal only the White Serpent Statue from Lord Mayor James Wolfe's private museum. But once the statue was safely on its way to the guild's client, the thieves decided to take advantage of the secret entrance known only to them to gather a few more valuables from the nobleman's treasure trove. By disturbing the

remains of the mummified King Udimu of ancient Akhutan, the thieves brought down a curse on the museum. Only the heroic deeds of brave adventurers prevented the Akhutani spirits' anger from spreading beyond the walls of the museum.

Now, the race is on to discover who hired the Elverin Skulk and why. But the only person who knows client's true identity is the infamous "Fox Prince," leader of the Elverin Skulk. Finding the Fox Prince is just one of many challenges that lie ahead.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

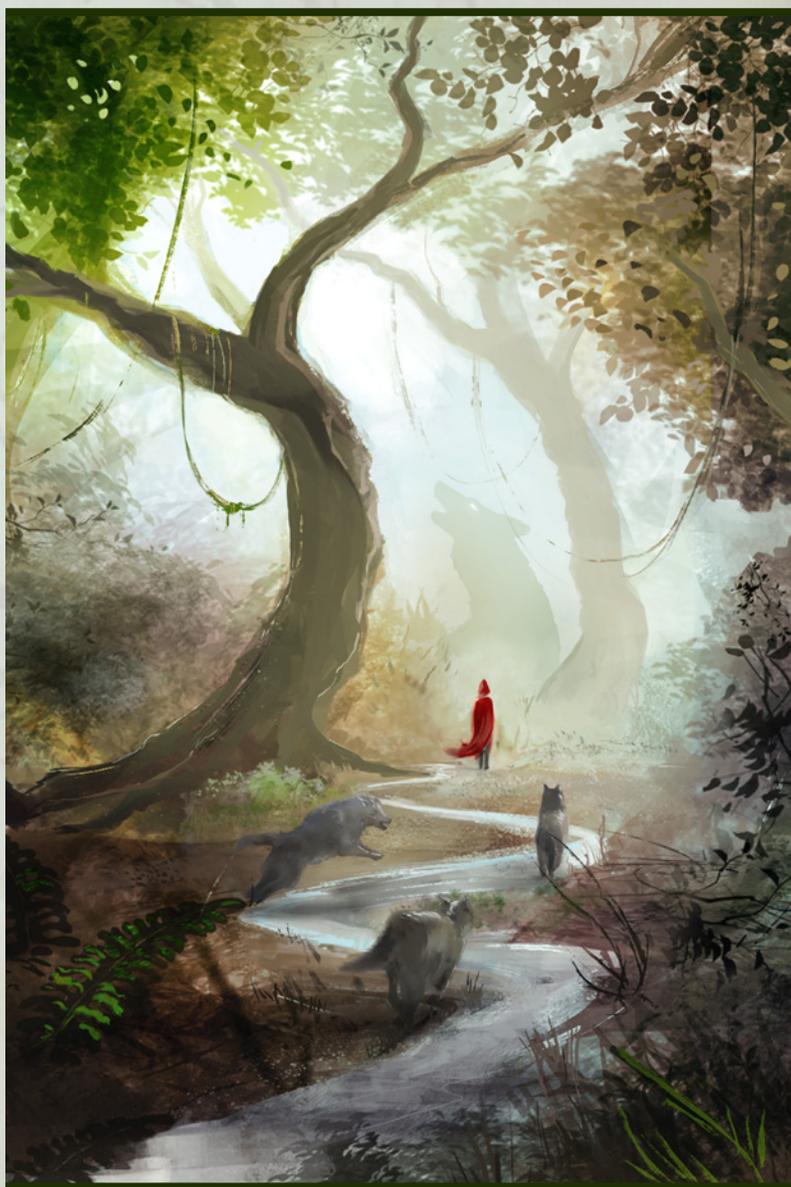
The adventure begins in the wilds south of Port Fairglade, as the PCs search for the Elverin Skulk's hidden lair. They know that thieves who wish to join the Elverin Skulk must find a hidden clearing in the UMBERWOOD, a tangle of trees and wetlands just down the river from the city. The area has a bad reputation and, although dangerous creatures rarely venture out of the place, few people venture into it. The PCs must brave the dangers of the forbidden wild in search of more clues.

After running afoul of the UMBERWOOD's unfriendly denizens, they meet a young man who claims to be looking for the guild's headquarters, himself. What's more, he claims to have a pretty good idea where it is and offers to take the PCs with him.

The PCs follow their guide deep into the forest, where they stumble into a band of goblins and their tribe

leader, a monster known as a barghest. After they defeat the barghest, their guide reveals himself to be a hag who gloats over tricking the PCs into getting rid of the barghest, who had challenged her dominion over part of the forest and the nearby marsh. She thanks the PCs for their "help" and promptly disappears. Leaving them stranded.

Continuing their search, they eventually find the entrance to the thieves' hideout, which at first appears to be a cleverly hidden pit. They discover that the bottom of the pit



is actually the first chamber of the Gauntlet, a dungeon designed to test the mettle and skill of potential guild members. The PCs must navigate a series of traps and puzzles to reach the guild hall, where they at last meet the Fox Prince.

Even after passing his tests, the Elverin Skulk's leader at first refuses to share what he knows, but then decides he is willing to trade for the information. The Fox Prince offers to tell them what they wish to know if they procure a special stone with the power to heal one of his agents who recently fell ill with a terrible disease.

The PCs must track down Grunhild, the green hag who taunted them before, and take the stone from her. If the PCs can get the stone for him, the Fox Prince will make them honorary guild members and share what he knows of the mysterious client who hired the Skulk to steal the Serpent Statues.

### STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players have their character sheets, are gathered around the gaming table and are ready to begin, read aloud or paraphrase the following passage. If your PCs have played the previous *Trail of the Apprentice* adventures, you can just recap the events of the previous adventures and use the last two paragraphs of this text to provide them with guidance for the way ahead:

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*A short while ago, the Lord Mayor of Port Fairglade hired you to help him get some information about the theft of two statues. He used to think that the statues only historical value, but someone has gone to great trouble and expense to steal them. The Lord Mayor wants to know who this unscrupulous "collector" is.*

*Orc bandits stole the first statue, called the Green Serpent, from the home of a sage, Ithamar Ruggles, during a brash raid on the village of Corbin. Although adventurers put the raiders to the sword, they could not recover the statue. They found a note found in the bandits' hideout that indicated the orcs had been hired to steal the statue by someone who referred to himself only as "B."*

*The second statue, the White Serpent, disappeared when someone robbed Lord Mayor Wolfe's family museum. This unfortunate series of events called a curse down upon the museum. Terrible things could have befallen Port Fairglade, but heroes intervened and put the spirit of a ruler of ancient Akhutan to rest. Unfortunately, they could not recover second statue.*

*The heroes did learn that the robbers were elite members of the Elverin Skulk, a notorious thieves' guild in northern Threll. Though the thieves escaped, Lord Mayor Wolfe believes their leader, the mysterious Fox Prince, knows who hired his guild to steal the statues. The mayor's agents in Port Fairglade informed him that thieves wishing to join the Elverin Skulk are sometimes told to go to the Umberwood to be tested before entering the guild's ranks.*

*The Umberwood is a dense forest downriver from Port Fairglade, ringed by marshes and shallow waterways and full of dangerous creatures. The people of Northumberland County avoid the place, as do travelers who know of it. If you are to learn more about the theft of these statues, it is there you must go.*

*Lord Mayor Wolfe will pay you well for your efforts. If you discover the identity of the Skulk's mysterious client, the Lord Mayor will pay Port Fairglade's spellcasters and craftsmen to create one magically-enhanced item for each member of your party. Aside from this substantial reward, finding the hidden mastermind's identity will bring you one step closer to learning why he wants these statues.*

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## ARCADIA

Arcadia is a village at a crossroad of about 150 souls, including humans, dwarves, halflings, elves, and others. The citizens are predominately lawful and good overall. Corruption and crime isn't rampant but neither is it a place of greater learning or schooling. Notable NPCs include Elder Dorothea Scattergood, Father Custis Tintzman (a 5<sup>th</sup> level cleric), Sheriff Locath Bolar (a 5<sup>th</sup> level fighter), Finley Freeland (a 4<sup>th</sup> level rogue), and Lucina Godfrey (a 5<sup>th</sup> level wizard). Most items and equipment from the PHB can be found here if not exceeding a cost of 550 gold pieces.

Although the story begins when the PCs are about to enter the Umberwood, the players may want to prepare for their quest. They can purchase things they need in Port Fairglade or in the village of Arcadia, near the Umberwood. If you wish to roleplay the shopping experience, use the information in the village's settlement statblock. Arcadia also makes a good base of operations, where the PCs can rest, heal, or purchase more supplies.

When the party is ready to proceed, continue to Part I: The Umberwood.

## PART 1: THE UMBERWOOD

East of the village of Arcadia, on the shore of the Lashelenite River, nestled between Plympton Cove and the Lamslith Run, lies a small section of land, shrouded beneath a canopy of dark evergreen trees. Known as

the Umberwood, this densely forested mix of flatland and tidewater has a reputation for being a dangerous place where goblins and other horrible monsters roam.

The people of Northumberland County avoid the place. Travelers on the road leading from Port Fairglade down to cities along the coast of Elverin Bay arrange to pass by the woods during the full light of day. Those who venture too close to the forest at night often disappear, as do those foolish enough to actually enter the woods after dark. Children will sometimes dare each other to see how far into the woods they can go during the day, but there have been enough disappearances that parents forbid their children from going anywhere near the Umberwood.

The Umberwood is home to many dangerous creatures. A tribe of goblins known as the Clawbiters dwells close to the shores of Darkwater Creek, guided to some unknown purpose by their leader, a mysteriously powerful goblin they call Clawripper. An ogre named Kergus also stalks the woods, making sport and small meals out of goblins or lone travelers he manages to catch in the traps he sets. Kergus and the goblins have lived in the wood for some time, but there are a few newcomers, as well.

Recently, lizardfolk have been scouting the wood for places where their tribe might establish a settlement. Four orcs, members of Gorocs' bandit army, are hiding here after they learned of Gorocs' recent defeat at the hands of adventurers. And perhaps most dangerous of all, a green hag's hut sits on the edge of a reed-choked inlet.

The Elverin Skulk takes advantage of the Umberwood's dangerous reputation. Seeking the most daring and capable rogues as members, the Fox Prince established a hidden testing ground in the wood. Whether he constructed the dungeon or merely took advantage of one that was already there, "The Gauntlet" is a challenge that nearly all prospective guild members must face.

Guild candidates are told only that thieves who wish to join must go to the Umberwood to be tested. They are given vague directions to the hidden entrance to the Skulk's Den, but must find the location on their own. Even entering the Umberwood is part of the test, for only those willing to brave the dangers of the forest have a chance of becoming Skulk members. Since those who enter the Gauntlet do not leave the forest by any visible means, their "disappearances" add to the mystique of an already dangerous location.

Most of the encounters in this section can occur in any order. After completing encounters 1A. and 1B., show the players the unlabeled map of the Umberwood and let them choose which hex they want to explore next. If the hex corresponds to an encounter on the GM's version of the map, that encounter takes place. Otherwise, there is no encounter unless you wish to introduce a random encounter of your own.

After encounter 1B., the hag Grunhild probably accompanies the PCs in her disguise as a human thief. If they listen to her directions, she leads them through the encounters in the order they are presented below until they come to face Clawripper. Once they deal with Clawripper, the PCs should be able to see that there is one unexplored area on the map. This area contains the entrance to the Gauntlet, which is the last encounter for this part of the adventure.

## THE CLAWBITER TRIBE

The Clawbiter goblins have eked out an existence in the UMBERWOOD for several generations. Given the goblins' short life cycle, several generations isn't a long time, but they have established a fairly stable life in the dense forest. They rarely feel the need to venture out of the forest in large groups, although one or two tribe members sometimes sneak into Arcadia to work mischief or steal food, or both.

Most of the time, the goblins scavenge the shoreline and swamp for food. They call themselves Clawbiters because much of their diet consists of crabs that live in the brackish waters of the river and creeks. The crabs are harvested by the Threllish people, as well, but goblins tend not to bother cooking them, so eating the claws first makes the meal less painful. Given the goblins' love of fire, their choice to eat this way is yet another sign of their racial insanity.

Less than a year ago, the tribe experienced a sudden change when a strange goblin appeared in their den. The goblin was extremely powerful and brutally slew their chief, Slimewart. The tribe gave this new goblin the name Clawripper and made him their chief.

Clawripper is actually a barghest, a fiend that can take on the form of both a goblin and a wolf. He keeps his true nature hidden. Normally, such powerful creatures take over goblin tribes to use them as part of a larger army, but Clawripper hasn't even sent them on raids into the civilized lands around the UMBERWOOD. The goblins sense that Clawripper is restless. He waits for some sign to set his plans in motion, but even he may not know what that sign will look like.

## 1A. CLAWBITER GOBLINS (200 XP)

When the PCs enter the forest, they cross paths with a small group of goblins is tracking a wild turkey.

*The bushes nearby rustle, drawing your attention just as a small humanoid creature with greenish skin and a wide, oval-shaped head shoves through the branches and emerges onto the trail. Three more of his kind quickly follow. At first, he is focused on something directly ahead of him, but then he spots you. He mutters something before he grins and chomps his tiny, sharp teeth.*

**Creatures:** Have the PCs roll **Wisdom (Perception)** skill checks (DC 16). If they succeed, they detect the goblins at about 60 feet away. Otherwise, the goblins and the PCs stumble upon each other at a distance of about 20 feet. Although goblins are almost always hungry, the band's leader, Mudgullet, is ravenous and orders his cohorts to "attack the food."

### GOBLIN WARRIORS (4)

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

8 (-1)   14 (+2)   10 (+0)   10 (+0)   8 (-1)   8 (-1)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Wisdom (Perception) 9

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Nimble Escape.** The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.



## EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Trail of the apprentice works best we feel using the milestone method of rewarding experience and gaining levels. Instead of tracking each individual number, concentrate more on the story and just level up each character at the conclusion of each adventure. You are certainly welcome to reward experience points as you go, whatever you and your players will have more fun with.

## ACTIONS

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** The goblins carry a total of 29 gold pieces and a single 25-gp gem. Mudgullet also has a *potion of feather fall* and a *scroll of burning hands*. He can't use the scroll, but keeps it because it is marked with pictures of fire.

## 1B. THE LOST TRAVELER

While battling the goblins, the PCs gain the attention of Grunhild, a green hag who claims Darkwater Creek as hers. She intends to build a coven and dominate the area, but such plans take time. For now, she practices her magic and brews potions, using her powers to ensnare desperate fools in Northumberland County who are willing to risk their lives for the power she sells.

Grunhild's most recent problem, though, is Clawripper. The barghest refuses to serve the hag and is likely to eat anyone entering the forest seeking her services. Although she might eat a hapless traveler herself, she is



more interested in corrupting them with her wares, for now. The barghest has to go, and Grunhild has been looking for a way to get rid of him. When she finds the PCs, she decides to disguise herself and test their mettle.

*A young man dress in ragged clothing stumbles onto the trail up ahead. When he sees you, he raises his arms, looks up to the sky and smiles broadly before rushing toward you.*

*“Thank goodness! I’m so relieved to see other explorers, here. With all of those horrible goblins and other beasts running around, I was beginning to think I was never going to get out of here.”*

Grunhild tells the PCs her name is Connor and claims to be a thief looking for the entrance to the Fox Prince’s den. Connor says he can take the whole party with him, if they are willing to help him fend off the creatures lurking in the UMBERWOOD.

The hag actually took this name, story, and appearance from a man she met in the forest some time ago. Grunhild thought he was too handsome and her hatred of all things beautiful took over. She offered him a potion that she claimed would enhance his senses and help him find what he was looking for. Instead, he fell asleep and never woke up.

**Development:** As the PCs interact with Grunhild, they may suspect that the “man” is not telling them everything. **ADC15 Wisdom (Insight)** check reveals that Connor isn’t being completely honest. A PC who touches or otherwise comes in contact with him gets a Wisdom saving throw (DC 13) to disbelieve her illusionary disguise.

If PCs cast *detect magic* on Grunhild or disbelieve her disguise, Grunhild first changes her image to look like an attractive woman and tell them her name is Elleonora. She still claims she is looking for the thieves’ den, but she thought it would be safer to travel in the

guise of a man. Unless a PC disbelieved the first illusion, another DC 15 **Wisdom (Insight)** check is required to see through this lie.

If the second disguise also fails, the hag becomes invisible and disappears into the forest. She remains invisible and follows the PCs, using false sounds or leaving other clues to guide them to the barghest's lair, hoping they will get rid of him, anyway.

If the PCs use spells to detect her alignment, they can determine that she is evil. However, many thieves are evil. That alone should not give them a clue that she is not human.

No matter what her disguise, if the PCs accept her help, Grunhild leads them through the forest toward the Clawbiter tribe, where she hopes they will eliminate the barghest and several goblins. She doesn't really know where the entrance to the Fox Prince's den is, and she doesn't care. (Grunhild's path leads through the hexes labeled 1c., 1f., and 1g.)

Grunhild's statistics can be found on page 34. These statistics remain the same, regardless of what appearance she gives herself.

### 1C. HUNTER'S TRAP (100 XP)

The UMBERWOOD's resident ogre, Kergus, occasionally sets traps to catch wild game, goblins, or wayward travelers to eat. Kergus is far away when the PCs encounter this trap, but it is still dangerous. Ogres are fairly stupid, except when it comes to making things that cause pain. This pit is no exception.

**Trap:** The trap is well hidden and covers 10 foot by 10 foot area to catch large creatures, as well as groups of smaller ones. It's possible that more than one PC will fall into it if they do not detect the trap, first. A DC 15 Intelligence

### IT'S A TRAP!

In 5e D&D traps that can be disabled can use any number of rules or decisions to get it done. Depending on the trap, it's sometimes best to just let the characters try roleplaying their way through it. If it's just a covered pit the best way is to find a way around it or to jump it or use the tools around you (maybe a plank tossed aside that could be used to walk across). It's rarely as straightforward as rolling dice. However, once the PCs think of a clever enough solution decide if a tool check (such as a character proficient with thieves' tools) or a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) may do the trick, setting DCs as applicable to the challenge. For magical traps, an Intelligence (Arcana) may do it or a well-placed *dispel magic* spell.

(Investigation) skill check will reveal the trap. Each PC that falls in suffers 1d6 damage and 2d4+2 from the spike at the bottom. The trap doesn't reset unless someone resets it.

### 1D. LOST RAIDERS, ORCS (4), 400 XP

As the PCs explore this area, they encounter a small group of orcs who have made a camp near the shore of Plympton Cove. If they detect the orcs soon enough, they may be able to catch them by surprise or avoid them altogether.

After Gorocs and his orc raiders attacked Corbin Village, heroes tracked them down and put them to the sword, but not all of the orcs were in the cave when the adventurers arrived. Gorocs sent a small group out to hunt. When they returned, they found that their hideout had been raided. Unwilling to return to the mountains, the band

headed west and hid in the Umberwood to avoid capture by Threllish patrols.

**Creatures:** These orcs are tired of being penned up in the woods. They are angry and ready for a fight.

### FAMILIAR ENEMIES

If your players have been following the “Trail of the Apprentice” campaign from the beginning, they will be reminded of their first battles against Gorocs’ raiders. The inclusion of remnants of that raiding band was intentional. We added these orcs because players often enjoy facing familiar foes as they rise in power.

While PCs are expected to face more powerful and dangerous enemies as they rise in levels, constantly increasing level of difficulty without a break can wear down the players. An occasional combat encounter that is below the party’s usual challenge rating gives the players a chance to fight something that they have an easier time defeating.

Weaker challenges, especially ones from recurring foes, lets the players see how much more powerful they are than when they started adventuring. A fight with an enemy that they fought earlier in their careers gives them the satisfaction of quickly taking down a creature that was much harder to kill at lower levels.

When running ongoing campaigns, consider using a “standard minion” for villainous organizations and let the players see how they can defeat more and more of these low-level foes as they gain more character levels.

### ORC BANDITS (4)

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 13 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 15 (2d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Intimidation +2

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Wisdom (Perception) 10

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Aggressive.** As a bonus action, the ore can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

### ACTIONS

**Handaxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Treasure** each orc carries a belt pouch with 5 gold pieces

### 1E. KERGUS THE OGRE (450 XP)

All of Umberwood belongs to Kergus the ogre. At least, that’s what Kergus thinks. Separated from his tribe at an early age, the ogre came to the Umberwood and settled here. He hunts the wood for game, which includes the humanoids that live here, and enjoys tying up his prisoners so they can watch him build his fire and make other preparations before he cooks and eats them.

When the PCs enter this hex, Kergus becomes aware of their presence unless the party is carefully hiding their movements (using **Dexterity**

(**Stealth**) checks for example). If he detects the PCs with an opposed **Wisdom (Perception)** check, Kergus begins tracking them. If the PCs succeed on a DC 9 **Wisdom (Perception)** check, they notice the large creature following them. Once they spot him, Kergus charges to attack, thinking he can quickly knock out all of the PCs and get several days' worth of food.

## **KERGUS THE OGRE**

**CR 2**

*Large giant, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 11 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 40ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

19 (+4) 8 (-1) 16 (+3) 5 (-3) 7 (-2) 7 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Wisdom (Perception) 8

**Languages** Common, Giant

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

## **ACTIONS**

**Greatclub.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Treasure:** 25 gp, 50 gp in gems, +1 *shield*, and a *bird feather token* (Kergus has no idea that the *feather token* is magical, but he wears it as part of a necklace that is also made of shells, rocks, other feathers, and small animal skulls. He knows the shield has magical properties, but it is made for a medium-sized creature, so he can't use it properly. It hangs from a leather strap on his back.) He also carries two tinderboxes.

**Development:** If Grunhild is with the party when they fight Kergus, the hag pretends

to be frightened for the first few rounds so that she can get a sense of how capable the PCs actually are. If she thinks they can't beat Kergus, she might leave and let the ogre have them. However, if the PCs are doing alright against him and just need a little help, she may choose to join them in battle.

If she can help it, she will not do anything to ruin her disguise, but she might try to sneak in and use her weakening touch on the ogre. With a successful **Charisma (Deception)** skill check, opposed by **Wisdom (Insight)** checks from the PCs, Grunhild can make it look like she uses some other form of melee attack to weaken Kergus.



## 1F. CLAWBITER TRIBE WAR PARTY (500 XP)

As the PCs explore this hex, have them roll DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** skill checks. Also make a **Wisdom (Perception)** check for Ironbelch and one for his followers. The DC for their checks is either 12 or the result of the PCs' **Dexterity (Stealth)** check, if they are using that skill to sneak through the forest. Success on these checks means that the winning side detects the other at a range of 60 feet. If only one side succeeds, that side gets to act in the surprise round. If both sides fail, each party stumbles onto the other at a range of about 30 feet.

Since the death of Chief Slimewart, Ironbelch is the closest thing that the goblins have to a leader. He was getting ready to kill Slimewart and take over the tribe, himself, but Clawripper showed up and ruined those plans. Now, the goblin takes out his anger on the others while doing his best to keep Clawripper happy. Ironbelch doesn't know that Clawripper is a barghest, but suspects that his power comes from some magical source.

The barghest's appetite is even bigger than a typical goblin's and his constant demand for food is pushing the tribe to a breaking point. Clawripper frequently complains that wants something "bigger" and "more powerful" to eat than the animals that dwell in the forest, so when Ironbelch sees the PCs, his first instinct is to kill them and take them back to Clawripper. There are other options, but only if the PCs get a chance to talk to the goblins before they attack.

## IRONBELCH, MALE GOBLIN ADEPT CR 1

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 21 (6d6)

**Speed** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Nimble Escape.** The goblin adept can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

**Spellcasting.** The goblin adept is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The goblin adept has following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (3 slots): *detect magic, bless, cure wounds, sleep*

## ACTIONS

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure** 75gp

## GOBLIN WARRIORS (6)CR 1/4

50 XP each (see page 8)

**Hit Points** 7

**Treasure:** Each goblin carries a pouch containing 25 gp in gems and coins.

**Development:** The PCs may be able to negotiate with the goblins. Goblins can be unpredictable and downright insane, but they are not necessarily stupid. Ironbelch speaks

very poor Common, but can communicate well enough. If the PCs can talk to them long enough to figure out what has happened in their tribe, they may be able to convince the goblins to let them go and find Clawripper.

If the PCs try to talk to Ironbelch as soon as they meet them, have them make a **Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check (DC 15). If they succeed, the goblins wait a few rounds before attacking. After telling the PCs the story of Clawripper, Ironbelch complains that now he has to fight tall ones, too. The PCs can convince Ironbelch to let them go by promising to get rid of Clawripper and rolling another **Charisma (Persuasion)** check (DC 15). If they fail to convince Ironbelch, he and his goblins attack.

If Grunhild is with the PCs when they encounter the goblins, she watches the interaction with interest. She doesn't really care if the goblins live or die. Her primary focus is in getting the barghest out of Umberwood. However, she can't tell the goblins what their leader is, without ruining her disguise.

As long as the PCs are going to fight Clawripper, she agrees to most any plan. However, if it looks like the PCs might try to avoid the barghest, she claims that she hears more goblins coming and starts a fight with the nearest enemy.

**Development:** As soon as the first person attacks, the goblins' violent nature takes over, and they continue fighting until they are killed. When the battle is over, Grunhild tries to convince the PCs that a goblin tribe with a strong leader is a real danger to the area and that they should destroy him. If the party refuses, she becomes very angry, but doesn't give up her disguise just yet. She keeps pretending to lead the party to the entrance of the thieves' den, while continuing along a path to the barghest's lair.

## 1G. CLAWRIPPER AND THE GOBLIN TRIBE (1,100 XP)

*The thick pine forest gives way to tall grasses and reeds as the ground slopes down to the muddy banks of Darkwater Creek. The brown and green grass arches over your head in places, forming darkened tunnels that branch off in two directions.*

A DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals that the path to the right has been traveled by many goblin feet. This path leads to the goblins' den, which is little more than a wide clearing surrounded by walls made of mud and reeds and dotted with small huts made of a similar material. A trail leads from the camp down to the water's edge, where the goblins catch crabs and fish in the creek.

If the PCs defeated Ironbelch and his hunting party, the camp is mostly empty, with only three warriors and two other goblins left behind to keep the cooking fires burning—by tossing sticks, reeds, dead fish, crabs, or other small animals onto the hot coals. Usually, the burned animals are eaten later—usually. These goblins are hardly a threat to a group of adventurers. They run and hide if the warriors are outnumbered.

If the PCs offered to help Ironbelch, instead, they find him here with his remaining warriors. When he sees the PCs, he quickly shouts down the other goblins and shoos the PCs back toward the other trail.

The other path has fewer goblin tracks. A DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check on this path reveals the presence of two other types of tracks: one set that appears to belong to a wolf and another that looks very much like human hands. This is the path that leads to Clawripper's lair.

*Up ahead, what appears to be a goblin standing guard is soon revealed as only the head of a goblin mounted on a short wooden stake. Crab claws and other small bits of chitin hang from the goblins' ears and clatter in the breeze like disturbing wind-chimes. Up ahead, another stake with similar decoration marks the path forward.*

The path to Clawripper's lair is surprisingly well-marked. The Clawbiter goblins made sure to mark the route with stakes upon which they mounted the heads of several tribe members who angered Clawripper, usually by simply daring to approach him. The heads are decorated with pieces of jewelry crafted from the shells of the blue crabs that make up the majority of the tribe's diet. These shells first turn a pale red or pink as they bake in the hot sun, but the red eventually fades to bone white.

The grass and reed tunnel continues to wind through the marsh until it widens to form a small clearing. On the other side, the PCs can see the dark opening of a rounded dome made of grass and sticks held together with the reddish-brown clay pulled from the riverbank. This crude hut is covered with more crabshells and other goblin-made decorations.

Unless the PCs succeed on their **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks (DC 22), Clawripper hears them approaching. As they enter the clearing, Clawripper assumes his goblin form and emerges from the hut.

*The creature that steps out of the hut looks like a goblin, but is obviously not a normal specimen. Muscles ripple under the skin of its tiny arms, as it picks something from its teeth with a sharp piece of crab shell. It stares at you, and the malicious expression common to all goblins holds a subtle intelligence.*

**Creatures:** Clawripper is confident that his otherworldly nature will protect him from most attacks. He also believes that the other goblins will come to his aid. As soon as he sees the PCs, he calls out to his tribe members for support.

If the party avoided killing Ironbelch or if they have already dispatched the goblins in the camp, nothing happens. Otherwise, three warriors come crashing through the reeds 1d4 rounds after the battle begins. The barghest stays in goblin form for as long as he can, taking advantage of his small size to avoid attacks, while also keeping the PCs guessing about his true nature.

He first activates *blur*, and then attempts to cast *charm person* on the PC he judges to be the greatest threat. He's smart enough to know that charmed PCs will not attack their companions for him, but he can at least be assured that a would-be hero won't attack his "new friend."

Remember, *charm person* spells don't allow the caster to control the target's actions or cause them to do something they would not normally do. They will, however, look favorably on the caster. A PC that falls victim to Clawripper's spell may try to convince the PCs not to attack, but will not harm his friends in the process.

If Grunhild is still with the party, she helps in this battle as best she can. She tries to get close to Clawripper and use her weakening touch on him, so that the party can finish him off. The PCs may suspect something is wrong when this happens, but they won't be able to do much about it in the thick of battle against a dangerous fiend.

If things start to go poorly for him, Clawripper changes into his normal form and fights with his claws to do more damage before trying to escape the clearing. If he cannot get away without great risk, he fights to the death.

## **CLAWRIPPER, BARGHEST** CR 4

### **Barghest**

*Medium fiend (shapechanger), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 91 (14d8 + 28)

**Speed** 30ft. (50 ft. in fiendish wolf form)

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

18 (+4) 14 (+2) 15 (+2) 14 (+2) 10 (+0) 15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Cha +5

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Abyssal, Goblin

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The barghest's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12). The barghest can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

At will: *levitate*, *mislead*

1/day each: *blur*, *charm person*, *dimension door*

### **ACTIONS**

**Bite (Fiendish Wolf form only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws (Goblin Form only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Greataxe (Goblin Form only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

**Shapechanger.** The barghest can use its action to polymorph into a small goblin, or back into its true form. Its statistics, are the same in each form except its attacks. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

### **REACTIONS**

**Devour Soul:** As an action while in fiendish wolf form, the barghest can feed on a corpse it has slain. It feeds until the end of its next turn. This is when it consumes the creature's soul and traps it within. If the barghest takes any damage before it can finish, the feeding ceases and it gains none of the benefits below.

When a barghest traps a soul, it heals 10 hit points and its current maximum hit points are increased by 10 for 24 hours. This bonus is cumulative if the barghest feeds again on a new corpse within the 24 hours.



A creature killed by the barghest in this way cannot be raised from the dead while it is still trapped within the barghest. Once 24 hours pass and the soul is lost the creature cannot be raised or resurrected at all. If the barghest is killed while it has souls trapped, they are freed and spells to raise or resurrect it can work.

**Development:** Once the battle ends, Grunhild immediately begins gloating over the dead barghest. While still in her disguise she laughs and points at the fallen fiend, saying things like, "Move in to take over *my* swamp, will you? That'll teach you to meddle in my affairs!"

As she speaks, the hag drops her disguise and transforms into the hideous creature she really is. She thanks the PCs for ridding her of the barghest. As a "reward," she lets the PCs live. She also allows them to keep whatever treasure the fiend has hidden in his lair. Before the PCs can attack the old crone, she makes herself invisible and disappears into the swamp.

**Treasure:** In his hut, scattered among the bones from his previous meals, the PCs will find the small amount of treasure the barghest has managed to collect: *potion of shield of faith*, *scroll of bless*, 21 gp, 68 gp worth of gems and jewelry, and a silver holy symbol of the moon goddess, Losinia (25gp). Clawripper took these items from a wandering cleric of the Losinia captured by the goblins some time ago. Nothing else remains of the cleric.

### 1H. THE GAUNTLET'S GATE (100 XP)

After the battle with the barghest, the PCs must still find the entrance to the thieves' den. Grunhild guesses that the entrance was somewhere in this area, but has little interest in it, and would never help them find it, anyway.

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*The trees here do not grow as closely together as they do elsewhere. In some places you can see rather wide areas of flat ground, covered only by a thick layer of pine needles and small branches. By some odd trick of nature one of the clearings seems to have taken on a rectangular shape, as though a house or other structure once stood here, only to have been picked up and moved by a giant, unseen hand.*

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If Grunhild is still with the party when they first enter this area, describe the scene, but have her hurry them along with claims that she knows the way to the entrance and stories about Kergus or some other dangerous monster that frequents this area.

Once the party has dealt with Clawripper, you can also remind them of Grunhild's apparent haste to get through this region. That should be enough to get them back on the right track.

When they have time to fully explore the area, have each PC make a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice strange tracks that pass into the clearing, but not out of it. If Grunhild is not with them, the PCs can take their time to find these tracks automatically. Make it clear to the PCs that they would likely have seen these tracks before, had Grunhild not kept them in such a hurry.

As they explore the area, the PCs risk falling into the pit trap that is actually the entrance they seek. The pit is covered with a reinforced stone slab that fits perfectly into its frame. Fallen pine needles and leaves cover the pit, hiding it from those not actually looking for it.

Unless they succeed on the **Wisdom (Perception) check** to notice the trap, the first PC to step in the middle of the clearing activates the trap, causing one end to drop, becoming a very steep slope that leads down into the ground. The PC who triggered the

trap and anyone within 5 feet of him must make a DC 20 **Dexterity** saving throw save to avoid sliding down the slope. The pit is 30 feet deep, but due to the angle, the PCs take only 1d6 damage from the fall. PCs who do not fall into the pit have an easier time getting into the chamber below, but only slightly. First, the trap closes and automatically resets on the second round after it opens. Unless a character successfully jams the mechanism with something they have to trigger the trap again. With the door jammed, it is fairly easy to lower a rope and climb down without any danger of being hurt.

Otherwise, the surest way to get in is to jump when the door opens. This still requires a **Dexterity** saving throw to avoid damage, but choosing to jump in grants advantage to the save.

## **PART II: THE GAUNTLET**

Once they recover from their fall, the PCs soon realize that they are not actually in the Fox Prince's lair. This dungeon is merely the test by which the thief assesses potential new members. If they cannot work their way through the dungeon and escape via the magical portal at the end, they are not worthy to be members. If candidates do happen to make it through the dungeon, but are severely wounded, the Elverin Skulk heals them, but the cost of that healing is taken out of their pay for the first few jobs they perform for the guild.

The Fox Prince won't say whether he had this strange site constructed for his own purposes or if he simply took advantage of something that was already there. Though it is in very good condition and seems to have kept out the dampness of the surrounding area very well,

there is something about the stonework and layout that speaks of great age. If the Fox Prince did have the entire Gauntlet built, himself, then he must be very, very old.

Special wards and spells placed on the entrance to the Gauntlet notify the Fox Prince when new candidates enter. Either he or a trusted lieutenant in the guild begins scrying on the potential thieves immediately. He follows their progress through the whole dungeon and is ready to receive them when they finally make their way through the portal. If you want to keep them on edge, you can occasionally tell the players that the PCs have the sensation they are being watched as they progress through the Gauntlet.

### **2A. ENTRY CHAMBER**

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*The chute ends abruptly, emptying into a roughly octagonal chamber. The chamber has been carefully crafted by a master mason. The floor, walls and ceiling of the place are all made of tightly-fit stones. The work here would make a dwarf proud, but some of the stones have fallen and lie scattered among the dirt and debris from above.*

*The room is bathed in a pale blue glow emanating from a shallow pool of clear water in the floor at the foot of the ramp.*

*Piles of dirt, gravel, and stone have been pushed to either side of the chute. Apparently, any dirt and rocks that follow "visitors" down the ramp gets is moved to clear a path leading through a wide archway into a hallway and what appears to be another room beyond.*

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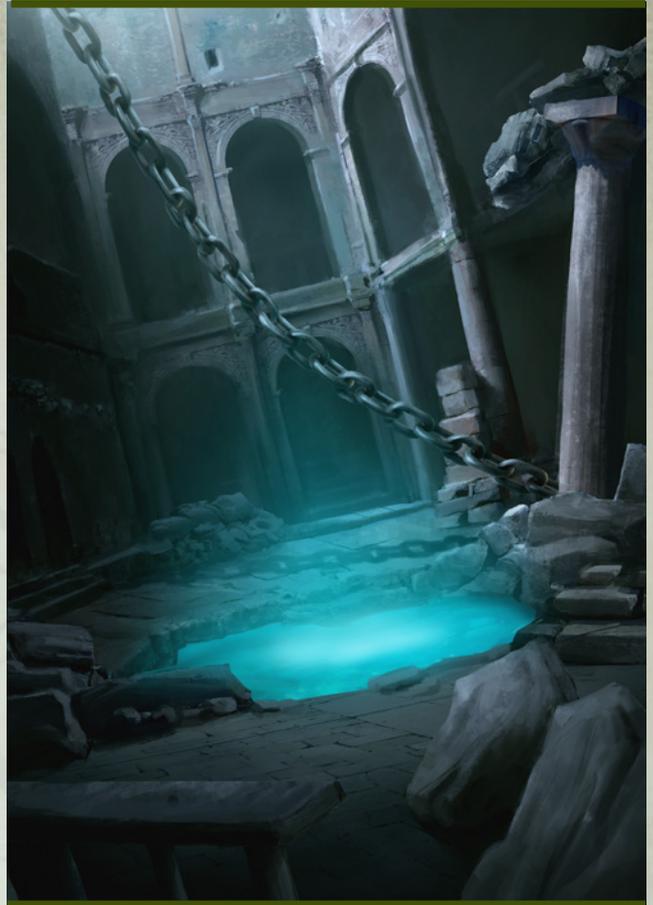
The PCs can try to climb back up the chute with a successful **Strength (Athletics)** skill check DC 15. The chute is 30 feet long and very

## WHAT? NO COMBAT?

The Fox Prince designed the Gauntlet as a test for potential thieves, not warriors. The tests within these halls determine if hopeful guild members have the minimum wit and skill to survive and focused on skill checks and thinking ability. Surviving traps and solving puzzles is a traditional aspect of tabletop RPGs, but some players may find an entire dungeon full of puzzles a little boring.

By the time your PCs have reached 3<sup>rd</sup> level (the suggested level for this module), you should have a sense of what the players want out of their game. You should also be able to gauge their reactions to events in the dungeon as the session goes on. If it looks like the players are getting bored or frustrated, you may want to give them something to hit.

You have a couple of options for how to do this. One way is to replace traps with opponents that represent an equal amount of XP. An evil 4<sup>th</sup> level rogue (CR 3, 800 XP) might be hiding the dungeon, waiting for a chance to knock out some competition. The Fox Prince may even assign a group of four human warriors (CR 2, 600 XP) to threaten those trying to get through the dungeon. As long as you can think of a reason for an appropriately difficult enemy to be in the Gauntlet feel free to add it in place of, or even in addition to, one of the challenges presented.



step. For most PCs, getting to the top requires two skill checks (moving 15 feet each time). Once they reach the top, PCs find that the trap door has closed and cannot be opened from the inside. Trying to smash the door would require powerful magic or great strength and sure footing. If they wish to get out, the party has to move forward.

## 2B. VESTIBULE (700 XP)

This chamber contains a large double door, which leads to “The Gauntlet’s Grip,” the Fox Prince’s biggest challenge for new recruits. But to get to it, applicants must pass through the door, which is held fast by a complicated lock requiring two very special keys. The Fox Prince, himself, tells the PCs what he expects of them.

### SUCCESS IS ITS OWN REWARD

Even if the PCs managed to jam the door above to keep it from closing, the PCs soon realize that there is no other entrance or exit to the Gauntlet. They have to explore the place if they want to find the Fox Prince. However, with the door open, the PCs have a way of getting out to purchase more supplies and perhaps even ask for help. Let them take advantage of that boon, especially if they are having a tough time. They've earned a benefit through the use of a skill, and they should be able to use it.

However, to keep the adventure on track, you should limit the number of trips they can make. They shouldn't have more than one opportunity to leave the dungeon and return without consequences. The time limit that the Fox Prince imposes, himself, will help urge the players along, but giving them too much help makes defeating the dungeon less of an accomplishment.

Remember that the Fox Prince is watching the PCs the whole time they are in the Gauntlet. Once he realizes that the door is broken, he sends workers to repair it. The workers make the repairs when the PCs are farthest from the entrance to ensure they don't interfere. The PCs might hear the "boom" of the closing door and come to investigate. Otherwise, when they try to go back to town a second time, they find that the door is closed.

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*Four sconces on the wall hold metal rods that emit an orange flame, similar to torchlight. They illuminate this rectangular room but produce no smoke or heat. The sconces are located in each of the room's four corners and rest above stone carvings of dragons' heads. The dragons' eyes stare menacingly at you.*

*On the wall opposite the archway from the entry room is what appears to be a massive metal-clad door. Covered with a brilliantly cast relief depicting several constellations found in Threll's night sky, the doors seem to have no handle or other device by which to open them. However, one of the figures, the clever fox, presented with a goose in its mouth, is actually an indentation in the door, unlike the other images that protrude from it.*

*There are also two open archways, one in each of the two side walls. The chambers beyond those archways are shrouded in darkness.*

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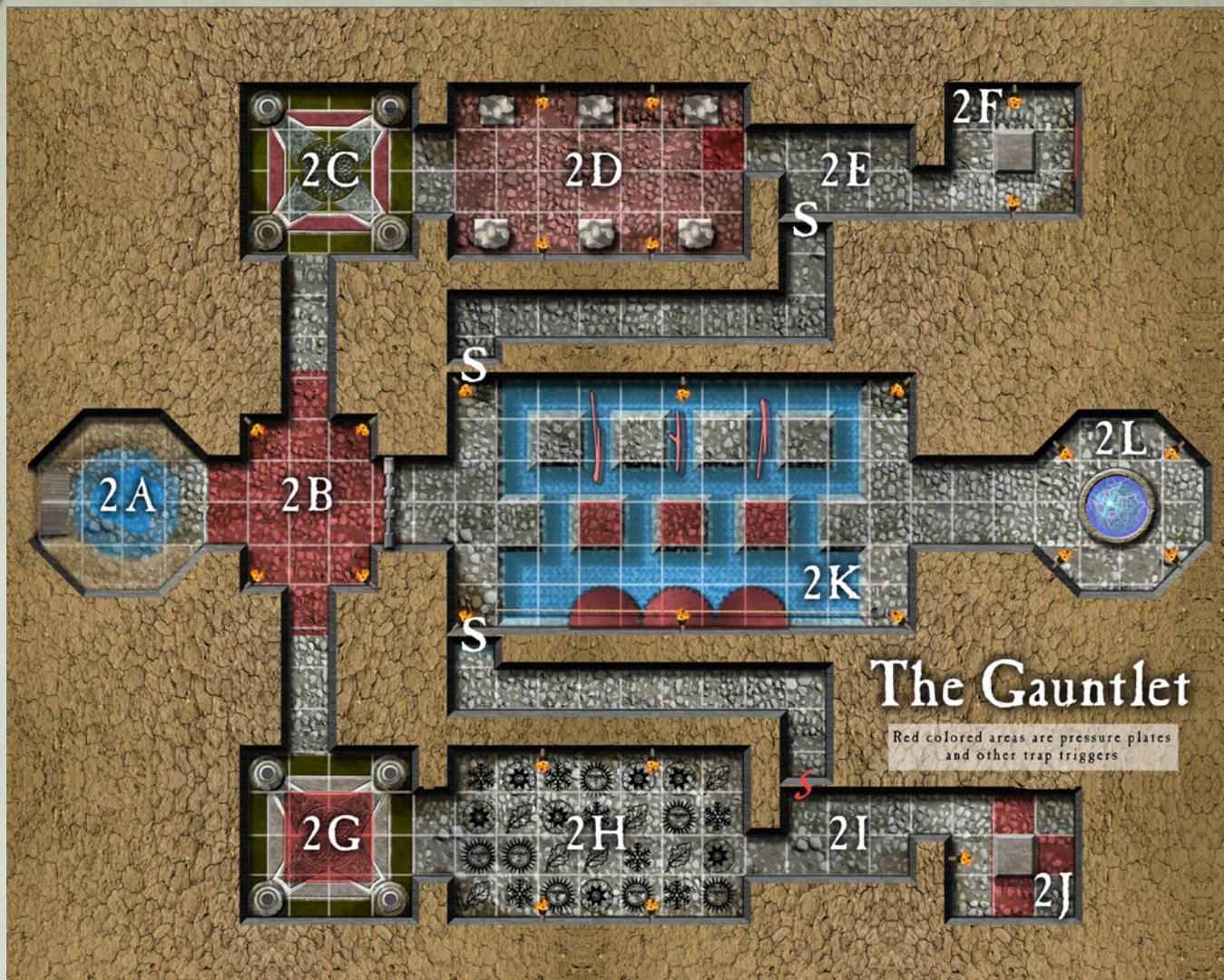
**Treasure:** The metal rods on the walls are enchanted with *continual flame* spells, and provide light equivalent to a torch. They can be safely removed from a sconce with a DC 14 **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check. A DC 20 **Strength** check removes an entire sconce from the wall, which makes for an awkward, but workable torch. Trying to get the rod out of the sconce by brute force damages the rod and then ruins the magic.

If the PCs have the skill to remove these rods from the wall, the Fox Prince lets them keep them. They could each be sold for up to 65 gold pieces.

The first time the PCs step up to the metal door, read the following:

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*As you approach the finely crafted door, the image of the fox suddenly moves. It places the goose on the ground, looks around the room, and begins to speak in a strong, clear voice.*



“Greetings! Welcome to the Gauntlet! Within these chambers, you will be tested for your worthiness to become a member of the most powerful and successful organization in all of Threll. You, of course, know what organization I mean, or you wouldn’t have gone to all the trouble of finding this place.” The fox laughs at his own joke then continues.

“The challenges within these halls will force you to think, move, and act with the level of talent and skill that I expect of all of my associates. These tests are dangerous and may very well take your life. I’m sorry if you think I am being too harsh, but one does not become the Fox Prince by accepting anything less than the best from those who work for him.

“Your task is quite simple. Beyond these doors lies the

path out of the Gauntlet. The doors, themselves, however, are very special, as you can probably guess, and will not let you pass unless you have the proper keys. There are two such keys stored elsewhere in these halls. You need to find both of them to open this door. If you try to pick the lock or break the door down, my four reptilian friends will put an end to you. Their breath is just terrible.

“So, there you have it. Collect the keys and gain the egress. I should tell you, though, that I also expect timely completion of assignments. If you are unable to gather all the keys quickly enough, I’ll have to send someone in to help move things along. Good luck!”

With that, the fox appears to pick up the goose in its mouth before resuming its place in the relief.

The lock can be disabled by a character proficient with thieves' tools (DC 20), but the PCs are not likely to succeed at the attempt. Failing the check by 5 or more triggers a trap that causes each of the four dragon heads to spew a cloud of poisonous gas in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in the room must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save or none on a successful one.

The poison gas trap is extremely dangerous, but the PCs know it's there and have been told there is at least one way to bypass it. If they avoid the trap by using the proper keys, they earn 600 XP. If the PCs manage to actually disable the trap or survive its effects, they could earn 12,600 XP from this single encounter. However, the poison can easily kill 3rd-level PCs. It's okay to encourage players to go along with the Fox Prince's game, but ultimately, the choice is theirs.

**Creatures:** The Fox Prince's threat about sending in someone to keep them moving is real. If the PCs take too long, he will trigger a spell effect that will summon a minotaur into the dungeon. The exact timing of this effect is left up to the GM, and this should be adjusted if the PCs are really having a difficult time. If they managed to jam the trap door and are able to get out of the dungeon, you can delay the summoning or you can use the minotaur to keep them in the dungeon. Once summoned, the minotaur hunts the PCs for one hour before the spell duration expires.

## MINOTAUR

*Large monstrosity, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 76 (9d10 + 27)

**Speed** 40ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +7

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Abyssal

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Charge.** If the minotaur moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

**Labyrinthine Recall.** The minotaur can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

**Reckless.** At the start of its turn, the minotaur can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

## ACTIONS

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage.

**Gore.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

## 2C. CROSSFIRE DARTS TRAP (100 XP)

*This 20-foot square chamber is unlit. Light from the previous room filters in to cast deep shadows on the floor. Four massive, fluted columns rest in the corners of the room. Thin lines etched into the floor radiate from the base of each of these columns, forming a geometric pattern.*

The floor of the room is etched with lines in a strange design. The etching connects the four massive pillars that seem to hold up the ceiling. The etching also serves to conceal the presence of four pressure plates in the floor (designated by the light shading on the map). Stepping on one plate arms the trap, stepping on a second plate sets it off.

**Trap:** This room appears to be identical to the Spiked Pit Trap room (area 2f). PCs who already know about that room may believe there is another pit in this room and try to avoid it by jumping or stepping around the suspect squares. Unfortunately, doing so forces them to step on at least one of two pressure plates and triggers the crossfire darts trap. Each PC in the room is targeted by 1d6 darts. Make a separate attack roll for each dart. *Dart. Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage

## 2D. THUNDER-STONE TRAP (100 XP)

This room tests the PCs' stealth. It contains six statues, each one enchanted to "listen" for sounds.

*This elongated chamber has a high, arched ceiling and is illuminated by four more enchanted torches. Their flickering light falls on six statues, three on each wall. From the doorway, it appears that the statues are arranged in pairs, with the three statues on the right mirroring the three on the left. The closest statues portray a gigantic male figure dressed in a long robe and wearing a scholar's miter on his head. The finger of one hand is pressed to his lips in a "shushing" fashion.*

As the PCs pass through the room, they will see that the other pairs of statues represent a woman with her lips pressed tightly together and a young man with his hands clasped over his mouth.

**Trap:** The PCs must cross the room while succeeding on one or more DC 15 **Dexterity (Stealth)** skill checks. Once a PC reaches the far end, he can step on a pressure plate to open the portcullis and disarm the trap. If he fails, the statues "hear" him and an enchanted stones drops from each of two holes in the ceiling. The stones strike the floor and explode, releasing their attacks on anyone within their areas of effect (highlighted on the map). Any creature in a highlighted area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be deafened for one hour.

## 2E. NORTH ANTECHAMBER

This room is unlit, making many of the relief's details hard to make out unless the PCs bring a light source.

*This room is empty, but the walls are lavishly decorated with a detailed and complex relief depicting a variety of hunting scenes. Game animals of all kinds are mingled with images of trees, hills and open fields along with hunters on foot and on horseback, some working with hunting dogs and others without.*

A thorough examination of the walls, and a DC 18 **Wisdom (Perception)** check, reveals that part of the relief in the southwest corner is shaped exactly like the fox and goose image on the door in the vestibule. The fox portion of the relief forms a hole that perfectly matches the fox key found in room 2F.

Clever and lucky PCs can insert the fox key into the slot and open a secret passage that leads directly to the Gauntlet's Grip. This "trick" is the Fox Prince's lesson that a thief should "break the rules" whenever possible.

## 2F. PUZZLE ROOM

*This small chamber seems to contain nothing but two wall sconces and an odd mural. The mural is mounted on the wall opposite the entrance and appears to be made up of numerous squares. There are pieces of an image embossed on each of the squares, but they are mixed up and do not seem to make much sense.*

The mural is actually a sliding puzzle that the PCs must solve in order to retrieve one of the two keys to the door in the vestibule. By moving the tiles around the board, they can rearrange them to form a replica of the relief that covers the door in area 2B.

PCs can accomplish this task by succeeding on a DC 18 **Intelligence** check. Alternatively, if you have a real sliding puzzle at home, you can give that to your players and have them try to work it out. Even though the image won't be the same as what the PCs are seeing, working through the puzzle can give them a sense of what their characters are doing.

When the PCs put the last piece of the puzzle in place, a pedestal rises out of the floor in the middle of the room. The top of the pedestal is disguised to match the stones in the floor and covers a compartment holding a small, fox-shaped brass statue. It looks like this statue would fit perfectly into the fox-shaped indentation on the locked door (or the one in 2E, if the PCs found it).

## 2G. SPIKED PIT TRAP (100 XP)

This room looks identical to the Crossfire Darts Trap room (area 2C.), including the etchings on the floor.

*This 20-foot square chamber is unlit. Light from the previous room filters in to cast deep shadows on the floor. Four massive, fluted columns rest in the corners of the room. Thin lines etched into the floor radiate from the base of each of these columns, forming a geometric pattern.*

**Trap:** PCs who already know about the trap in area 2C. may try to avoid it by jumping or stepping over what they think are pressure plates. However, stepping onto any of the highlighted squares in the middle of the room drops them into a pit full of spikes. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) skill check will reveal the trap. Each PC that falls in suffers 1d6 damage and 2d4+2 from the spikes at the bottom. The trap doesn't reset unless someone resets it.



## 2H. BURNING HANDS TRAP (100 XP)

The object of this test is to cross the room without triggering one of many burning hands traps.

*This long room appears to be empty, save for the four sconces on the walls. The floor, however, is etched with various symbols, apparently scattered throughout the room at random. There are four different symbols: a sun, a leaf, a flower and a snowflake.*

**Trap:** The safe way to pass through this room is to follow the pattern of the seasons, represented by the symbols on the floor: summer (sun), fall (leaf), winter (snowflake), spring (flower). It doesn't matter what season a character starts with, but once they start they must continue on the path they have chosen.

Going backward or choosing a symbol that is out of order triggers a *burning hands* spell focused on the square the PC is in. There is one path through the room that allows a PC to simply walk from square to square. Choosing any other path requires the PC to attempt **Acrobatics** checks to jump to the correct square. PCs failing the check land in the wrong square and trigger the trap. Each creature in a 15-foot cone must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 3d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Development:** When the PCs return from the goose key room (area 11.j.) they find that the trap only works in one direction. They can cross the room safely on their way back to the vestibule, but will have to follow the correct path if they choose to return to the key room.

## 2I. SOUTH ANTECHAMBER

This room appears to be a mirror image of area 2E.

*This room is empty, but the walls are lavishly decorated with a detailed and complex relief depicting a variety of hunting scenes. Game animals of all kinds are mingled with images of trees, hills and open fields along with hunters on foot and on horseback, some working with hunting dogs and others without.*

A thorough examination of the walls, here, and a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** skill check, reveals that part of the relief in the northwest corner is shaped exactly like the fox and goose image on the door in the vestibule. The goose portion of the relief can be removed to form a hole that perfectly matches the goose key found in room 2j.

Clever and lucky PCs can insert the goose key into the slot and open a secret passage that leads directly to the Gauntlet's Grip. This "trick" is the Fox Prince's lesson that a thief should "break the rules" whenever possible.

## 2J. VENOMOUS SNAKE TRAP (100 XP)

*A 4-foot high pedestal dominates the center of this room. The top of the pedestal is covered with the same stones set into the floor, making it appear to have been pushed up from below. A metallic object rests within a hollow compartment in the pedestal.*

This key room has a pedestal identical to the one that rises from the floor in area 2F., but it is already sitting in the center of the room. The key is visible: upon closer inspection it appears to be a brass statue of a dead goose. Getting the key, unfortunately, is a little more difficult than simply picking it up.

**Trap:** The pedestal is actually counterweighted and balanced by the weight of the goose key. Removing the statue removes the weight from the pedestal causing it to rise, which opens doors to niches on three of the room's walls. Each niche holds an angry poisonous snake, which is dumped out onto the adjacent square (highlighted on the map).

The PCs must estimate the weight of the statue. Unfortunately, the statue is actually a brass casting filled with lead, making it difficult to use the fox key as an example. Too much weight causes the pedestal to drop, opening the doors. Too little raises the pedestal, and the doors open.

If they think of it, the PCs can use the rocks from the first chamber as weights to balance out the missing weight. Alternatively, they might notice that the doors open in a sequence, starting with the northern door and moving clockwise. Only by grossly misjudging the weight will they release all three snakes at once. Clever PCs can remove the weight slowly, allowing only one snake into the room at a time and dealing with each one individually until all are dead.

The other complication is that, as the doors to the snakes' niches open, a portcullis drops to close the entrance to the chamber. Putting the statue back opens the portcullis, but the PCs must figure out how to get the statue out of the room without getting themselves trapped in it.

The PCs can use a variety of skills to properly estimate the weight of the key. A successful DC 20 **Intelligence (Investigate) check** reveals that the statue is not made entirely of brass, without even needing to pick it up (flaws in the coating are obvious to those know what to look for). A successful DC 15 **Wisdom** check would also work.

If a PC is willing to remain trapped in the room, he can hand the key through the

portcullis to another PC, who can then take the key to the entrance chamber and get just the right amount of rocks to balance the weight with a DC 5 **Dexterity** check. Failure indicates a venomous snake drops from each of three wall compartments onto the squares indicated. They are very angry and will fight until dead.

### **VENOMOUS SNAKES (4)**

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 5 (2d4)

**Speed** 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

4 (-3) 18 (+4) 11 (+0) 2 (-4) 12 (+1) 5 (-3)

**Senses** blindsight 10ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### **ACTIONS**

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage.

## **2K. THE GAUNTLET'S GRIP (100 XP)**

When the PCs have collected both keys, they can take them to the door in area 2B and insert them into the appropriate niche. The door emits a series of clicks and grinding noises before opening inward to reveal the room beyond.

Alternatively, the PCs might enter through the secret tunnel, via a door that slides up into the ceiling.

*As the door opens, the room beyond erupts with the sounds of heavy machines lurching into motion. Whirring, whooshing and popping sounds are accompanied by the mechanical staccato of hidden gears and timing devices that give life to what lies ahead.*



**Trap:** There are three obvious paths across this room, but each one poses its own danger.

Just inside the main entrance, the room's floor drops away, yielding to a pool of murky water ten feet below. The surface of the water is dotted with hundreds of black specks—the tips of spikes rising to barely break the water's surface. It's difficult to tell how deep the water is, but the spikes must be at least a few feet long.

Falling into the water for any reason results in 1d6 points of damage and 2d4+4 from spikes. If a PC survives the initial fall, he can carefully navigate to the wall (moving at one fourth of his speed) and attempt to climb out. Moving at half speed requires a DC 15 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check to avoid slipping and falling onto one spike (1d4+2 damage). Moving at full speed increases the DC of the save to 20.

Several square columns rise out of the water running down the middle and left side of the room, spaced about 5 feet apart. One might easily jump from one column to the next, were it not for some obvious obstructions.

On the left, three great axes swing back and forth, threatening anyone caught in their destructive path. In order to cross the pit this way, PCs must succeed on a DC 10 **Strength (Athletics)** check to jump from one column to the next. If they pass the check by 5 or more, they have timed their jump to easily dodge the axe. Otherwise they must roll a DC 14 **Dexterity saving throw** to avoid the swinging axe. If they fail that save, they take 1d8+3 points of damage and must roll a second DC 14 **Dexterity saving throw** to avoid falling into the water and landing on the spikes below.

In the middle of the room, the columns are the dangerous places to be, because arcs of electricity leap from the ceiling down to metal plates embedded in the stone on top of them. The arcs flash in a regular pattern, starting at the column closest to the entrance and moving away each round, then starting back at the beginning.

Again, PCs must roll DC 10 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** checks. If they succeed, they have 2 rounds in which to attempt to jump to the next column before the arc of electricity reaches the column they are on. If they move too slowly, the lightning targets them (4d6 electricity damage, DC 15 **Dexterity saving throw** for half). Taking any damage from the electricity requires the PC to roll a DC 15 **Dexterity saving throw** to avoid falling into the water.

The right side of the room offers a different means of crossing. A single, taught rope stretches between two sturdy-looking supports. PCs can use their climbing ability to get across, but to do so they must avoid three scythe traps that come whirling out of the wall beneath the rope. They can accomplish this by making **Acrobatics** checks to walk across the tightrope (usually three DC 20 checks when moving at half speed) or **Climb** to pull themselves across (eight DC 10 checks when moving at 1/4 normal speed). PCs may not take ten on any of these checks. Failing any check requires the PC to roll a DC 20 **Reflex** save or be subjected to an attack from one of the wall scythes (+20 melee, 2d4+6/x4). If that attack hits, a second DC 20 **Reflex** save is required to avoid falling into the water.

**Development:** When the first PC makes it across the room, all of the traps instantly wind down, allowing the remaining PCs to cross in relative safety. With the other traps out of commission, PCs making DC 8 **Strength (Athletics)** skill check to jump from column to column or DC 8 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill checks to shimmy across the rope. Landing on the opposite side also causes the iron portcullis to open, allowing the party to move into the final chamber of the dungeon.

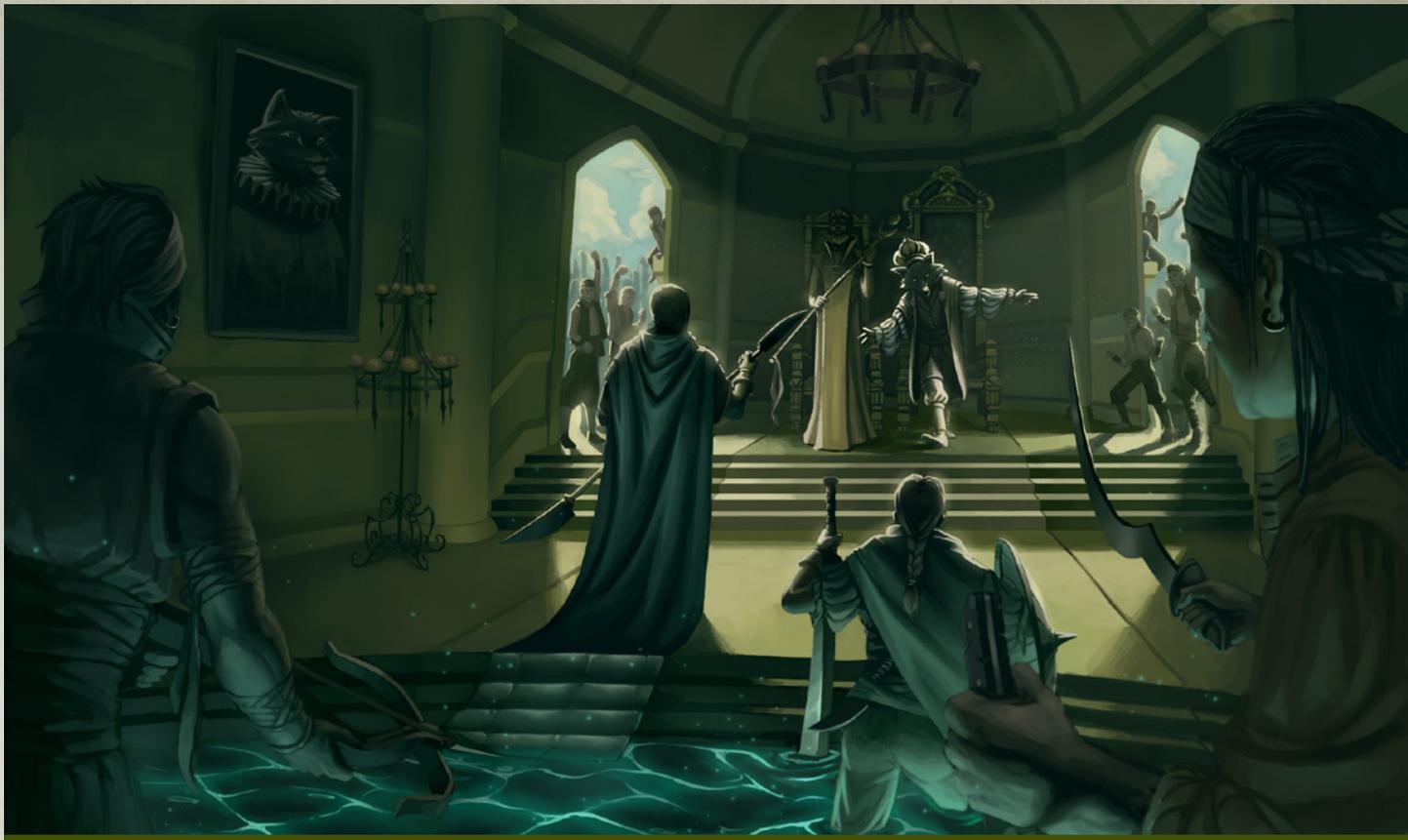
The combination of traps in this room makes getting across it very dangerous. Knowing the traps are there provides some help, but there are many of them to overcome and getting to them to disable them is almost impossible. Award the party experience for a CR4 encounter when they manage to make it across the room. Additionally, if they manage to disable any of the traps, award them experience for each trap they defeat.

## 2L. TELEPORT CHAMBER

This chamber contains the candidate's final test of daring.

*This room is octagonal in shape and is well-lit by four sconces. In the center, a large pool of clear water reflects the torchlight. The rim of the pool is marked with a variety of strange-looking symbols. As you look into the pool, you get the impression that the water possesses a luminous quality of its own, even without the help of the other lights in the room.*

The pool is actually a teleportation circle which transports those who step into it directly to the great hall of the Fox Prince's headquarters, which is far away from the Gauntlet. Only by braving the danger and choosing to enter the circle can a thief finally leave the dungeon and become a member of the Elverin Skulk.



The PCs may be able to guess the nature of the pool by a number of means. A DC 14 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check reveals that the runes are associated with teleportation magic. A successful casting of *detect magic* along with a DC 18 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check reveals that the pool is a teleportation device. Alternatively, they can simply toss something into the pool and watch it vanish to get a clue about what the pool does.

Once the last PC steps into the pool and vanishes, move on to area 2J.

## 2M. GREAT HALL OF THE THIEVES' DEN

The PCs appear in the middle of the Great Hall of the Fox Prince's headquarters, surrounded by dozens of gang members who seem genuinely pleased to see them.

*A sound like rushing water fills your ears, then suddenly recedes and is replaced by the sound of cheering. The cheering quiets down as your surroundings come into focus. You realize that you are standing in a large room, like the grand hall of a castle or keep. Before you, on a raised dais, sits a figure which looks like a man except he has the head of fox. The figure stands and bows with a flourish before addressing you.*

*"Welcome, initiates, to the den of the Elverin Skulk! Congratulations on completing your trials!"*

The Skulk enjoys watching candidates make the attempt through the Gauntlet. The viewing is made possible by a combination of divination and illusion magic worked by a wizard who serves the Fox Prince. More than a few of the guild members have made money by wagering on the PCs performance. The ones who lost money seem to have taken the loss fairly well.

### THE FOX PRINCE

The Fox Prince is an enigma. There is no sure way to tell whether he really does have the head of a fox or if he is merely cloaked in illusion. If the PCs cast *detect magic* on him, they find that he is under the effects of many schools of magic, including illusion. However, he and his guards won't let them get away with anything more intrusive that might reveal his identity.

The Fox Prince lets the PCs take a moment to regain their bearings before asking them to introduce themselves. As the conversation continues, he realizes that the party did not brave the dangers of the Gauntlet to become members of the guild. While he admires them for their bravery and commitment, the situation puts him in a very difficult position.

When the PCs finally explain the purpose for their visit, he becomes visibly distraught. After shooing away all but his three most trusted lieutenants, as well as the wizard who stands quietly beside the Prince's throne, he shakes his head ruefully.

*"I am dreadfully sorry to hear that you have come all this way only to be disappointed. I cannot possibly help you. The anonymity of my clients is of the utmost importance. To violate that could seriously damage the Elverin Skulk's reputation. And without reputation, an organization like ours does not survive for long."*

The Fox Prince is not completely heartless, however. He knows that the PCs have struggled and suffered to get here. In other circumstances, he would be forced to kill interlopers, but he instead tells them that he will have his wizard alter their memories and teleport them back to the forest.

Impress upon the players that the Fox Prince must be very powerful and he probably retained the others in the room for his protection. The Fox Prince and his allies possess character levels far above the PCs' ability to handle. The party would be foolish to attack him or try to force the information out of him.

If the PCs try to convince the Prince that whatever this client wants with the statues can only be bad for everyone, the Fox Prince tells them that he cannot be held responsible for

the deeds of his clients. The PCs can try to use **Charisma (Persuasion)** on him, but must beat a DC 18 to even get him to listen to their pleas.

During the course of the negotiations, or perhaps just as the wizard is about to cast the spell that wipes their memories away, an elderly woman comes rushing into the room and whispers something in the Prince's ear. Upon hearing her words, he looks down, shaking his head sadly. Then, as if suddenly struck by an idea, he looks up at the PCs.

*"If you truly are heroes, and wish only to do good in this world, then perhaps we can strike a deal. I need the help of heroes, right now, and if we can be of mutual service, then that means you are the heroes I need."*

The Fox Prince goes on to explain that during a recent job, one of his agents, someone very important to him, fell into the sewers beneath Port Fairglade. The agent became very ill a few days after returning to the Skulk's headquarters. None of the guild's healers have been able to cure him. They believe that the disease may be magical in nature. Powerful healing magic is required to save the sick guild member.

It just so happens that a local “swamp witch,” actually the hag known as Grunhild, is rumored to possess a *healing stone* that be able to cure the disease. If the PCs go into the swamp and get the stone from her, the Fox Prince will repay the favor by telling them all he knows about the client who hired the Elverin Skulk to steal the White Serpent.

If the PCs agree, he shows them a crude map that describes the path through the swamp to the hag’s lair. The Fox Prince does not care how the PCs get the *stone*, as long as they bring it back and heal his best agent, for whom he happens to care very much.

### **PART III: A THIEF’S ERRAND**

The Fox Prince lets the PCs rest, heal up, and replenish spell components or other mundane supplies they need, before the Skulk’s wizard teleports them back to the Umberwood. Following the Fox Prince’s map, the PCs must make their way to the hag’s retreat and deal with her to get the *healing stone*. The PCs must face a few obstacles along the way, but they eventually find the old crone’s hut. Unfortunately, Grunhild has no interest in seeing the PCs again. She and her earth elemental servant attack them as soon as they arrive.

#### **3A. LIZARDFOLK (2) (200 XP)**

A pair of lizardfolk are scouting the swamps around Blackwater Creek just as others of their tribe have been scouting other swamps in the region.

*Following a muddy path through the brush, you stumble onto a pair of reptilian humanoid skulking through the undergrowth. When they see you, they hiss angrily, raise their spears, and charge!*

The lizardfolk have been displaced from

their original home by some terrible event and hope to find a place where their tribe can settle. The exact nature of this catastrophe is beyond the scope of this adventure, but could be a springboard for further adventures, once the PCs have completed their mission.

#### **LIZARDFOLK (2)**

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30ft., swim 30 ft.

**STR** DEX **CON** INT **WIS** **CHA**

15 (+2) 10 (+0) 13 (+1) 7 (-2) 12 (+1) 7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Draconic



**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spiked Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

### 3B. GIANT SPIDERS (2), 400 XP

The PCs pass by the lairs of a pair of giant spiders.

*The trees here grow together in a tangle that is only made worse by an abundance of unhealthy looking vines. On either side of the path, the plant life has been draped in white, silky fibers and formed into circular tunnels leading away into darkness.*

**Creatures:** As the PCs approach the spiders come rushing out of their dens, hoping to surprise a potential meal. Each spider bites a PC and attempts to drag him back into its lair to finish him off. To avoid being surprised, the PCs must succeed on a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception) check**.

### GIANT SPIDERS (2)

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d10 + 4)

**Speed** 30ft., climb 30ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 16 (+3) 12 (+1) 2 (-4) 11 (+0) 4 (-3)

**Skills** Stealth +7

**Senses** blindsight 10ft., darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### 3C. GRUNHILD'S LAIR (2,500 XP)

The PCs at last find their way to the hag's shack

*You don't need the Fox Prince's map to tell you that you are on the right track. Up ahead, the whole swamp signals that you are entering a place of great danger. The ground you walk on appears firm, but seems to squirm beneath your feet with every step. The trees have grown twisted and gnarled, crooked and bent like the back of an old woman. Mosses and vile-looking fungi hang from the branches or sprout from ruptures in the bark. All around, croaking, buzzing, and flapping sounds emanate from unseen sources giving the place an aura of slimy, crawling, unnatural life.*

The well-worn path takes the PCs over a series of bridges connecting areas of mostly dry land, the PCs soon see the hag's crude wooden hut up ahead, hanging over the water on pilings driven down into the mud. As they get closer, Grunhild steps out of her door onto the porch to observe them. When she recognizes them she shouts out, telling them they have already served their purpose. She tells them to turn around, if they know what's good for them. If the PCs do not leave, she orders her earth elemental to attack, jumps into the water, and becomes *invisible*.

The ground before you seems to ripple like water. Then a dome of rock and mud bursts upward, rising to form a column about the height of a man before growing arms and legs. The dirt and rocks take on the appearance of a scowling face before the mouth opens wide and unleashes a roar that sounds like hundreds of stones cascading down a steep slope.

**Creatures:** The earth elemental fights to the death, driving PCs closer to the water's edge where Grunhild can leap up and grab them. If she can't pull them down under the water and drown them, she uses her weakening touch to soften up her opponents and lets the earth elemental do the rest.

### **GRUNHILD, GREEN HAG CR 3**

Medium fey, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 82 (11d8 + 33)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

18 (+4) 12 (+1) 16 (+3) 13 (+1) 14 (+2) 14 (+2)

**Skills** Arcana +3, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Sylvan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Amphibious.** The hag can breathe air and water.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

**Mimicry.** The hag can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check.

### **ACTIONS**

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Illusory Appearance.** The hag covers herself and anything she is wearing or carrying with a magical illusion that makes her look like another creature of her general size and humanoid shape. The illusion ends if the hag takes a bonus action to end it or if she dies

The changes wrought by this effect fail to hold up to physical inspection. For example, the hag could appear to have smooth skin, but someone touching her would feel her rough flesh. Otherwise, a creature must take an action to visually inspect the illusion and succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the hag is disguised.



**Invisible Passage.** The hag magically turns invisible until she attacks or casts a spell, or until her concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). While invisible, she leaves no physical evidence of her passage, so she can be tracked only by magic. Any equipment she wears or carries is invisible with her.

## **EARTH ELEMENTAL CR 5**

Large elemental, *neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30ft., burrow 30ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

20 (+5) 8 (-1) 20 (+5) 5 (-3) 10 (+0) 5 (-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** thunder

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., tremorsense 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Terran

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Earth Glide.** The elemental can burrow through non magical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

**Siege Monster.** The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Grunhild stays hidden in the water until she is ready to strike at an opponent. The other PCs should have a chance to attack her before she

slips beneath the water again. If they reduce her to less than 15 hit points, Grunhild will make herself invisible and jump into the water to escape and plot her revenge.

**Development:** Once the battle is over, the PCs are free to investigate the hag's home. Among her other treasures, they find a large chunk of hematite that radiates a powerful aura of evocation (healing) magic. This *healing stone* is the item the Fox Prince seeks. Once per day, the stone can be used to cure a victim of one disease. Although the sick thief's ailment is potent, the *healing stone's* power can defeat it.



### FEAR IN THE SWAMP!

This should be a scary battle for the PCs. They are taking on a hag and an earth elemental on their own turf. The earth elemental attacks relentlessly, but even after it is defeated, Grunhild might still be lurking, waiting to get her revenge on the PCs. Take pauses, allowing the PCs to look around, wondering where the hag is before she erupts from the water to attack one of the characters.

### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After the PCs collect the healing stone, they can return to the entrance to the Gauntlet, where the Skulk's wizard is waiting to transport them to the guild's headquarters. There, the Fox Prince awaits word about the sick thief's condition before thanking the party for helping him. Once he is sure that his agent will recover, he shares what he knows about the client who now has the Green and White Serpent statues.

*"Just because I don't share my clients' information with others doesn't mean I'm not interested in knowing who I'm working for. I do a fair amount of digging into the lives of many clients. What I find can be useful on the rare occasions someone decides to double-cross me. As we agreed, I will tell you what I know of this client.*

*"His name is Belazeel. He's a very intense fellow...a rather skilled practitioner of magic from what my sources can gather. He tends to keep to himself, though. He doesn't associate with the wizards of any of the major arcane universities, which leads me to believe his studies lean more*

*toward the darker arts. I don't know exactly why he is interested in the statues, but I can tell you that it is very important to him and also that his motives have very little to do with money. Based on what he paid me to get the statue for him, he obviously has plenty of that already."*

The Fox Prince tries to answer any questions the PCs have, but he has little information to offer beyond what he has already given. If asked how Belazeel contacted the Skulk, he can provide a hand-written note that is similar to one in the possession of the sage, Ithamar Ruggles in Corbin village. The other note was used to hire a band of orcs to steal the first statue. This second letter also has a wax seal with an ornate sigil affixed to it. It might be of some interest to Lord Mayor Wolfe's investigators, and the Fox Prince allows the PCs to keep it, if they wish. This seal might be used in conjunction with certain powerful divination magic to help the PCs figure out what he is up to.

When their business is concluded, the Prince says his goodbyes. If there are any rogues in the group, and they performed well during their time in the Gauntlet, he privately offers them positions in the Elverin Skulk. Even if they decline, he makes sure they know the offer remains open. The Fox Prince considers the party to be allies, because they helped save his sick agent. Having someone like him for a friend can be a mixed blessing, but for now, at least, the benefits outweigh the costs.

After wrapping up any loose ends, which include making the PCs promise not to reveal the location of the Gauntlet, the Fox Prince directs his wizard to transport the PCs back to Port Fairglade.

If any of the PCs refuse to keep the location of the Gauntlet a secret, the Fox Prince is forced to have one of the Guild's spellcasters modify the PCs' memories with magic. The spell merely erases knowledge of the Gauntlet's location, not its existence or the experiences they had within. Once those precautions have been taken, the wizard teleports the party back to woods outside of Port Fairglade, then quickly disappears.

When they make contact with Lord Mayor Wolfe, the PCs can pass on what they know and collect the reward he promised them. Each PC gain one magic item of his choice. The item can be of any type (weapon, armor, wand, ring, or wondrous item) but its purchase price must be no greater than 2,500 gold pieces. The item is ready within a week of placing the request, during which time the heroes can work with the Lord Mayor's investigators and scholars to determine the next course of action to take in their plan to stop Belazeel.

### **CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN**

*The Thieves' Den* can be used as a stand-alone adventure, but it presents a number of options if the GM and players wish to continue the campaign based on the events of this story.

- The PCs have made an enemy of the barghest known to them as Clawripper. Killing a fiend on the Material Plane merely sends that creature back to its native plane of existence. The barghest will want revenge for his defeat and his hidden masters will want him to complete the task he was sent to Threll to accomplish. It is likely that, when he returns, he will bring help with him.

- The lizardfolk who live south of Threll are making more frequent incursions into the kingdom. Although they have been furtive in their search for a new home, the incidents of encounters with Threllish citizens are increasing. All that is known is that some terrible danger is driving the lizardfolk from their homelands. They will not speak of it to the "smooth-skinned" people. If the incursions continue, tensions between Threll and the lizardfolk could erupt into violent conflict.
- Grunhild may have escaped the battle with the PCs, making her yet another foe seeking revenge against them. Grunhild may seek others to form a coven to take out her anger on all of Northumberland and Moresby Counties, and perhaps beyond. Even if they finished her off, the confirmed presence of a hag in northern Threll is a troubling detail that must be reported to the Knights of Hagwatch Tower.

The most likely continuation, however, and the one we hope you will choose, is in the next chapter of the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, in which the PCs seek the help of a powerful oracle to discover what Belazeel is up to and how he might be stopped. But in order to get the answers they seek, they must brave ancient ruins deep within a forbidden forest and pass a different series of tests to prove that they are worthy of the oracle's aid. What they learn puts them on a collision course with their long-hidden foe. Only their efforts can stop him from unleashing a terrible evil on the world.





**T**hese ruins must be over a thousand years old. How is that possible? And what god did these people worship?" The cleric stood before the remains of a large statue. "And if this is a temple of healing, where are the references to Losinia's light?"

"I know it's fascinating, Keian, but we're kind of in a hurry. Let's find that seal and get out of here."

"Of course, Molly. You are correct." Keian moved around to the pillar behind statue, tracing symbols so time-worn they were nearly illegible. Then, his fingers caught on something—a seam so fine that he could feel it, even though he couldn't see it. He followed the seam to reveal a rectangular panel in the stone. After a few tries, Keian found the right spot to press, causing the panel to swing outward on some hidden hinge.

"I think I've found it!" His voice came out in a hoarse whisper of excitement.

A few paces away, Molly felt the sudden rush of a hot wind blowing over her. Her shadow danced across the courtyard in front of her. It was as though someone had suddenly lit a wagon-load of torches behind her.

"Keian. You've definitely found something."

# THE ORACLE'S TEST

# What You Will Find Inside The Oracle's Test

A mysterious plot is unfolding. Following clues about the theft of a pair of ancient statues, the heroes have discovered who hired the notorious Elverin Skulk thieves' guild to rob the Lord Mayor. Simply putting a name to this shadowy nemesis is not enough to halt his sinister plans, yet there is hope. Deep in the forlorn forest lie ruins from a forgotten age, and a stone circle that with the proper tokens it can open a portal into the faerie realms. Within this never-land, the heroes must seek the wisdom of a mysterious oracle to unveil their enemy's true purpose and how to stop him, but the oracle does not give his counsel freely. Are the heroes up to the challenge? Can they pass his tests and show themselves worthy of the oracle's boon?



# THE ORACLE'S TEST

*The Oracle's Test* is an adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 4th-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into three parts, and each part is designed to be run within a few hours. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 5th level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

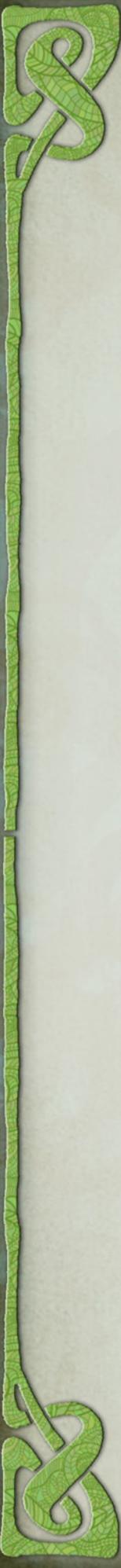
*The Oracle's Test* is the fourth adventure in a mini-campaign entitled *Trail of the Apprentice*, which began with *The Bandit's Cave*. A campaign is a series of adventures that are connected by a larger plot. You might think of a campaign as a television series, in which each adventure is like a different episode of the series. This campaign plays out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level. Game Masters can use this adventure to continue the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, as a stand-alone, "one-shot" event, or as a side quest in their own campaigns.

The story is set in the kingdom of Threll, located on the Terrallien continent of the planet Aeva. Most of the adventure's events take place in and around the ruins of Sol'Ithmanna, an ancient ruined city in Ithmar Forest. The module provides enough information to run the entire adventure, but is designed to be portable. You can use it "as is" or set it in any campaign world you choose.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After a long search, the wizard Belazeel finally possesses the Green Serpent and White Serpent statues. Stolen for him by hired agents, the statues are the two keys necessary to release a spellcaster of legendary power from her eons-long imprisonment in the Basilisk Shroud, a prison crafted specifically to contain her. Belazeel is certain that when he completes the ritual, the spellcaster will make him her apprentice and teach him the secrets that once made her enemies fear the very utterance of her name: a name stricken from history. If Belazeel is not stopped, it is a name that will live again to be uttered in hushed, fearful tones by the people of Threll.





A group of heroes recently discovered that Belazeel is behind the theft of the serpent statues. With each theft, adventurers had to undertake dangerous missions to protect the people of Threll, but they were always too late to keep the statues out of Belazeel's hands. Only by gaining the trust of the infamous Fox Prince could the heroes learn the man's identity. However, they do not know where he is, nor do they know why he wants the statues.

The scholars and spellcasters in the city of Port Fairglade could not locate Belazeel by any form of scrying or divination available to them. Grasping at straws, the scholars suggested consulting the Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna, a fey being who has knowledge of the past, present and future. The scholars, themselves, know little about the Oracle, but tales say that those in great need can enter his domain and gain wisdom from him.

Sol'Ithmanna is known to most people of northern Threll as little more than an ancient, ruined city. They believe the original ruins date back many thousand years, from a time before the great catastrophe that scoured an entire civilization from the face of the continent, which was then called Ilsgardien. Historians and wizards don't know why these ruins survived that catastrophe when it left no trace of more recent structures. It is merely one of the many mysteries associated with the strange events of the continent's past—part of what led explorers to rename the lands Terrallien.

The Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna, whose name is Revien, was a fixture of the now-ruined city from the very beginning. He lived there long before the arrival of the city's builders and suspected that they would choose the site for one of their cities. As a faerie seer, he also knew

the arcane power these mysterious people possessed and that they would dominate the land from the moment they set foot there. The fey who already dwelled in the forest would resist, but they would fail. To protect his kin from the ravages of war, Revien appeared before the rulers of Sol'Ithmanna and offered a trade. He would grant them the services of his prophetic sight in exchange for peace and freedom for the fey living in the forests nearby. The settlers accepted, but planned to use the Oracle's visions to expand their control and wage war on people nearby.

Revien foresaw this, of course, and when the time came for him to begin his service, he slightly altered the terms. In order to access his domain, the rulers of Sol'Ithmanna had to bring five seals and place them in niches on the Stone Portal, an archway resting on a small hill near the center of town. He gave one seal to the heads of each of the main groups leading the city. Each seal represented a heroic virtue that the Oracle felt was important.

The temple of the city's god of healing received the seal of compassion. The city's military headquarters received the seal of strength. Revien gave the seal of wisdom to the scholars at Sol'Ithmanna's library and the seal of honor to the civil leadership at city's great hall. One final seal, the seal of courage, went to one who would represent the city's heroes. Each year, Revien chose a new hero to carry that seal.

By dividing the five keys among the city's various powers, the Oracle hoped that no one person or group could monopolize his power. If someone wanted help from the Oracle, all other groups had to agree that his goals were worthy. This system worked well, until someone



managed to steal all five of the seals. Revien then devised a series of five tests for those who entered his realm. Even if a person or group used trickery to get through the portal, they still had to prove themselves worthy of his knowledge.

Revien has existed this way for thousands of years. The ancient empire fell, but he remained trapped in his domain, bound by the very terms of service that he devised. Occasionally, he receives visits from fey creatures with the ability to reach him, but he spends most

of his time alone. He is a prisoner, having traded his freedom for the well-being of others. Settlers came to Threll and eventually discovered the ruins. Few folk know about the oracle, but adventurers, explorers, or historians who have heard the tales sometimes visit the ruins and try to recover the seals. Revien welcomes all who pass his tests, which change each time a person enters, but he will not answer questions for those who fail.

The seals, themselves, are indelibly linked to the city. If they are carried away, they disappear on the following sunrise and reappear in the places where they rest, awaiting another hero to gather them. They also return to these places after the

Oracle's visitors enter his domain.

If asked why he did not foresee the fall of the other civilization and set the terms of his service to expire after that, he says only that his service is still necessary. In some respects, he is correct. His presence in these lands can be a valuable resource. Those who seek his knowledge for noble reasons can do great things with what they learn. And those who would use it for evil may still learn something by taking his tests.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins in the port town of Riverside, on the shores of the Imlenite River. The PCs have stopped in the town to gather supplies and information about the ruins. The party seeks out a local man who knows the tales of the ruins. While in town, they gain the attention of two unsavory groups: an unscrupulous adventuring party and a pack of werewolves. The evil adventurers, known as the “Dark Hand,” hope to use the Oracle to find an item of importance to their leader. The werewolves use Ithmar Forest as a hunting ground. They want revenge against the PCs and plan to make a meal of PCs.

The party must travel overland through the Ithmar Forest, where they encounter a few of the forest’s denizens, including members of the werewolf pack, before they arrive at the ruins of Sol’Ithmanna. Once inside the ruins, the PCs must gather the seals that open the portal. But other creatures call the ruins home and do not take kindly to being disturbed. To complicate matters, the PCs must contend with the Dark Hand, who get in the way or attempt to rob them.

Once the PCs have four of the seals, the Oracle grants the fifth and final seal to one character he deems most worthy. But before they can put the seals to use, they must deal, once and for all, with the Dark Hand who are determined to take all the seals for themselves.

After defeating their enemies, the PCs enter the Oracle’s domain and must take the five tests through which they prove their worth to Revien. Revien already knows the damage that Belazeel can do if he is successful and automatically provides the PCs with basic answers about their mission. He is far more

helpful to those who have passed all of his tests. Additional information may mean the difference between success or failure as the heroes continue their quest to stop a mad wizard from unleashing a terrible evil on the world.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players have their character sheets, are gathered around the gaming table and are ready to begin, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

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*Stepping off the barge that brought you across the Imlenite River, you set foot on a long pier that curves slightly upward to meet the river’s steep bank. You move with a small crowd of your fellow travelers and enter the bustling town of Riverside. Hawkers shout out to you, offering a variety of local delicacies and advertising the many inns and boarding houses that support Riverside’s temporary population.*

*You are looking for Miller’s Tavern, for it is there that you expect to meet Hector Amaku, the man who can tell you about the ruins of Sol’Ithmanna and the fabled Oracle who lives there.*

---

If the PCs succeed on a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check, they pick out a voice and follow it to a woman advertising for the tavern they seek. She gives them directions and sends them on their way.

If they fail their check, the PCs must wander through the crowd, probably looking very lost. Eventually, a boy steps out of the crowd and offers to help them find their way, in exchange for one gold piece per party member, an extremely high price. If the PCs choose not to pay, they must find the information on their

own. It isn't too difficult to locate Miller's Tavern on their own, but asking for directions wastes time. They might even run into trouble with locals or other travelers whose intentions are less noble.

## PART ONE: RIVERSIDE AND ITHMAR FOREST

The party stopped in the Riverside to meet with Hector Amaku. Hector is something of a local celebrity. He is one of the oldest human residents in the town and possesses a wealth of historical information about the area. He is not exactly a scholar, but Riverside is a small community around a busy river port. Hector enjoys meeting travelers and traders who frequent Riverside's inns, boarding houses, and shops as they make their way up, down, and across the river throughout the year. He has learned a great deal from talking to these people, and his memory is still sharp, despite his age.

### SETTLEMENT STAT BLOCK: RIVERSIDE

The following stat block is provided for ease of integration, giving key traits that help describe the town.

#### RIVERSIDE

CG Small Town

**Qualities** Prosperous, Rumormongering Citizens

**Government** Council

**Population** 1,500 (1,300 humans; 80 dwarves; 70 halflings; 20 elves; 30 other)

**Notable NPCs**

**Councilman Addison Fowler** (N noble)

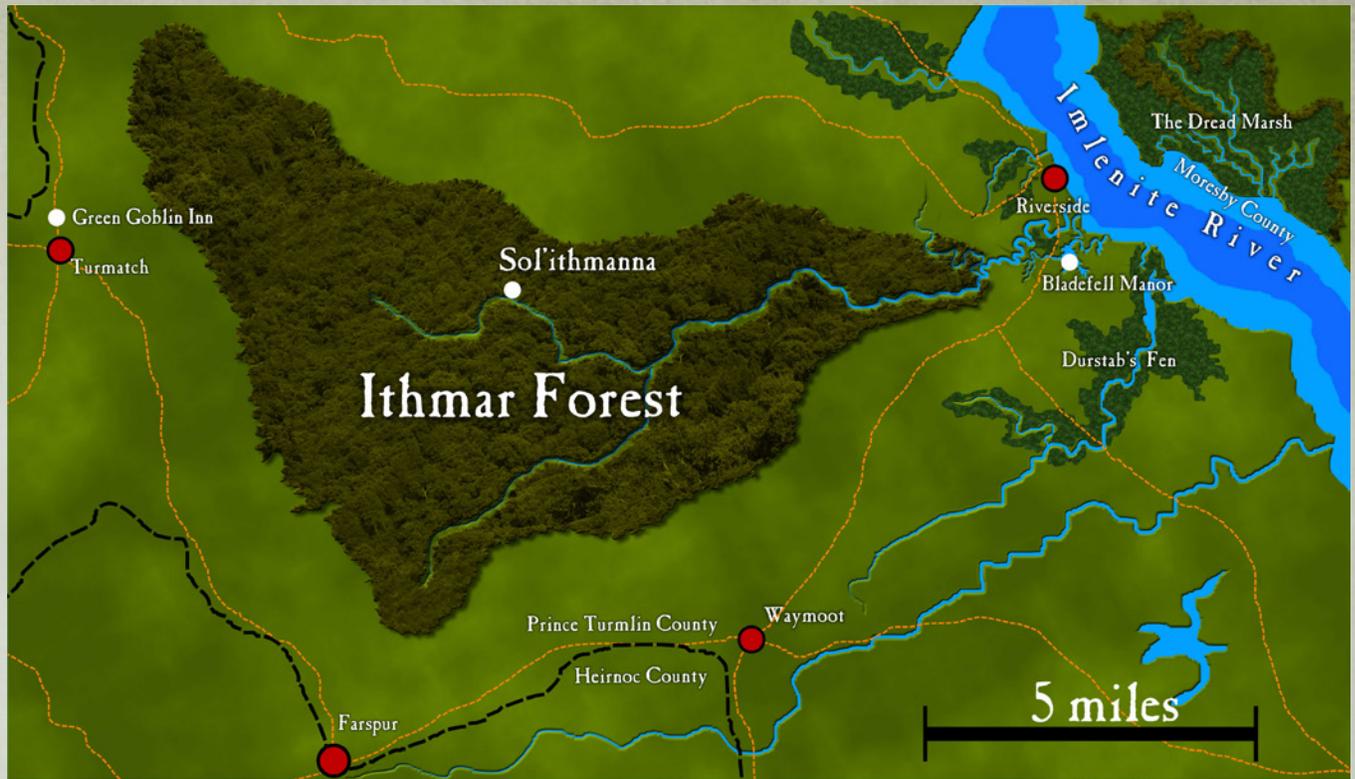
**Hector Amaku** (NG human commoner)

On their way to the tavern, the PCs first encounter a thief who tries to steal from them. The thief is something more than what he appears, however, and the chance encounter sets up a future confrontation. During their journey to the ruins, the PCs run afoul of the forest's denizens, including the family of the thief they met in town.

### 1A. THE PICKPOCKET (700 XP)

A gang of villainous thieves secretly resides in Riverside. The presence of a gang is bad enough, but these thieves are also werewolves. They have spent the past several months preying on unwary travelers for food and money. They are smart enough to avoid attacking





anyone within the town's limits, though, and confine their hunting to the roads that skirt the edge of Ithmar Forest. As the PCs make their way to Miller's Tavern, they bump into one of the werewolves.

As the PCs move with the crowd along a street lined with vendors, a man moving in the opposite direction passes close to one of the party members. The chosen PC should be one who carries a coin purse or other valuable object, especially if that PC makes a purchase from one of the vendors on the street. He bumps against the PC in passing and mutters an apology before attempting to move on.

The man is a thief who goes by the name Augustus Shepard. He is young, perhaps in his early twenties, with simple clothing that hangs loosely on a thin, but nimble, frame. His eyes are dark brown. His face is a bit longer than most people of Threll and framed with a mop of thick, dark hair.

On a successful DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check, the PC notices when Augustus takes his coin purse. Surpassing the check DC by 5 or more allows the PC to notice the attempted theft before Augustus can remove it. If the PC fails the check, he doesn't notice the item is missing until the next time he attempts to use it.

A PC who notices he is being robbed gets a single action and may try to grab Augustus' hand while he is flat-footed, using **Strength (Athletics)** to initiate a grapple against Augustus' **Dexterity (Acrobatics)**. If he succeeds, he can try to prevent the thief from moving until he breaks the grapple. You can use the grapple rules or simply have the characters continue the contest at each round. After the surprise round, the other PCs can help keep him from escaping.

A town watch patrol arrives in 3 rounds. If the PCs hold Augustus long enough, the watch listens to the PCs' claims and questions Augustus. Augustus claims he is innocent, but

the guards find several stolen items in his pockets, including items he took from the PC. They take Augustus to the local jail, and give the PCs a bottle from the thief's stash as a reward (it contains a *potion of invisibility*).

If they don't catch Augustus or he manages to get away before the authorities arrive, he quickly drinks the *potion of invisibility* and escapes. However, the PCs later see him in Miller's Tavern, after their meeting with Hector Amaku. They can catch him spending money from the PCs' coin purse or holding the item he stole. The PCs may cause a scene in their attempt to get their property back, but their actions should lead to Augustus' arrest or his quick departure from town to escape arrest.

It isn't long before word gets around that the PCs were involved in the thief's recent "troubles" with the law. His werewolf kin pay attention when the PCs leave town and follow them to get revenge.

### **AUGUSTUS SHEPARD, WEREWOLF**

*Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 in humanoid form (leather armor), 13 (natural armor) in wolf or hybrid form

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +4

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4, Sleight of Hand +4

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common (can't speak in wolf form)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Shapechanger.** Augustus can use his action to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Augustus reverts to his true form if he dies.

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** Augustus has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn, the Augustus deals an extra 2d6 (7) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the Augustus that isn't incapacitated and the Augustus doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** Augustus makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with its claws, or two with his dagger.

**Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

**Claws (Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

### **1B. MEETING WITH HECTOR AMAKU**

The PCs eventually locate Miller's Tavern, where they find Hector Amaku.

*Miller's Tavern is a relatively small building on the corner of two narrow roads. The surrounding buildings, a mixture of shops and residences, give the*

*intersection a crowded feel. A covered porch wraps around the building on the two sides facing the street.*

*Two men step up onto the porch and head into the tavern. As they pass a dark-skinned man seated in a rocking chair near the tavern's entrance, the patrons wave and call out a warm greeting. "It's good to see you, again, Mister Amaku!"*

The primary purpose of this freeform encounter is to give the PCs the information they need from Hector Amaku, but it is also an opportunity to interact with other NPCs. If the PCs failed to notice that their pockets were picked, Miller's Tavern is where they meet Augustus for the first time, setting into motion the events that lead to the later encounter with the werewolves.

As long as they approach Hector Amaku in a friendly—or at least respectful—manner, he is happy to meet the PCs and to share some of what he knows about Sol'Ithmanna. The PCs still have to work to get some of the more important details from him, though. If they are rude or threatening, they probably won't learn much at all.

If asked, Hector tells the PCs that his parents came to Threll from Eskaenturu before he was born. They were guides and explorers with a Threllish expedition into the jungles there, led by Edison Wolfe before he became Lord-Mayer of Port Fairglade. When he returned to Threll, Wolfe invited

Amaku's parents to travel with him. They were curious about Wolfe's homeland, so they accepted. They spent several years exploring the lands just beyond Threll's borders to the west and south. They gave the king valuable information and gathered a small fortune in lost treasures before settling down in Riverside to raise their son. Hector grew up in the town and remained there, becoming a farmer on his family's land and raising a family of his own. Hector's wife died a few years ago, and his children run the farm, now. He spends his time sharing stories of the region and gathering news of far-off places from travelers.

You can use Hector Amaku as a source for myths and legends that hint at all kinds of adventures, but the PCs most need his knowledge of Ithmar Forest, for now. Hector automatically shares the following information about the forest and the ruins of Sol'Ithmanna.

- The ruins are extremely old.
- They are not the ruins of the culture that dwelled here before the great cataclysm that occurred 1,500 years ago, when the continent was still called Ilsgardien.
- They do not seem to be related to any known culture on Aeva.



- Diviners say the city was named Sol'Ithmanna, but have learned little else.
- A mysterious oracle dwells in the ruins, but very few have seen it.
- Most of the ruins have been picked clean of treasure, but people sometimes go there to find the oracle and gain information from him.

Hector knows more, but he won't give up the information right away. Hector has never met the oracle, but he knows of people who have. He understands that only those deemed worthy can enter the portal to its realm, and he's not about to help anyone find it if he doesn't think their cause is worthy.

Either through roleplay or with a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check, the PCs must convince Hector that their mission deserves his help. If they fail to convince him, he tells them only the first piece of information below. If they succeed, however, Hector quietly shares all he knows.

- The portal to the oracle's domain is near the middle of the ruins. It looks like a natural stone archway with five circular depressions carved into one side.
- The carved spaces on the archway are meant to hold golden seals. Placing all five seals in the archway opens the portal.
- Four of the seals are in different parts of the ruin: the temple of healing, the great hall, the library, and the armory. A fifth seal appears in random locations. (Hector doesn't know that the oracle gives this seal to those he deems most worthy.)
- The seals never seem to leave the ruins.
- There must be dangers within the oracle's realm. Not everyone who has entered the portal has returned.

### MILLER'S TAVERN

The PCs can interact with many people during their time at Miller's Tavern. Some of these characters can provide assistance during an encounter with Augustus Shepard. Others may become recurring NPCs that aid the party with information or services, later:

**Arabella Miller** (NG female **commoner**) inherited the tavern from her father, Eamon. She manages the place well, and has a good reputation with the town sheriff and several local merchants.

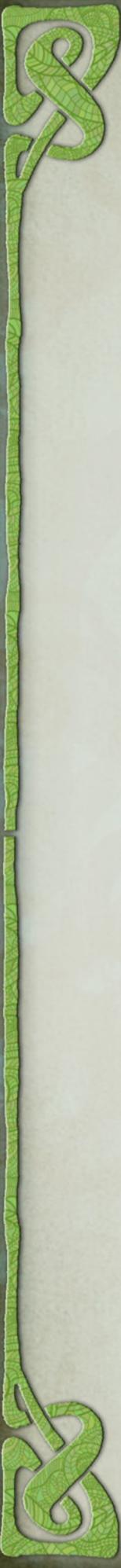
**Gideon Templeton** (LN male human **noble**) is a merchant with offices near the tavern and a warehouse closer to the docks. He is a stern man and known to hold grudges. Rumors hold that he has a score to settle with Port Fairglade's harbormistress, Temara Wiley.

**Hamlet Wheeler** (NG male human **acolyte**) serves Bedisia, the goddess of the hunt. He lives in the wilds, but returns to Riverside to sell skins, pelts, and meats. Locals say he knows the path through the Westwatch Mountains into the Darkvale Forest.

**Salome Bellwood** (LG female human **noble**) manages the Azure Spirits Winery, south of Riverside. She took charge of the business from her husband, Clifton, who is ill. He claims to know what happened at Bladefell Manor, when the family disappeared, but his stories are confused and unhelpful.

**Tryphena Sutton** (N female elf **bandit captain**) is captain and owner of the *Silver Skate*, a small ship that runs passengers and cargo on the Imlenite and Lashelenite Rivers. Some say she is a royal spy who carries secret messages from Solaerin to the naval port in Felldragon Sound.

**Ulric Kindle** (CG male human **veteran**) is owner and operator of The Battered Pauldron. A skilled blacksmith and armorer, Ulric takes special orders from his friend, Edwin Pierce, the weaponsmith in Corbin village.



Hector can give the PCs a basic map of the ruins to help them in their search. If the PCs give him paper or parchment and something to write with, he draws a rough map for them while they wait on the tavern's porch. Otherwise, he delivers it to them on the following day.

**Development:** While the PCs meet with Hector, another group of adventurers overhears their conversation. These ne'er-dowells are not on a noble quest, but their leader does plan to use the oracle to find an item of great value to her. These NPCs try to listen in without being noticed, but PCs succeeding on a DC 18 **Wisdom (Perception)** check can tell that a group of four people seated on benches at the end of the porch are paying attention to Hector and his guests.

The PCs can explore town and prepare for their venture into the forest. Riverside is a bustling community and the PCs can find all the common materials they need for such a trip. The PCs should avoid causing any further trouble, if they can. Riverside makes its money by catering to merchants and others who expect safe travels on their way. The town's guards do not take kindly to mischief-makers.

## 1C. INTO ITHMAR FOREST

Ithmar Forest is one of the densest, oldest collections of trees and plant-life in northern Threll. The forest proper lies entirely within Prince Turmlin County and remains mostly untouched by Threllish civilization. Ithmar has always seemed to resist intrusion. Locals have long attributed its verdance to a fey influence, giving them another reason to stay away. Without regular Threllish patrols to discourage them, dangerous creatures settled into the forest

and reinforce the idea that outsiders should stay away. Only those desperate enough to search the ruins for treasure or seek the oracle venture far beyond the treeline.

The ruins of Sol'Ithmanna are about 8 miles from Riverside as the crow flies. However, the overland trail is less direct, covering a distance of about 10 miles through trackless forest. The journey encompasses at least one night—two if the PCs want to arrive in the ruins during daylight.

While traveling through Ithmar Forest the PCs encounter some of the forest's unfriendly denizens, or at least signs of their presence. You can introduce a few random encounters in the forest to give the PCs a sense of the danger found in Ithmar Forest, roll percentage dice twice each day and twice each night the PCs are there. During the day, there is a 20% chance that a random encounter occurs. At night, if the PCs make camp, the chance of an encounter stays at 20%, but if they travel at night, the chance rises to 35%.

When an encounter occurs, roll a d10 or choose one of the encounters below. These encounters can happen more than once, except for the wyvern and the unicorn encounters. If you roll those encounters a second time, reroll until you get a different encounter. For repeated encounters, replace any treasure described with something of similar value.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN ITHMAR FOREST

## 1. WYVERN (CR 6)

Wyverns are degenerate cousins of true dragons, and their dim intelligence manifests as cruel cunning. They are foul-tempered, brutish beasts who use violence as the answer to every problem. Wyverns are rare in Ithmar, but one currently resides in a rough cave in the southern part of the forest, somewhere between Sol'Ithmanna and Farspur. The dangerous reptile is out hunting and attacks to defend its territory—and to eat the PCs.

### WYVERN

*Large dragon, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

19 (+4) 10 (+0) 16 (+3) 5 (-3) 12 (+1) 6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The wyvern makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Reward:** The wyvern carries no treasure, but tell the PCs that the death of such a dangerous creature is something local officials will want to hear about. If they take its stinger (or some other proof that they slew it) back to Riverside, town officials offer them 750 gp in coins or treasure as a reward.

## 2. OGRES (900 XP)

Ogres are a problem in Ithmar, just as they are in the UMBERWOOD. A number of these disgusting creatures dwell here, preying on animals and the rare travelers in the deep woods or on the road from Farspur to Turmatch. They rarely make attacks outside of the forest. Local authorities have chosen to ignore them in the hope that leaving them alone won't encourage them to attack. The party encounters **two ogres**.

### OGRES

*Large giant, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 11 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 59 (7d10 + 21)

**Speed** 30ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

19 (+4) 8 (-1) 16 (+3) 5 (-3) 7 (-2) 7 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** Common, Giant

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Greatclub.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin (4 each).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 20ft./60ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.



**Treasure:** The ogres are carrying a sack of their belongings, which include a *potion of lesser restoration* and a Medium-sized magical breastplate. The breastplate requires attunement, and heals the wearer of 1 hit point at any time the wearer receives magical healing.

### 3. ASSASSIN VINE (450 XP)

The PCs encounter a mature assassin vine. These treacherous plants are kept in check in most places, but flourish in areas far from civilization.

#### ASSASSIN VINE

*Large plant, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 52 (7d10+14)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR** 17 (+3) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 14 (+2) **INT** 2 (-4) **WIS** 13 (+1) **CHA** 9 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** cold and fire.

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Camouflage.** Assassin vines have advantage when hiding amongst foliage.

#### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10+3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13), and restrained until the grapple ends.

### 4. GIANT STAG BEETLE (1,100 XP)

Fey influences in Ithmar can cause mundane creatures to take on monstrous qualities. This male stag beetle is far larger than its normal kin. It recently burrowed up from its nest after

spending five years transforming from a grub into a beetle. Although stag beetles feed almost exclusively on tree sap and detritus, especially rotting fruit, the giant beetle is territorial and tries to kill the intruding PCs.

## GIANT STAG BEETLE

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d10 + 30)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The giant stag beetle makes one pincer attack, and one slam attack.

**Pincers.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage. If the creature is medium sized or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC of 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the giant stag beetle can't use its pincers on another target.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Treasure:** When the beetle burrowed out of the ground, it overturned an old, rotting log and uncovered a *returning longsword* left behind after a long-forgotten battle in the forest. The sword requires attunement, and can fly into the attuned owner's hand once per day.

## 5. VENOMOUS SNAKES (200 XP)

Depending on the time of year, these snakes are either protecting a clutch of eggs or angrily defending themselves after awakening from hibernation. The party encounters **two venomous snakes**. PCs failing a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check nearly step on the snakes before seeing them, allowing the snakes a surprise round to attack up to two characters.

### VENOMOUS SNAKES

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8+4)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** None.

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Camouflage.** The venomous snake has advantage when hiding amongst foliage.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## 6. WOLVES (50-250 XP)

Although rare in much of Threll, wolves maintain a healthy population within Ithmar. They scout alone or roam in packs of **1d4+1 wolves**. Unfortunately, fearful rumors of werewolves hunting in the area may cause local nobles to start hunting Ithmar's wolves in a misguided attempt to remove the threat.

## WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The wolf has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## 7. BOARS (200-800 XP)

The wolves of Ithmar Forest feed on many animals in the forest, not the least of which are boars that forage among the trees and undergrowth in small groups (**1d4 boars**). For their part, unlike deer and other animals of the forest, boars aggressively defend themselves from anything that might be a threat, including the PCs.

## BOAR

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Charge.** If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** If the boar takes 7 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Tusk.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

## 8. ZOMBIES (50-300 XP)

The fates of those who venture into Ithmar are not always known. Some who fall without receiving proper burial may be animated by tendrils of evil energy that worm through the earth. Bands of undead sometimes gather and move through the forest. The dead shuffle to attack any living beings they encounter. The party encounters **1d6 zombies**.

## ZOMBIE

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 20 ft.

**STR** 13 (+1)   **DEX** 6 (-2)   **CON** 16 (+3)   **INT** 3 (-4)   **WIS** 6 (-2)   **CHA** 5 (-3)

**Saving Throw** Wisdom +0

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

**Treasure:** One of the zombies carries a satchel that holds a fully charged *wand of secrets* wrapped in purple silk and two *potions of healing*.

### 9. GRAY OOZE(2) (100 XP)

Lying in wait at the edges of sluggish streams, swampy areas, or muddy pools, the nearly-transparent gray oozes are a threat to animals and any travelers who happen to stop for a drink. As the PCs approach these oozes' hiding place, they may notice strange trails through the undergrowth that are completely devoid of vegetation or anything organic (**passive Perception** of 13 or greater). Anyone noticing the trails can make a DC 15 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check to deduce that the trails were created by an ooze as it moved through the forest. If the check exceeds a DC of 20, the PCs realize that there may be more than one ooze. Without this clue, the PCs

must succeed on a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check or be surprised by the **pair of oozes**.

### GRAY OOZE

*Medium ooze, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)

**Speed** 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

**STR** 12 (+1)   **DEX** 6 (-2)   **CON** 16 (+3)   **INT** 1 (-5)   **WIS** 6 (-2)   **CHA** 2 (-4)

**Skills** Stealth +2

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)



**Amorphous.** The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.  
**Corrode Metal.** Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the ooze corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative  $-1$  penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to  $-5$ , the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the ooze is destroyed after dealing damage. The ooze can eat through 2 inch thick, nonmagical metal in 1 round.  
**False Appearance.** While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an oily pool or wet rock.

### ACTIONS

**Pseudopod.** *Melee Weapon Attack:*  $+3$  to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage, and if the target is wearing nonmagical metal armor, its armor is partly corroded and takes a permanent and cumulative  $-1$  penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

### 10. UNICORN (CR 3)

Though locals have long suspected that a pair of unicorns dwells in Ithmar Forest, only a few can truthfully say they have seen one of the magnificent creatures. In this encounter, the PCs find one unicorn grazing in a small glade. Unicorns are chaotic good, intelligent creatures, so their reactions depend on how the PCs approach.

If they are careful to treat the forest with respect, the unicorns can be helpful allies, suddenly appearing to provide support in combat against a dangerous foe—they especially hate ogres—or arriving to heal a character in dire need. The unicorns may even show up in Sol'Ithmanna to help the PCs against the evil cleric and her cohorts. However, if the PCs are careless and wasteful or they intentionally damage the forest, one or both unicorns appear to protect their realm.

### UNICORN

*Large celestial, lawful good*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 67 (9d10 + 18)

**Speed** 50ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Celestial, Elvish, Sylvan, telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Charge.** If the unicorn moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a horn attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The unicorn's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The unicorn can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *detect evil and good, druidcraft, pass without trace*

1/day each: *calm emotions, dispel evil and good, entangle*

**Magic Resistance.** The unicorn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** The unicorn's weapon attacks are magical.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The unicorn makes two attacks: one with its hooves and one with its horn.

**Hooves.** *Melee Weapon Attack:*  $+7$  to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Horn.** *Melee Weapon Attack:*  $+7$  to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Healing Touch (3/Day).** The unicorn touches another creature with its horn. The target

magically regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points. In addition, the touch removes all diseases and neutralizes all poisons afflicting the target. **Teleport (1/Day)**. The unicorn magically teleports itself and up to three willing creatures it can see within 5 feet of it, along with any equipment they are wearing or carrying, to a location the unicorn is familiar with, up to 1 mile away.

### 1D. SNARED! (450 XP)

The ogres of Ithmar leave cruel snare traps around the area. These traps capture animals and other creatures for the ogres to eat. As the PCs pass between some bushes, following a rough animal trail, they stumble into one of the ogres' well-hidden traps.

**Trap:** If the PCs do not detect the trap (DC 19 **Wisdom (Perception)**), the lead character triggers the trap, which yanks him off of his feet, slamming him into the ground then lifting him up by one or both legs. Ogres feel the need to make everything more painful, so they crafted the snare with thorny vines.

Stepping into the trap requires a DC 16 **Dexterity** saving throw to avoid the trap, taking 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage, and 2(1d4) piecing damage from the thorns on the snare. The trap can be dismantled with some effort (DC 15 Intelligence or Dexterity check; tool proficiencies may be relevant). Anyone trapped by the snare can make a DC 16 **Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check to escape. Alternately, 5 hp worth of damage can be dealt to the snare, effectively breaking the trap. Make sure to award experience to the group even if they trip the trap.

**Development:** If the PCs haven't already defeated the ogres from the random encounters above, the creatures might attack the PCs while one of them is tangled in the snare.

### 1E. HUNTED (1,400 XP)

At the end of the PCs' first day of travel through Ithmar, once they are deep in the forest, members of the Shepard family catch up with them to get revenge for the trouble they caused their cousin Augustus in Riverside.

**Creatures:** The two werewolves track the PCs from the moment they enter the forest, taking great care to remain in wolf form and follow them by scent. They stay out of sight until the time is right, preferably in the twilight or dark of night.

This encounter can work in different ways. You can make it a sudden attack, noting the **passive Perception** scores of each PC (opposed by the werewolves' Dexterity (Stealth) check) to decide if the group notices the threat just in time to react.

However, you may also play this encounter as a tense scene that builds up to a final confrontation with the monsters. For example, you might have the PCs make DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** checks to hear the sounds of furtive movement around their campsite. If they surpass the DC by 5 or more, they can tell that the sounds aren't made by animals. Surpassing it by 10 or more allows them to pinpoint the intruders' locations and prepare a defense. Let the sense of dread rise as the PCs explore their surroundings, trying to figure out who or what is stalking them.

The Shepards are angry and confident in their abilities. They take on the entire party at once, if they have to, but the werewolves prefer to wait until a PC is alone and attack together to take down the party, one member at a time. In either case, when they are ready to strike, each werewolf shifts into hybrid form.



### **WEREWOLF (HYBRID FORM)**

*Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 in humanoid form (leather armor), 13 (natural armor) in wolf or hybrid form

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft. (40 ft. in wolf form)

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

13 (+1)   15 (+2)   14 (+2)   10 (+0)   10 (+0)   10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity +4

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4, Sleight of Hands +4

**Damage Immunities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common (can't speak in wolf form)

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The werewolf can use his action

to polymorph into a wolf-humanoid hybrid or into a wolf, or back into his true form, which is humanoid. His statistics, other than his AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The werewolf reverts to his true form if he dies.

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The werewolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** The werewolf makes two attacks: one with his bite and one with its claws, or two with his dagger.

**Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werewolf lycanthropy.

**Claws (Hybrid Form Only).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

**Treasure:** Each werewolf carries a vial of antitoxin from a cord around his neck.

**Development:** If the PCs drive off but do not kill the werewolves, they return while the PCs are in the ruins.

## 1F. ALONG THE RIVER (600 XP)

The PCs' path takes them along the edge of the Ithmar River, which flows sluggishly in this area.

**Creatures:** A trio of freshwater reefclaws live in a deep pool near the shore. They surge out of the water as the PCs approach, hoping to poison them and drag them back into the river where they have an advantage.

### REEFCLAW

*Small aberration, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 60 (11d6 + 22)

**Speed** 5ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	4 (-3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Damage Resistances** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Amphibious.** The reefclaw can breathe air and water.

**Death Frenzy.** When a reefclaw's hit points are reduced below 0, it uses its reaction to make two claw attacks. These attacks do not have to be made against the creature that dealt damage to the reefclaw. In addition, the reefclaw will continue making attacks against any creature adjacent to it for one additional turn after it has been reduced to 0 hit points before dying.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The reefclaw makes two pincer attacks.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). The reefclaw has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target. In addition, the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 5 turns. At the end of each round, the target must make an additional saving throw, ending the poisoned condition on a success.

**Treasure:** The reefclaws don't intentionally gather treasure, but the pool they live in has collected some valuables over time. By holding their breath and fishing around in the muck at the bottom of the pool, PCs can recover two rotting leather bags, each containing 200 gp in coins and gems, and a silver shortsword.

## 1G. UNWANTED VISITORS (900 XP)

As the PCs approach the ruins of Sol'Ithmanna, they encounter a scouting party from the city's ruined temple. The shallow riverbank gives way to a flat marsh which broadens to envelop the trail the PCs are following. Although they are following a thin path of solid ground, they are flanked by thick mud and pools of unknown depth. Marsh grasses grow in clumps; some are only inches high, but others rise several feet into the air. The marsh on either side of the trail is considered difficult terrain for the PCs, but not for the boggards.

**Creatures:** Two boggards move slowly through the swamp, using the cover of the reeds and their natural stealth in the environment to hide from the PCs (DC 19 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice them). The boggards begin combat with their terrifying croak abilities, timing the croaks to frighten the PCs into stumbling off the trail and into marsh, where the boggards have an advantage.

## BOGGARD

*Medium humanoid (boggard), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 11 (hide armor)

**Hit Points** 78 (12d8 + 24)

**Speed** 20ft., swim 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

15 (+2)   8 (-1)   14 (+2)   13 (+1)   10 (+0)   12 (+1)

**Skills** Athletics + 4, Perception +4, Stealth -1

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common (can't speak in wolf form)

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Hold Breath.** A boggard can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution score before it risks drowning or suffocating.

**Swamp Camouflage.** The boggard has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in swampy terrain.

**Swamp Stride.** Boggards are not affected by difficult terrain in swamps, unless the terrain has been altered magically.

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Tongue.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* A creature hit by the tongue is considered grappled. The creature can remove the tongue with an opposed Strength check or by dealing 2 points of damage to the tongue (AC 11, damage does not count against the boggard's hit point total). Until this grapple ends, the boggard cannot use its turn again. The boggard can release its target on its turn without using an action.

**Terrifying Croak (Recharge after a Short or Long Rest).** The boggard can emit a loud and horrible croak. Non-boggards within 30 feet must make

a DC 13 Charisma saving throw, becoming frightened for 1d4 rounds on a failed save, and being unaffected on a successful one.

**Treasure:** One of the boggards carries a *pearl of power*, which it found in the fountain pool where the rest of his tribe has made its home.

**Development:** If either of the boggards escapes this encounter, do not award the PCs experience for defeating it. Instead, add the creature to the fight in the temple ruins. This boggard warns its tribe members of the PCs' presence. The boggards should be more prepared when the PCs arrive at the temple, making that encounter more difficult. They may even send four boggards out to patrol the ruins, triggering a separate encounter.

## PART TWO: THE RUINS OF SOL'ITHMANNA

Sol'Ithmanna lies in the heart of Ithmar Forest on the banks of the Ithmar River, which once flowed more freely and provided clear access to the Imlenite River. Now, the river is really just a large creek, deep enough to support animal life and small boats, but not important enough to allow for trade with anyone dwelling on its banks.

In this part of the adventure, the PCs explore the ruins to locate each of the five seals that open the door to the Oracle's otherworldly realm. While exploring, the PCs face the ruins' current residents and must also deal with another group of adventurers who are trying to take advantage of the PCs' hard work to get the seals and gain access to the Oracle's domain.

The encounters in this section can occur in any order. Each part of the ruin is fairly easy to find and Hector Amaku gave the PCs



a good enough description of the layout that they can use a rough map of the area to plan their explorations.

The only exception to the freeform nature of these encounters is the final encounter at the Stone Portal. The PCs can visit the portal at any time, but the major events there can only take place when the PCs, and perhaps their adversaries, have gathered the golden seals from each of the other locations.

## 2A. THE CAMPSITE (XP VARIES)

The PCs can easily find a site to make camp: an open area of level ground, covered in thick moss and surrounded by dense undergrowth. The bushes provide cover to keep the PCs safe from most predators, but at least one night of their stay is troubled by the ruins' denizens.

**Creatures:** On the first night of their stay, a group of 3 wolves, 3 boggards, or 6 zombies

attacks the campsite. (Use the statistics provided in the forest encounters from Part I.) If you know the PCs will be staying in the ruins for more than one night you can break this up into two encounters, using groups of 2 wolves, 2 boggards, or 4 zombies instead.

**The Dark Hand:** Nyrene and her cohorts may attack during one of the fights here. If the PCs already have two or more of the seals, they stay on the outskirts of the camp and use ranged attacks against the PCs. They flee into the forest when it appears that the monsters are going to lose the fight. If the Black Hand participates in a fight, grant the PCs an additional 800 XP for surviving the encounter.

## 2B. TEMPLE OF HEALING: THE SEAL OF COMPASSION (2,300 XP)

These ruins were once home to priests of an ancient god of nature and healing. The temple's priests enlisted the aid of elemental creatures

## THE DARK HAND

The PCs' rivals are members of the Dark Hand, a small adventuring company led by an evil cleric named Nyrene, who serves the demon lord Kaeresh. Nyrene's cohorts are eager to gain treasure in the ruins. The PCs encounter these villains a few times as they explore the ruins. Each encounter includes a section on their tactics. The statistics for members of the Dark Hand are provided at the end of this book. During the earlier encounters, they do not fight to the death, and quickly withdraw when the tide of battle turns against them. During encounter 2F, however, they fight until they are completely beaten.

The Dark Hand doesn't need to appear at every location. They should be around often enough to be a nuisance and cause trouble for the PCs, but if the party is having difficulty, you can leave them out of some of the encounters.

If the PCs fall during an earlier battle with the Dark Hand, the villains do not finish them off. Instead, they use the opportunity to collect the golden seal hidden at that location. The PCs must defeat the Dark Hand in the battle at the portal to regain any seals the evil adventurers obtain.

## THE FIVE SEALS

The seals are thin, circular plates of gold, approximately six inches in diameter. Each seal is embossed with the image of an animal's head and each animal is symbolic of one heroic quality:

**STRENGTH:** Bear

**WISDOM:** Owl

**COMPASSION:** Unicorn

**HONOR:** Stag

**COURAGE:** Lion

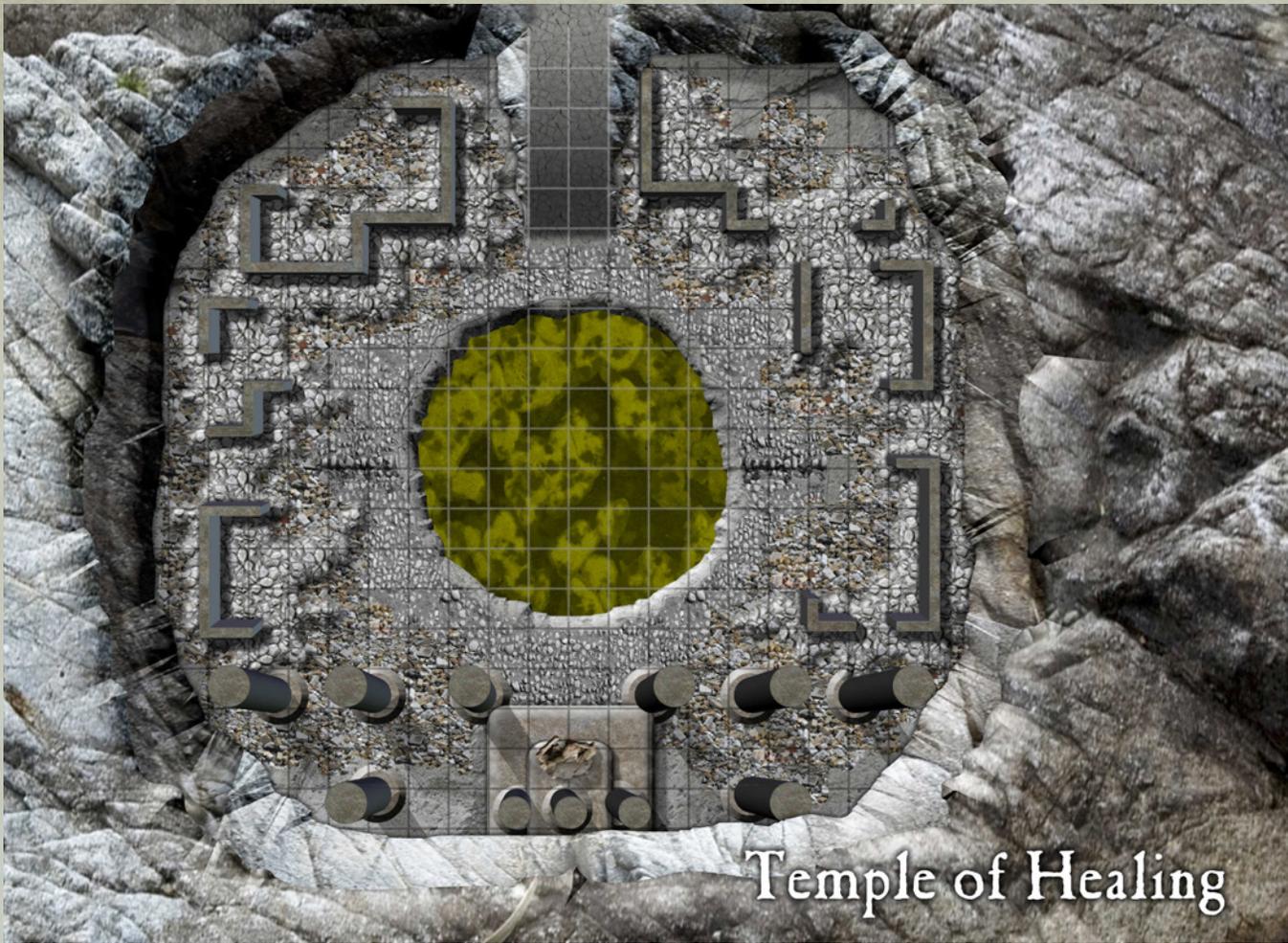
## ENCOUNTERS IN THE RUINS

Although the goals of the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign should create a sense of urgency for the players to complete their mission in the ruins, they can spend as long as necessary in their search for the five seals. The timeline for Belazeel's work to free the evil sorceress is entirely up to you. You can put some extra pressure on them, if you wish, but you can go easier on them if you need to.

On the other hand, the longer they stay in the ruins, the more likely they are to run into the various creatures who call the ruins home—or use them as a hunting ground. For each day and night they are in the ruins, roll percentage dice twice. Day or night, the PCs have a 25% chance for a random encounter. Roll a d10 and consult the table below to determine what the PCs encounter.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN SOL'ITHMANNA

ROLL	RESULT
1	1d6 skeletons (CR 1/2)
2	1d4 wolves (CR 1/4 each)
3	1 assassin vine (CR 2)
4	1 giant stag beetle (CR 4)
5	1d3 venomous snakes (CR 1/4 each)
6	1d3 boggards (CR 2 each)
7	1d3 giant wood spiders (CR 3)
8	1d4 boars (CR 1/4 each)
9	1 gray ooze (CR 4)
10	1d6 zombies (CR 1/2 to 5)



## Temple of Healing

to protect the seal of compassion from those who might steal it. Now, however, the temple is also guarded by a group of boggards who recently moved into the area.

*A small hill rises above the forest floor just north of the river. The white stones of an ancient structure rest atop the hill, with only a few broken walls and pillars still standing. A stairway climbs between steep walls on the northern side of the hill.*

*On the southern edge of the hilltop, a raised dais supports a time-worn stone statue that appears humanoid but no longer bears any identifying marks. Three pillars stand behind the statue. A few wide-mouthed, froglike creatures occupy a courtyard with a wide circular pool at the center. The pool's water is green with algae.*

The ruined walls on the outer edges of the hill have crumbled down to almost nothing, but characters can crouch behind them to gain cover against ranged attacks.

**Creatures:** The boggards have decided that the pool of the temple's old fountain will be an excellent place to raise their hatchlings, once they arrive. There are no eggs to protect, yet, but the boggards fiercely guard their territory.

### **BOGGARDS (2)**

**450 XP each**

**Hit Points** 78 (see page 22)

Once the boggards are no longer a threat, the PCs can examine the area. Inspecting the statue and the three pillars behind it with a DC 15

**Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a small stone door in the central pillar. Anyone who opens the door without first speaking the name of the temple's deity unleashes magic that summons an air elemental and a fire elemental, each of which appears in front of a pillar on either side.

### **AIR ELEMENTAL**

*Medium elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 71 (11d8 + 22)

**Speed** 50 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

14 (+2)   18 (+4)   14 (+2)   6 (-2)   10 (+0)   6 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing attacks from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Auran

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Air Form.** The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Whirlwind (Recharge 5-6).** Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 12 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 12 (3d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage and is flung 20 feet away from the elemental in a random direction and knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as

a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't flung away or knocked prone.

### **FIRE ELEMENTAL**

*Medium elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 90 (12d8 + 36)

**Speed** 50 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

10 (+0)   16 (+3)   16 (+3)   6 (-2)   10 (+0)   6 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing attacks from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Ignan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Fire Form.** The elemental can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. A creature that touches the elemental or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) fire damage. In addition, the elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 4 (1d8) fire damage and catches fire; until someone takes action to douse the fire, the creature takes 4 (1d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

**Illumination.** The elemental sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light in an additional 30 feet.



**Water Susceptibility.** For every 5 feet the elemental moves in water, or for every gallon of water splashed on it, it takes 1 cold damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two touch attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) fire damage. If the target is a creature or a flammable object, it ignites. Until a creature takes an action to douse the fire, the target takes 4 (1d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

**Treasure:** The boggards brought a portion of their tribe's wealth with them to this new site in a handy haversack they must have taken from a previous victim. Among the mundane items in the haversack is a box, crafted of cypress wood with a turtle shell top, that contains 500 gp in gems (mostly uncut precious and semiprecious stones).

**Development:** The summoning magic remains dormant for 24 hours, then resets automatically. If the PCs do not take the seal with them, they may have to fight the elementals when they come back the next day.

**The Dark Hand:** If the Dark Hand appears in this encounter, the PCs arrive to find a battle is already underway between the boggards and the NPCs. Add 2 additional boggards (for a total of 4). The PCs should realize that the boggards may be too difficult to defeat on their own and that helping the Dark Hand may be the best choice, for now. Once they defeat the boggards, Nyrene tries to intimidate the PCs and scare them out of the ruins. If they fail, they withdraw to lick their wounds and plan for an attack at a later time.

## 2C. GREAT HALL: THE SEAL OF HONOR (700 XP)

The great hall was once the seat of Sol'Ithmanna's government. Now, it is a squat ruin that is being slowly, but inexorably, reclaimed by the forest.

The sprawling remains of an ancient limestone building rise up from the forest floor. Wide steps climb from a central plaza, opening into a hall with a raised platform in the middle. The platform holds the crumbled remains of what might have once been a fine statue. The walls and pillars have withstood time and the ancient catastrophe that reshaped Terralien are now surrounded by rubble at their bases and covered with thick, leafy vines. Here and there, small trees struggle up through the floor's masonry. The broken walls and empty archways still manage to convey some of place's original grandeur.

Let the PCs explore the ruins, giving them a sense of the age of this place. Describe how the crumbling walls almost form a maze of half-open rooms and cast long shadows, even during daylight. The emptiness of the ruins should fill them with a sense of dread and the weight of the past.

The golden seal of honor was originally held in a niche in the statue that once stood on the dais. A large block of the statue holds looks like a rectangular compartment, but it is empty.

**Creatures:** Unfortunately for the PCs, the ruins are now the home of a vicious manticore. He hunts intruders, chasing them through the ruin, if necessary. The monster already claimed the seal from the dais. He wears it on a strip of leather around his neck and the PCs must defeat him to claim it. He can squeeze through any of the openings in the walls, or fly up over

them, but the pillars prevent the creature from using its flyby attack indoors.

The manticore is hiding in a side area when the PCs arrive and stalks them until it decides it can surprise them or get one PC alone, then attacks. PCs succeeding on a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check notice movement in the shadows, but a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals the creature for what it is. If the PCs discover the manticore, it leaps from hiding and attacks.

### MANTICORE

*Large monstrosity, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 86 (8d10 + 24)

**Speed** 5ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Tail Spike Regrowth.** The manticore has twenty-four tail spikes. Used spikes regrow when the manticore finishes a long rest.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The manticore makes three attacks: one with its bite, and two with its claws or three with its tail spikes.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Tail Spike.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/200 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.



## The Greathall

**Treasure:** The manticore's den is in one of the smaller rooms of the ruined building. He has gathered a collection of rings, necklaces, and brooches into a small pile. The total value of the jewelry is 1,750 gp.

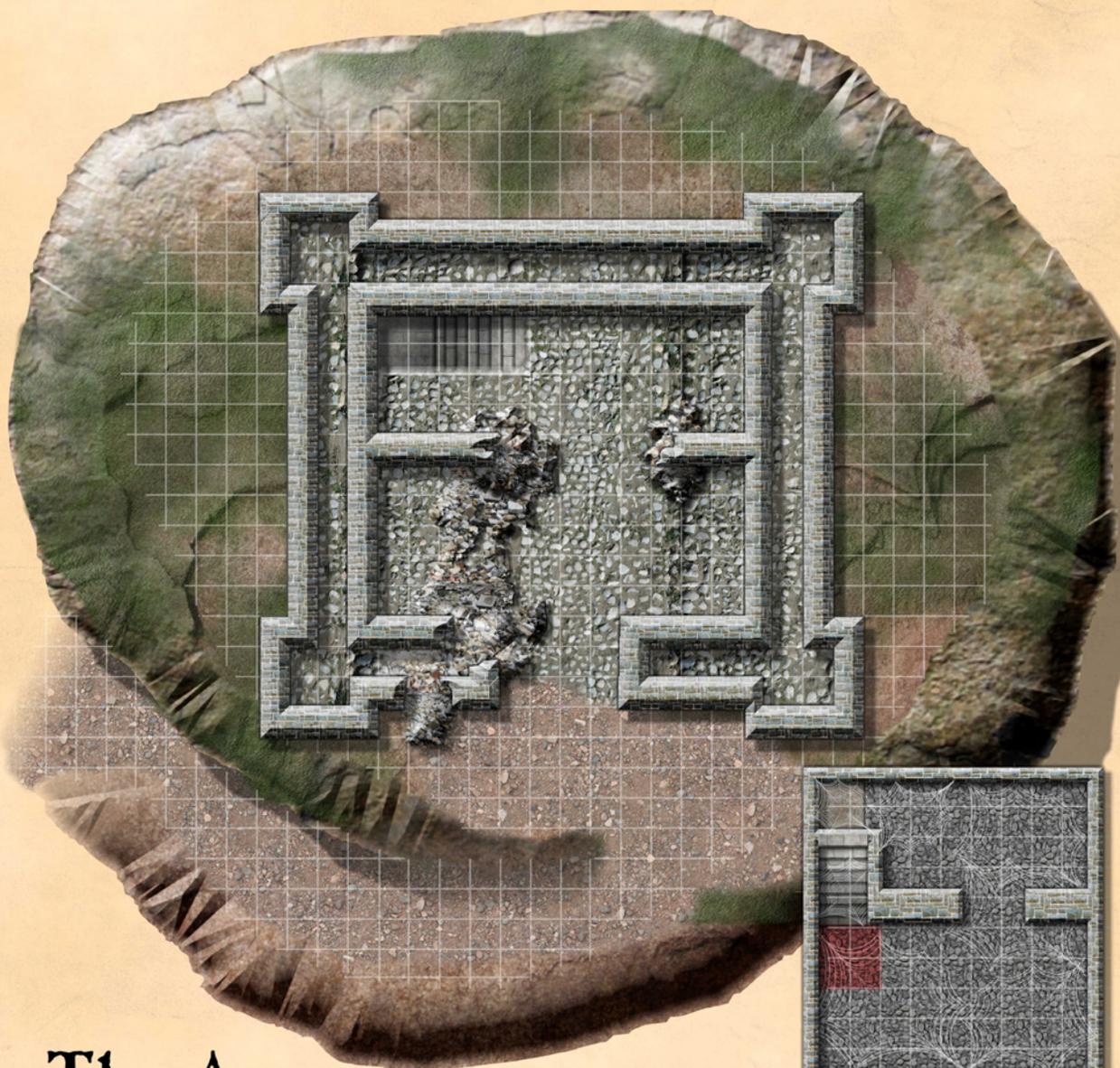
**The Dark Hand:** The Dark Hand makes an appearance here to attack both the manticore and the PCs. While the PCs distract the monster, Aurlan moves close and attempts to steal the amulet before the battle ends or as soon as the monster falls. If he succeeds, the Dark Hand retreats and leaves the PCs to deal with the manticore.

### 2D. ARMORY: THE SEAL OF STRENGTH (1,800 XP)

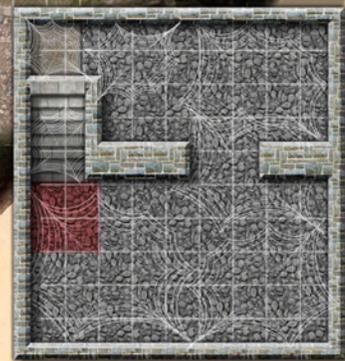
The armory once housed the weapons for Sol'Ithmanna's city guard. The weapons are long gone after centuries of scavenging by explorers. However, the ruins are not entirely empty.

*A sloping walkway winds up the side of a small hill to a thick-walled, square building. Tangled vines cover the walls, and a wide, arched entranceway opens into a small courtyard leading to a narrow-looking interior.*

As with the other ruin sites, little is left of the building's roof and interior structures. The ground floor is divided by a single wall



## The Armory



Lower Level

and the innermost room holds a 10-foot wide stair leading down into darkness. A problem, however, becomes clear—the stairwell is covered from floor to ceiling with webbing. A giant wood spider claims the armory as its home, so the heroes must proceed with caution.

The lower level is dark. The walls are about 10 feet high and crafted of large stone blocks that slope inward slightly. The stairs empty

into a room that was once lined with weapon racks and shelving, but is now littered with animal bones.

The seal of strength rests on a small shrine built into the wall of the back room. The PCs can claim it and escape once they deal with the spider.

**Trap:** The armory's builders installed a trap to prevent thieves from stealing weapons. Just

before the bottom of the stairs, a lever protrudes from the wall. Normally, the lever is easy to spot, but it is covered with webbing. The lever operates the safety latch for a deadfall trap. Intruders who step on the squares at the bottom of the stairs without first engaging the safety latch cause a section of the stone wall to fall on them. An hour after the trap is sprung, heavy chains and a clockwork mechanism reset it.

This trap makes a ranged weapon attack with a +8 bonus against all targets in a 10 ft area, and deals 21 (6d6) piercing damage. Make one attack roll and compare it to the AC of each affected target. The trap is typically reset within 1 hour, but can be bypassed with the aforementioned lever. Detecting this trap takes a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) roll, and a DC 20 Intelligence or Dexterity check to disarm (this check may allow for tool proficiency bonuses).

**Creatures:** When it is not out hunting, the spider rests in the corner opposite the stairs. Although the webbing is not sticky and doesn't hinder the PCs' movement, the spider detects their presence as soon as they set foot on the webs. The spider waits until the PCs are in the room before it attacks. If they set off the deadfall trap, the spider is startled by the commotion and waits a round before attacking. Clever players may figure out how to use the deadfall trap against the monster.

## GIANT WOOD SPIDER

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Athletics +6, Stealth +6

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Spider Climb.** The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Web Sense.** While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

**Web Walker.** The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

**Web (Recharge 5–6).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

**Treasure:** Unfortunately, a few Threllish hunters have fallen prey to the spider. Some of their belongings are still in its den. The PCs can find four daggers, a shortbow, and eyes of *minute seeing*.

**The Dark Hand:** The villains arrive after the PCs. Aurlan finds and releases the safety switch, then waits until the spider is dead. When the PCs approach the stairs to leave, he tosses a heavy bag of rocks onto the pressure plate, hoping to catch them in the trap. If the PCs have passive Perception scores that are higher than the thief's Stealth check, they notice the thief in the stairway and avoid the trapped area.

Another option for this encounter is to assume the spider is out hunting and let the PCs retrieve the seal, then have the Dark Hand arrive as the PCs leave the room with the shrine. While the two groups face off against each other, the spider returns and throws the whole scene into chaos.

## 2E. LIBRARY: THE SEAL OF WISDOM (1,400 XP)

The scholars of Sol'Ithmanna's library were some of the most learned people in the world. Although knowledge does not always equate to wisdom, there were those within its walls who were very wise indeed. The treasures within this vast storehouse of knowledge are lost to the ages, but the remnants of its greatness remain, as does the magic that guards the place.

*The edifice of the once-great library is cracked and covered with vines, moss, and lichens. Wide stairs lead up to a broken balcony that once overlooked what must have once been well-tended gardens or a busy public square. Across the balcony, pillars hold up stones that supported a covered walkway.*

The main entrance to the library's great hall is a large open archway. Crumbing stairs rise to smaller outer doors at each of the building's outer corners. Long wings on either side of the building once held wooden shelves containing

great secrets of history, literature, magic, and science. Now, they are simply open vaults, empty, save for the encroaching forest and a few families of nesting birds.

The seal of wisdom is in the central hall, resting on a pillar in the crook of the massive staircase leading up to a nonexistent second floor. Collecting the seal is a simple affair, but wards placed on the library long ago prevent anyone from leaving with it unless they speak a passphrase long lost to memory.

**Creatures:** As soon as the person carrying the seal gets within 15 feet of any doorway leading out of the hall, a pair of animated statues materializes on either side of that door. The statues focus attacks on the character carrying the seal and change targets if the seal changes hands. They also attack anyone preventing them from reaching the seal carrier. If they can no longer see who carries the seal, the creatures attack the nearest target.

The statues disappear when defeated or if the seal is returned to the pillar, but they return as soon as anyone carries the seal toward one of the exit doors. The statues are stored in an extradimensional space, where other magic repairs them after 24 hours, even if they are destroyed. If they return to the library multiple times on the same day, they have the same damage or injuries they did when they last disappeared.

### ANIMATED STONE STATUES (2)

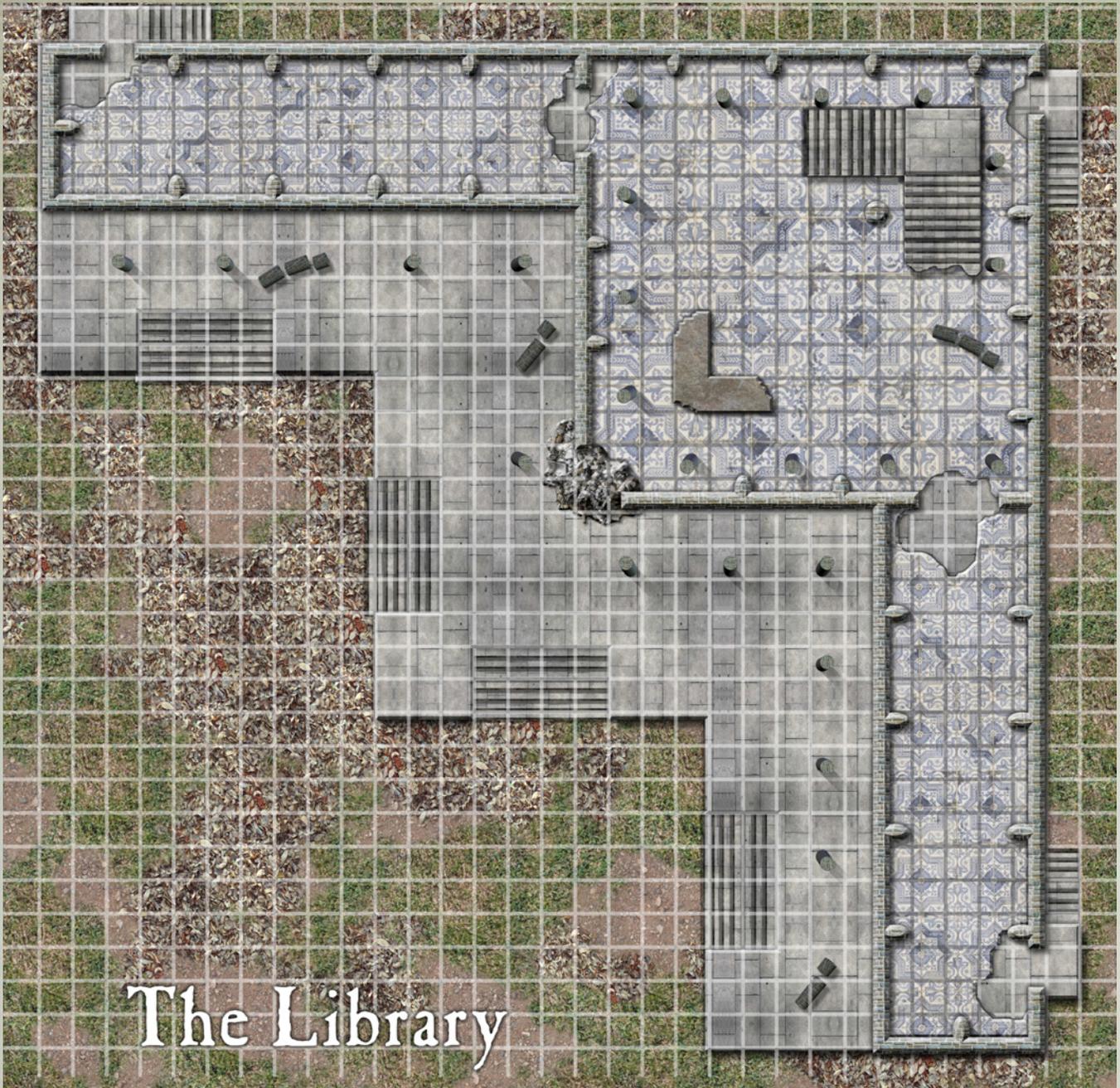
*Medium construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 67 (9d10 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)



## The Library

**Damage Immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 6

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Antimagic Susceptibility.** The statue is incapacitated while in an area of an

*antimagic field*. If targeted by a dispel magic, the armor must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

**False Appearance.** While the statue remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal statue.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The statue makes two slam attacks. **Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (3d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the statue can't slam another target.

**Treasure:** During the fight, dislodged stones reveal a hidden niche that contains a book of arcane knowledge. The script is unlike any language known on Aeva, but a *read magic* spell reveals that the book contains wizard spells. The collection consists of 1st through 4th-level spells, with the collection totaling up to 40 spell levels. The GM can select or determine the spells randomly. The book would also be worth 1,200 gp to another wizard or a collector.

**The Dark Hand:** This encounter presents one of the better choices to allow the Dark Hand to collect one of the seals. The villains could arrive before the PCs and discover the secret of the seal's defenses. They might choose to stage a standoff with the PCs between them and a doorway, then move close enough to summon the statues. When a fight breaks out, the Dark Hand puts the PCs between the statues and the seal while they escape, leaving the PCs to fight the statues.

## 2F. THE STONE PORTAL (XP VARIES)

The portal to the oracle's domain rests at the bottom of a strange depression in the ground. Through the force of fey magic, it has survived the centuries, despite the destruction of Sol'Ithmanna and the rest of civilization on Terrallien.

*The ground here sinks into a slightly oblong, bowl-shaped depression about 50 or 60 feet in diameter. A sloping path leads down the southeastern side toward a marble platform with steps rising up to an archway formed of natural stone. A brazier stands on either side of the platform. The archway*

*is marked with pictograms, strange symbols, and 5 circular indentations—two on either side and one at the top of the arch.*

The final encounter with the Dark Hand works best if Nyrene holds at least one of the four seals. If the PCs possess all four of the seals, Revien causes the fifth seal, the seal of courage, to appear in the hands of the PC he deems worthy. This may be the leader of the PCs' party or it could be someone else, depending on how the PCs acted during their time in the ruins.

**Creatures:** If the Dark Hand holds even one of the seals and the PCs hold the remaining seals, Nyrene has Aurlan fire an arrow bearing a message into a tree near one of the PCs. She proposes a meeting at the stone portal, so they can determine how best to resolve their dilemma. If the PCs refuse, Nyrene threatens to keep her seals and simply melt them down to make up for their losses in the ruins. (Neither she nor the PCs know that the seals return to their original locations on the following day if they are removed from the ruins or destroyed.)

Whether they agree to meet with her or not, the PCs arrive to find Nyrene standing before the portal, flanked on either side by her companions. She tries to convince the PCs to give up their seals, using arguments about the value of cooperation or threats of terrible vengeance. If the PCs cooperate, the Dark Hand betrays them as soon as they have all four seals. If the PCs resist, a battle ensues.

At the start of combat, Nyrene's companions move behind the portal, so the cleric can cast *fear* against the PCs. After this opening attack, Nyrene targets the strongest PC with *hold person*, then uses her spells and weapons to support her cohorts. Aurlan remains behind the portal, using it to provide some cover while



he attacks enemies with his shortbow. Ethlyn wades into battle, seeking to take out arcane and divine spellcasters before engaging any martial combat-oriented characters. If Lauriel and Govar are involved, Lauriel hangs back and attacks with her damage-dealing spells, while Govar uses tactics similar to Ethlyn's.

**Development:** If Nyrene falls first, Aurlan and Govar cut their losses and run. Otherwise, they fight to the death. Lauriel and Ethlyn fight to the death, and Ethlyn actually fights more viciously if Nyrene is killed. Once the PCs defeat the Dark Hand and claim all of their seals, Revien can determine who is worthy of the fifth seal. Once they possess all five seals, they can move onto the platform and open the portal.

### PART THREE: THE ORACLE'S DOMAIN

The PCs can at last proceed to the Oracle's domain. The braziers on the platform begin to glow as soon as they set foot on the stairs leading up to the portal. A quick examination reveals that depressions on the archway have markings that match the images on each of the seals. Placing the seals in the niches on the stone arch opens the portal.

*As the final seal settles into place, you feel a faint vibration and the archway fills with a vertical plane of swirling colors. A soft but clearly audible voice says, "Enter, heroes, and be tested. Only the worthy may benefit from my knowledge."*

The portal remains open until they complete the first test.

### 3A. STRENGTH (600 XP)

*A hero must be strong in both body and spirit.*

Upon passing through the portal into the Oracle's domain, the PCs find themselves in a 15-by-15-foot room with stone walls and containing only one solid-looking door, crafted of wood and banded with iron. The portal through which the party entered is a flat gray disc hanging in midair an inch or two away from the wall opposite the wooden door. The PCs' eyes must adjust to the dim lighting, which seems to emanate from nowhere at all, since there are no torches on the walls. Then, a soft but clearly audible voice echoes from everywhere at once.

---

*The door ahead is locked and barred.*

*There is no key for you.*

*But mighty arms and strength of heart*

*Will surely see you through.*

---

The purpose of this test is to prove the heroes' strength. A simple ability check or use of Strength-related abilities tests physical strength and a Will save against a spell effect serves to test the characters' strength of spirit.

The PCs must break the door or force it open with weapons, tools, or their bare hands. The fastest method is to break down the door. The door has a damage threshold of 5, AC of 15, and 15 hit points. A DC 18 **Strength** check is required to force it open.

As soon as the door opens (or when its hit points reach zero), the image of an ebony skull erupts from the darkness beyond and rushes at the characters. It speaks in a thundering voice, saying, "You shall all perish! You are doomed!"

### THE ORACLE'S TESTS

The hero's test is a classic component of myth, legend, and fantasy tales. Facing trials and overcoming specific challenges serves as a way for the hero to either demonstrate his abilities and worthiness or to learn something about himself. This adventure presents one way of adding such tests to an adventure.

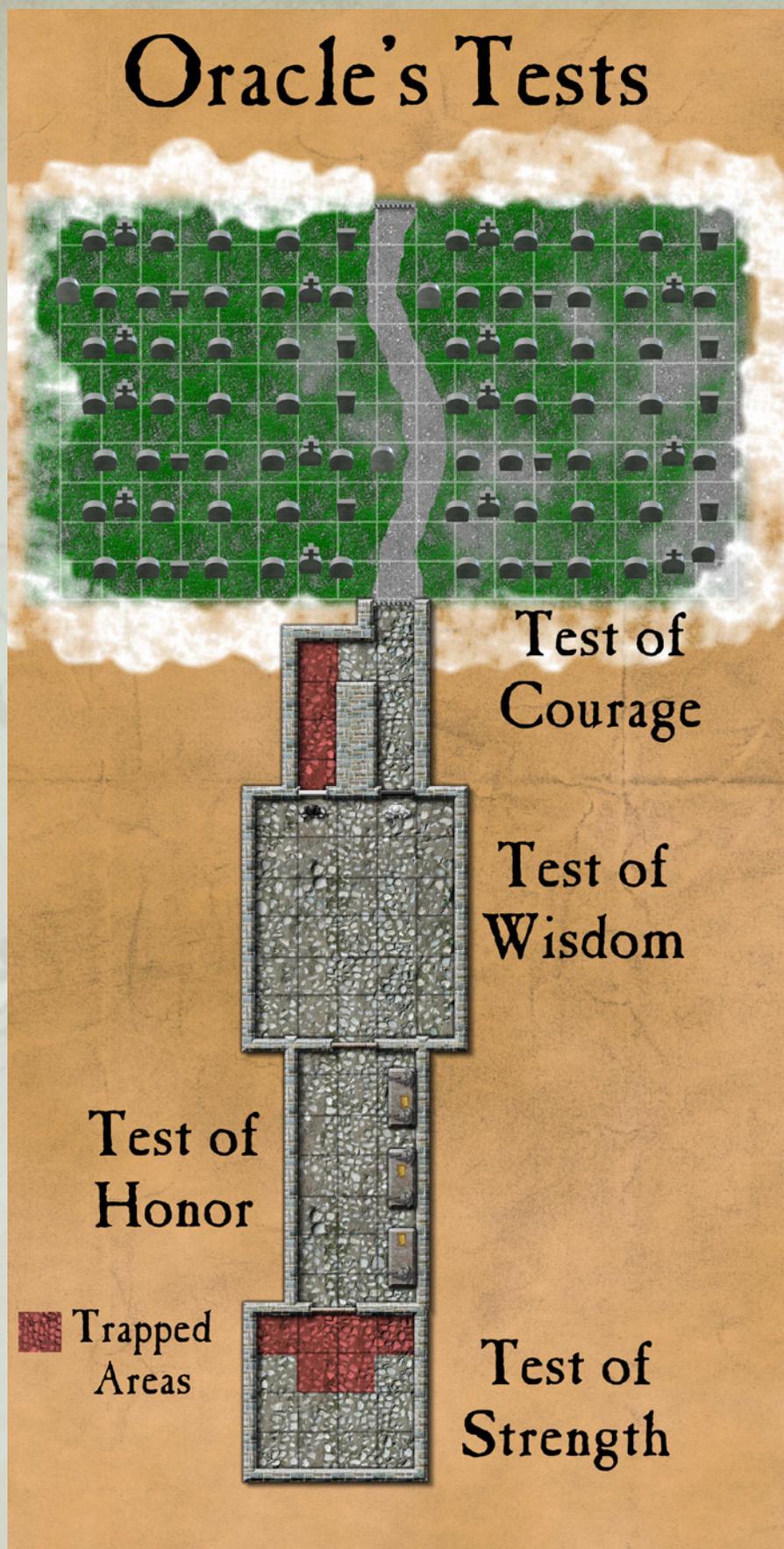
The tests here are examples based on the heroic qualities the Oracle considers important: Strength, Honor, Wisdom, Courage, and Compassion. The challenges give the players a chance to demonstrate those characteristics using the game rules. While some challenges involve simple dice rolls, in cases where the characters are required to make a moral choice, the rules impose consequences for the incorrect choice. As often as possible, players should make choices for themselves.

For example, in the Test of Honor, PCs may choose to take valuable items that might help them in their quest. Rather than requiring Wisdom saving throws to resist temptation, the choice is left to the players. However, there are penalties for making the wrong choice, both in game mechanics terms and in terms of the information they can get from the Oracle at the end of the adventure.

Also, these tests are just examples. If you have ideas for tests that you think better suit the characteristics or if you think that other heroic qualities are more important, feel free to change any or all of these to meet your own vision. The tests change every time someone visits the Oracle, becoming more difficult as the heroes become more powerful, so you can use the Oracle as a recurring resource in your campaign.

before disappearing in a cloud of smoke. Anyone within 10 feet of the door is targeted by a *bane* spell (DC 15 **Charisma** saving throw). PCs who are unaffected by the *bane* spell are considered to have passed this test when they walk through the open doorway.

As soon as the first PC crosses the threshold, the portal leading back to the ruins closes with a soft popping sound. A PC who is only part of the way through the opening when it closes must succeed on a DC 15 **Dexterity** saving throw or be thrust back into the room and take 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage. PCs who succeed on the save instinctively jump back into the room. Those who surpass a DC 20 on the saving throw may choose which side of the portal they escape to, but if they are not in the first room when the portal closes, they cannot continue the adventure with the rest of the party. Once the portal is closed, the PCs have no choice but to move forward and take each remaining test.



### 3B. HONOR (800 XP)

*A hero does his duty and demonstrates the utmost integrity.*

The PCs find themselves a long, narrow room with a doorway on the opposite side. Three tables rest against the wall on one side of the passage. They are covered with chests full of gold coins and gems, small statues and other pieces of art, and different kinds of fabulous-looking weapons. As the PCs take in the sight, the same mysterious voice echoes through the hall.

---

*Behold! The treasures of heroes past  
Whose deeds are the stuff of song!  
Rewards hard-earned through trial and faith—  
To take them would be wrong.*

---

The items on these tables are real and represent a significant amount of wealth. There are three chests with 500 gold pieces each in coins and gems. There are five well-made statues crafted in silver and adorned with precious stones worth 250 gold pieces each. There are three weapons, each of which is of excellent quality (choose a type most appropriate for the party—otherwise, the weapons are a longsword, a greataxe, and a longbow). Each weapon is embellished with precious materials (500 gold pieces per weapon). Unfortunately, there is a cost for disturbing these treasures, which were won through the valiant efforts of long-forgotten heroes.

All of the items in the room are cursed. If a creature touches or disturbs any of the items, it must make a DC 17 **Constitution** saving throw or immediately contract a debilitating illness for the next day. Gloves, gauntlets or similar coverings provide no protection against this cursed disease. The creature's flesh turns bright

red, beginning at the spot where it touched an item (usually its hand). The discoloration spreads as each new item is touched. At the same time, his body is wracked with a painful sensation as though he is being pricked by thousands of tiny needles. The effects of this curse last for one day, persisting even after the party has completed their business with the Oracle.

### THE THIEVES' CURSE

---

**Effect** The target must make a DC 16 **Constitution** saving throw. On a failure, they take a -1 penalty on all ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for one day; touching an additional item requires a new saving throw and failure increases the duration by one day; **Cure** The curse can only be cured by the passage of time or by successfully casting both *remove curse* and *lesser restoration* within 1 minute of each other.

### 3C. WISDOM (1,100 XP)

*A hero must be able to solve problems with his mind.*

Leaving the treasure room behind, the PCs enter a 20' by 30' room. The floor and nearby walls are unadorned, making the scene at the far end of the room stand out in stark comparison. The far wall holds two doors, one seemingly crafted of carved ivory, the other of darkest ebony. Two suits of armor stand between the PCs and the doors, with each suit enameled in the opposite color: a black suit in front of the ivory door and a white suit in front of the ebony one.

As the PCs enter the chamber, the suits pop to attention and the disembodied voice once again fills the chamber.

---

*Two guarded doors: one white, one black. Solve the riddle or turn back. One door's passage leads to death; the other, forward with vital breath.*

*Two armored suits: one black, one white. One is wrong; the other, right. Only falsehoods one will tell; with truth the other guides you well.*

*One choice to make: you must decide. Your patience, wit, and skill be tried. Ask your questions, think, then choose; but rush your choice, and life you'll lose.*

---

This is a minor variation on the classic puzzle of the two knights, one of whom always lies while the other always tells the truth. The PCs must use the information they gain from these two knights to determine which of the two doors is safe. The wrong path leads them into a tunnel where they face a dangerous spear trap before they can proceed to the Oracle's chamber.

To solve this puzzle, the PCs need to question the knights and use their answers to figure out which door to choose. The problem is that one of the knights never tells the truth and there is no visible clue to tell which knight is the liar. The knights are constructs who do not give the same "tells" that living creatures do when they are lying, so the DC for a **Wisdom (Insight)** check to detect the liar is 40, well beyond the PCs' current ability. The PCs likely do not have access to magic that would force the knights to speak the truth or reveal which one is lying. Therefore, the players must use their minds, both their wisdom and intelligence, to figure out the solution.

The easiest way to solve this challenge is to ask one of the knights which door the *other* knight would tell them is safe, then pick the opposite one. It is possible for the players to

simply guess the right answer, as well. The white knight is the liar and the black door leads to the trapped hallway. If the players struggle with this puzzle, they can attempt a DC 17 **Intelligence** or **Wisdom** check to figure out the method for solving the puzzle.

**Hazard:** The party must also exercise patience. Charging forward and picking a doorway subjects the impatient character to a jolt of electricity that gets more powerful as the stubborn hero gets closer to the door (1d6 +1d6 per 5-foot square of movement closer to the door, up to a maximum of 4d6). The PC is allowed a DC 17 **Dexterity** saving throw in each square to halve the damage taken.

The only way to avoid the electricity trap completely is to speak to the guards and tell them which door they choose. Once the PCs choose a door, both knights salute and stand aside, and the selected door opens to reveal a dark passageway. After all the PCs have moved into the passage, the door closes behind them.

**Trap:** If the PCs choose the black door, a hallway with walls painted black extends about fifty feet straight ahead, then turns sharply to the right. When they are 20 feet from the turn, the trap launches several spears from cleverly hidden holes in the walls ahead of them.

This trap makes a ranged weapon attack with a +9 bonus against all targets in a 10 ft area, and deals 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage. Make one attack roll and compare it to the AC of each affected target. The trap is reset instantly and affects any creature that triggers it, along with any unfortunates that are in the affected area. Detecting this trap takes a DC 19 Wisdom (Perception) roll, and a DC 21 Intelligence or Dexterity check to disarm (this check may allow for tool proficiency bonuses).

**Development:** If they survive the trap, the PCs are free to continue through the passageway, which turns left and joins the passage leading from the white (safe) door.

The PCs pass this test by choosing the white door, which takes the PCs through a straight hallway. There is no sign of the intersecting passageway from the more dangerous passage. The Oracle uses the control he has over his domain to block the alternate passage and keep the PCs from accidentally stumbling into the trap.

### 3D. COURAGE (1,600 XP)

*A hero must overcome his fears, both real and imagined.*

Regardless of which door the PCs chose in the previous room, the tunnel leads to an archway with a wrought iron gate. The gate is unlocked and swings open on rusty hinges with a loud, metallic squeal. Once PCs leave the tunnel, they can look back to see that the stone archway and gate stand alone, with nothing behind them to indicate that they lead into a stone tunnel.

The path ahead is a winding, dirt and gravel walkway through a shadowy graveyard. The landscape extends far out of sight to either side, disappearing in the twilight haze. A mist hangs close to the ground, concealing most of the gravestones. The fog muffles the sounds of the PCs' footsteps. The PCs hear no birds or other sounds of life, and the dim light gives the place an aura of dread and loneliness. Through the mist ahead, the PCs can just barely see that the trail leads to another wrought iron gate—the most likely way out.

The same voice drifts soft and clear through the air, as though carried on a wind that cannot be felt or seen:

---

*This desolate scene of final rest.*

*A place forbidden and forlorn.*

*Beware the shadows of the mind,*

*Of eyes deceived, and evil born.*

---

This test involves overcoming illusions and real dangers: an illusory will-o-wisp and a group of zombies, some of which pose real danger to the PCs. The PCs must cross the graveyard to reach the exit on the far side. As they pass through, they realize that the names on the gravestones are of people they know. When they reach the middle of the graveyard, they find a group of graves with stones bearing their own names.

Suddenly, the earth erupts in a shower of dirt as hands clad in gray, decaying flesh burst from the graves around them. The hands grasp blindly, trying to find purchase and pull their owners up to the surface. Meanwhile, other humanoid shapes shuffle out of the fog, closing in on all sides. As they get closer, the PCs can see that these creatures are zombies. A small, glowing orb appears above the zombies and darts back and forth, rising and falling erratically. PCs who succeed on a DC 16 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check identify the orb as a will-o-wisp, an aberrant creature that feeds on fear.

If your players can handle a slightly more frightening scene, you can describe the zombies in horrific detail and might choose to have some of the zombies be people the PCs know, such as loved ones or friends. A personal connection to the undead creatures can heighten the fear they experience. Some of the zombies might also appear to be the members of the rival party they recently defeated in the ruins outside of the Oracle's domain.

**Creatures:** There are a total of 12 zombies shambling through the gravestones toward the party, but only 6 of the zombies are real. The other eight are illusions, as is the will-o-wisp. Striking an illusory zombie causes it to wink out of existence. Once any PC sees a zombie disappear or otherwise interacts with any of the illusions, he can attempt a DC 17 **Intelligence (Investigation) check** to disbelieve them. Otherwise, the PCs must guess which of the zombies is real, possibly wasting combat actions on illusions while the real zombies get a chance to attack them. The will-o-wisp merely lingers above the fray, supposedly feeding on the PCs' fear.

### **ZOMBIES (6), 50 XP EACH**

**Hit Points** 22 (Use the zombie from the Random Encounters in Ithmar on page 138.)

**Development:** In order to pass the test, the PCs must face the undead. While the undead remain, the exit to this area stays locked (superior lock, DC 30 to unlock with Thieve's tools). The PCs can break or destroy the door (AC of 17, Damage Threshold 10, 60 hp, Break DC 25), but attacking the door means that PC must ignore the zombies who attack the PCs until they are destroyed. Once all the zombies (both real and illusory) have been defeated, the will-o-wisp disappears and the door unlocks itself, allowing the PCs to continue.

### **3E. COMPASSION (2,900 XP)**

*A hero protects the innocent and brings freedom to the oppressed.*

When the PCs pass through the gate out of the graveyard, they find themselves in a large chamber with a domed ceiling crafted from a

translucent white crystal. Light permeates the dome, filling the chamber with a soft, white glow.

In the center of the chamber rests a circular fountain flowing with clear water. The sound of the falling water echoes off the walls creating a natural kind of music that tugs strangely at the heart.

A figure clad in white robes sits on the edge of the fountain's pool. It would appear he had been gazing into the water, were it not for the fact that he wears a blindfold. He rises when the PCs notice him and walks around the pool toward them, seemingly unaffected by the blindfold covering his eyes. The air around the figure quivers and ripples. It is clear that the PCs are in the presence of a strange and powerful fey creature. He begins to speak, and when he does, his voice mingles with the water's music, filling the room.

---

*In ages lost amidst the flow of time,  
An empire spread its grasp beneath the stars.  
And when their reach found this land, so sublime,  
The place we loved was soon no longer ours.  
Where once we'd danced down pristine forest trails,  
Their armies marched and gathered ancient stones.  
The doorways to our glens and sunlit vales,  
Were sundered as the victors built their homes.  
I knew we could not stem the rising tide,  
For I had traced the threads of many fates.  
I offered up myself to save our pride,  
And hoped my bid for peace was not too late.  
For aeons I have served, bound to this place,  
Though service now is to a different race.*

---

When he finishes speaking the poem, the figure stands before the party. He places his hands together in front of him and smiles warmly. He greets the party and introduces himself as Revien, the Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna.

Revien is a faerie seer, a fey being that exists outside of time while maintaining the ability to see many outcomes that can branch from a single event, giving him awesome powers of divination.

Revien begins by conversing with the characters, telling them of how he came to serve those who built Sol'Ithmanna. Use the information in the adventure's back story and make sure that the PCs understand that Revien is effectively a prisoner within this domain, forever trapped until he is released from service.

The final test is both simple and complex, much like the Oracle himself. The PCs must show compassion for the Oracle. The greatest way to do this would be to attempt to free him, preferably by sacrificing some of the information they could have gained by choosing to set him free instead of asking additional questions or seeking his assistance. Even if the PCs do not think to make a request for Revien's freedom, they may still meet the requirements of the test by expressing a desire to free him or by planning to go in search of information on how to do so. Expressing a genuine desire for his freedom is enough to show that the PCs feel compassion for his plight.

Revien only answers the questions of a PC who has passed three of his five tests. He listens and speaks with any of the PCs, but only one who has shown promise by demonstrating at least some of the qualities he expects of a worthy hero will gain his help.

Even if the PCs failed all of his tests, he provides some aid. Revien is not heartless and knows that the PCs have risked much to gain his help. He has also foreseen the dangers to these lands if they fail in their quest, so he will

not leave them completely empty-handed. In this case, Revien answers their questions with only the most basic, necessary information. He gives them enough to lead them to the next part of their quest, but that information won't grant them any advantages in the trials yet to come.

The PCs may try to attack Revien. Revien's statistics are provided for reference, but attacking him is extremely foolish. He is a being of great age and significant power, and the PCs are within a domain over which he has nearly complete control. Before the PCs attack, he looks on the party with great sadness and tells them that he has already seen that this would come to pass. He had hoped they would make choices to change that possible future but when they don't, he ejects them from his domain, never to return. If this happens, each member of the party suffers 7 (2d6) points of psychic damage (DC 19 Constitution saving throw for half damage). If they failed to get any information from Revien before they attacked, he leaves them with a single piece of knowledge echoing in their minds—just enough to get them going in the right direction. He also admonishes them to “choose a better future.”

### **REVIEN, FAERIE SEER CR 7**

*Medium fey, neutral*

**Armor Class** 20 (aura)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)
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**Saving Throws** Constitution +6, Dexterity +6, Charisma +7

**Skills** Arcana +7, Deception +7, History +7, Insight +9, Nature +7, Performance +7,

Persuasion + 7, Religion + 7

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Languages** Aquan, Auran, Common, Draconic, Elven, Dwarven, Ignan, Infernal, Sylvan, Terran

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Aura of Unraveled Fate.** A faerie seer stands outside the fabric of time and is surrounded by an area in which many possibilities compete for dominance. This grants the faerie seer a +7 bonus to AC and creates a reality-warping aura with a 20-foot radius. All attack rolls within the aura have disadvantage. A success on a DC 19 Charisma save can be made to avoid the aura's effect on attack rolls, and characters who succeed on the save are immune to this effect from that faerie seer's aura until he finishes a long rest.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Revien's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components: 3/day each: *contact other plane, scrying*

1/day each: *divination, legend lore, nondetection*

At will: *comprehend languages, detect magic, detect thoughts*

**Spellcasting.** Revien is a 6th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks).

Revien has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will):  
*guidance, light, minor illusion, prestidigitation, resistance, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, color spray (wand), detect poison, identify, sleep*  
2nd level (3 slots): *locate object, see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Revien makes two scythe attacks.

**+1 Scythe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

**Treasure:** Revien's scythe is a magical +1 weapon that is two-handed and heavy.



## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the PCs conclude their meeting with Revien, he thanks them for their heroism and their willingness to take on the mission before them. He bids them farewell and, with a wave of his hand, transports them out of his realm and back to the dais in front of the Stone Portal. The sun is just rising, no matter what time it was when the PCs entered the Oracle's domain, and any surviving members of the Dark Hand are gone. Strangely, the PCs emerge fully healed and completely refreshed, as though they had all gained a full night's rest.

The PCs are free to resume their quest, using the information they obtained from the Oracle. If there are any loose ends, like the werewolves' hunt for the PCs, you can resolve them via a few encounters on the way back to Riverside. Once back in civilization, they can share their tales with Hector Amaku.

The PCs can send word to Lord Mayor Wolfe about the situation and will quickly receive a reply telling them that they should make preparations to go after Belazeel. He also sends a letter marked with the seal of King Ambrose I, himself, giving them the ability to requisition equipment and supplies worth up to 1,000 gp per party member. If the PCs choose not to go after Belazeel, the letter instead represents a reward for their service to Threll.

## THE TRAIL OF THE APPRENTICE

If you are running the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, your PCs seek information about the vile wizard Belazeel. The Oracle tells them the following information, based on the number of tests they pass. Aside from these things, Revien says only that knowledge will be revealed in its due time.

**No Tests Passed:** Belazeel is in the Shadescar Rift. He knows how to use the Green and White Serpent Keys to "lift the Basilisk Shroud." (If the PCs attack Revien, this is the only information they get.)

**One Test Passed:** The "Basilisk Shroud" is an ancient magical prison crafted by a group of spellcasters. Belazeel hopes to open this prison and free the being known only as the Sorceress. She was imprisoned by her enemies because her lust for power led her to commit terrible deeds. Belazeel hopes that she will reward him for freeing her by teaching him her secrets.

**Two Tests Passed:** In her search for power, the Sorceress used forbidden magic and transformed herself into a terrible monster. Her return to power would bring disaster—first to Threll and, then, to all of Aeva.

**Three Tests Passed:** The Sorceress will be at her weakest when she first emerges from the Basilisk Shroud. If the PCs cannot stop her then, the world will face great danger.

**Four Tests Passed:** Another powerful creature waits for the PCs in Shadescar Rift. Belazeel has an ally in the dark caverns of the rift. They must overcome this evil or turn it aside if they hope to succeed in defeating Belazeel and the Sorceress.

**Five Tests Passed:** There are tools with which to fight this enemy. The gnomes know where to find them, but they dare not tread where they are kept.

## **CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN**

*The Oracle's Test* is primarily aimed at giving the PCs information to send them off on the next part of a larger quest, but there are a number of options if the GM and players wish to continue the campaign based on the events of this story.

- It's possible that Revien's motives are not entirely selfless. He might decide that his time of service in Sol'Ithmanna is at an end and give the PCs information that will ultimately set him free.
- The PCs also have Hector Amaku as a valuable resource. He has gathered a wealth of knowledge about the local area, the kingdom of Threll, and beyond. His private study at his family farmhouse contains old documents and interesting items, any of which might serve as inspiration for a whole new adventure.
- The presence of werewolves in northern Threll is a problem. The PCs may have dealt with the Shepard clan, but they might be members of a larger tribe. The encounter in the woods may have just been the first skirmish in a war to keep the region free from dangerous lycanthropes.
- If Nyrene survives, she may yet find the source of power she seeks and may then seek revenge against the PCs for thwarting her in the ruins. She could become a recurring villain in your stories, showing up at inconvenient times to cause trouble for the PCs.

The most likely continuation, however, and the one we hope you will choose, is in the next chapter of the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, in which the PCs enter the Shadescar Rift. The heroes will encounter the strange denizens of the lightless depths beneath the surface of Threll and face their greatest challenges, yet, as they race to stop Belazeel from completing his selfish bid for power at any cost.

## **APPENDIX: THE DARK HAND**

Use the following statistics for encounters with Nyrene and her companions. The Dark Hand must include Nyrene, Aurlan, and Ethlyn and should be a sufficient challenge for a party of 4 PCs. If your game includes more PCs or you want to make the Dark Hand more of an obstacle, you can include Lauriel, Govar, or both. Running a group of NPCs over a long time can be complicated, however, so be careful about adding more characters than you can manage.

## NYRENE BESSIERES

This raven-haired woman is dressed in dark studded leather armor and a cloak dyed such a deep red that it looks almost black.

### NYRENE BESSIERES, HUMAN CLERIC

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate)

**Hit Points** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**Speed** 30ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

9 (-1) 12 (+1) 13 (+1) 11 (+0) 17 (+3) 16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Charisma +5

**Skills** Acrobatics +3, Deception +5, History +2, Insight +5, Perception +5, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common, Abyssal

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Spectral Grasp.** Nyrene can use her clerical power to launch her dagger, and uses her Wisdom score to modify the attack and damage in place of her Strength or Dexterity. Nyrene's dagger also magically returns to her hand after she throws it.

**Spellcasting.** Nyrene is a 5th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Nyrene has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance*

1st level (4 slots): *bless, detect magic, command, cure light wounds*

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, hold person, see invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *fear, speak with the dead*

### ACTIONS

**Silver Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (+5 to hit ranged), reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft.,

one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Shadow of Doom (2/day).** Creatures within 30 feet of Nyrene must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they take 10 (3d6) necrotic damage, or half as much on a success.

**Treasure** *potion of healing (3), scroll of darkness, scroll of lesser restoration, breastplate, silver dagger, 53 gp*

*Nyrene is a fanatical cleric of the demon lord Kaeresh. She believes that the oracle can help her find a relic to strengthen her connection with*



*Kaeresh and make her more powerful. Her companions either support her twisted goals or think they can profit from her success. Nyrene is cruel and focused only on achieving her objective and will sacrifice her followers if it suits her.*

## AURLAN GRIEVES

*Dressed in a suit of dark studded leather armor under a brown, hooded cloak, this short man with blonde hair looks about with an impatient expression on his face.*

### AURLAN GRIEVES, HUMAN ROGUE

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 83 (15d8 + 15)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dexterity+5

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Deception +3, Insight +5, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7

**Tool Proficiency** thieves' tools +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Evasion.** If Aurlan is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Aurlan instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn, Aurlan deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Aurlan that isn't incapacitated and Aurlan doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll

## ACTIONS

**Shortsword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Shortbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Treasure** *potion of healing, potion of invisibility, potion of enhance ability; studded leather, shortsword, shortbow with 40 arrows, thieves' tools, 34 gp*

*Aurlan is a quick-witted rogue who specializes in getting into "hard to reach" places. Whether those places are protected by locks, traps, or guards, Aurlan uses his skills to solve problems and get what he wants. He venerates Kaeresh, but is more interested in gold and treasure than in Nyrene's evil schemes. He doesn't have any plans to betray the cleric, but he won't rule out the possibility.*

## ETHLYN LANGDALE

*Clearly strong and athletic with short, black hair and hard, green eyes, this woman moves with self-assurance and purposefully grips the longsword at her side.*

### ETHLYN LANGDALE, HUMAN FIGHTER

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

**Armor Class** 16 (half plate)

**Hit Points** 83 (15d8 + 15)

**Speed** 30ft. (20 ft. in armor)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Constitution +3

**Skills** Intimidate +3, Perception +3, Survival +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Heavy Swing.** Ethlyn can reroll melee weapon damage once per turn, but must take the second roll.

**Revitalize (1/day).** Ethlyn can use a bonus action to heal 10 hit points once per day.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Ethlyn makes two attacks with her longsword, shortsword, or light crossbow. She must make both attacks with the same weapon.

**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure** *oil of magic weapon, potion of healing, potion of jump;* half plate, light crossbow with 20 bolts, longsword, shortsword

*Ethlyn is a talented warrior who relies more on her agility than on powerful armor to keep her safe. She is devoted to Nyrene and serves as her enforcer and defender. She is open about the fact that she doesn't trust Aurlan, but admits that his skills are valuable to the group.*

## LAURIEL

*The tanned skin, copper hair, and long, pointed ears make this tall elven woman look even more exotic, but her golden eyes have a look of cruelty.*

### LAURIEL, ELF WIZARD (EVOKER)

*Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 36 (8d8)

**Speed** 30ft. (20 ft. in armor)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Intelligence +5

**Skills** Arcane +3, History +2, Insight +5, Perception +2, Religion +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven, Orc, Sylvan

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Fey Ancestry.** Lauriel has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the Lauriel to sleep.

**Evoker Strike (1/day).** When Laurien casts an evocation spell, she can reroll any damage dice she chooses, but she must keep the second result.

**Spellcasting.** Lauriel is a 4th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Lauriel has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, mage hand, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, grease, mage armor, magic missile* 2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow, scorching ray*

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit (+5 to hit ranged), reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

**Ray of Frost.** Ranged Spell Attack: +5 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d8) cold damage, and the creature's speed is reduced by 10 feet until the start of Lauriel's next turn.

**Treasure** *potion of barkskin, potion of enhance ability, potion of healing; dagger, spellbook, 50 gp*

*Lauriel is a bit of a mystery to the group. She appears to be slightly insane and has given different stories about her past. However, Nyrene sees no evidence that she would betray the group, so she keeps her around to help with problems involving arcane magic—and to use her destructive magic against their enemies.*

### GOVAR HAMMERSTRIKE

*This stern looking dwarf wears finely crafted armor and carries a heavy sword, which he hefts with practiced ease.*

#### GOVAR HAMMERSTRIKE, DWARF FIGHTER

*Medium humanoid (dwarf), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 16 (scale mail)

**Hit Points** 84 (13d8 + 26)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Strength +4

**Damage Resistance** poison

**Skills** Acrobatics +4, Intimidate +3, Survival +2

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Dwarf Traits.** Govar has advantage to resist being poisoned.

**Knockdown (1/day).** When Govar hits with his greatsword, he can force the target to make a DC 14 Strength saving throw. The target becomes prone on a failure.

**Revitalize (1/day).** Govar can use a bonus action to heal 10 hit points.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Govar makes two attacks with his longsword, shortsword, or light crossbow. He must make both attacks with the same weapon.

**Greatsword.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

**Morningstar.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Treasure** *potion of healing, potion of levitate, potion of enhance ability; scale mail, light crossbow with 20 bolts, morningstar, greatsword, 81 gp*

*Govar is almost as much of an oddity in the group as Lauriel is. He ventured from his clanhold across the sea years ago and has been working as a mercenary ever since. Nyrene paid him well. His oath to her and the promise of even more wealth lead him to serve loyally. His skill with a greatsword has yet to earn him much of a reputation, but someday it might.*



5



**A**ndor gripped his musket and headed toward the archway that appeared in the wall. Birkett skidded up alongside. Andor nodded to the halfling, then to the others. He checked his weapons and adjusted the belt holding his ammunition.

“Right. Let’s end this.” Turning, they rushed down the passage and burst into a brightly lit room.

If the wizard had seen the portals open, he wasn’t paying them any attention. He was chanting in sibilant words that made Andor’s skin crawl. An armored man with a sword stood nearby and fixed his gaze on the new arrivals. He was obviously trying to figure out which of them was the greatest threat.

Beyond them, Andor could see the Green and White Serpent statues, those blasted objects that had started this whole mess. Grown to incredible size, they were twisted together like corkscrews. The snakes’ bodies undulated, as if they were alive. When gaps formed between them, he could see brilliant light shining through.

“Belazeel!” Andor spat the name, which echoed loudly.

Slowly, the red-robed figure rose a few inches off the ground and turned. He grinned, and his eyes glowed with arcane power. Andor’s companions charged. The dwarf raised his rifle and took aim.

# THE WIZARD’S DUNGEON

# What You Will Find Inside The Wizard's Dungeon

Long has the dreaded Sorceress slumbered in her enchanted prison, but at long last her power-hungry apprentice is ready to release her evil once more upon the land! Guided by the Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna, the heroes must venture into the dreaded Shadescar Rift, a chasm that leads down to the dark tunnels of Kimmeros, the lands below the surface world. In this shunned place, the boundaries between worlds have worn thin and the heroes must unravel the secrets of a deadly dungeon within its depths infused with the magic of many planes. Only by surviving its challenges can they open the magical portal and take the fight to the villains to end the threat to their kingdom once and for all!



# The Wizard's Dungeon

*The Wizard's Dungeon* is an adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four 5th-level player characters (PCs), but can be used with groups of two to six players.

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into three parts, and each part is designed to be run within a few hours. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 5th level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

*The Wizard's Dungeon* is the fifth and final adventure in a campaign entitled *Trail of the Apprentice*, which began with *The Bandit's Cave*. A campaign is a series of adventures that are connected by a larger plot. You might think of a campaign as a television series, in which each adventure is like a different episode of the series. This campaign plays out over the course of five adventures, allowing players to advance from 1st level all the way through 5th level. Game Masters can use this adventure to continue the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, as a stand-alone, "one-shot" event, or as a side quest in their own campaigns.

The story is set in the kingdom of Threll, located on the Terrallien continent of the planet Aeva. Most of the adventure's events take place in and around the ruins of Sol'Ithmanna, an ancient ruined city in Ithmar Forest. The module provides enough information to run the entire adventure, but is designed to be portable. You can use it "as is" or set it in any campaign world you choose.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Belazeel was once known by a different name, but he craved power from a very young age. He learned magic from his father and other arcane scholars at Lanimar Academy in Queenspoint, but he always felt that his teachers were keeping knowledge from him and slowing his progress. Proud and ambitious, he decided he would take for himself what the older wizards would not give him. He snuck into restricted sections of the academy archives to read forbidden texts and cast divinations to increase his magical knowledge.

Among the archives' foul books, Belazeel discovered a mysterious scroll, through which his mind contacted entities that dwell outside the mortal world. The creatures were evil, but Belazeel listened to their promises of power. They told him of a great teacher who could reveal secrets to him and what he must do to free the one they called the Sorceress. Belazeel stole several valuable items from the archives, set a fire to hide his crime, and escaped amidst the chaos. The young student disappeared. He assumed his new name, sold most of his treasures, and spent the next several years following the instructions of the creatures speaking to him through the scroll.

When his plans came to fruition, Belazeel at last held both of the serpent statues, magical keys to unlock the Basilisk Shroud, the prison holding the Sorceress. He and his bodyguard snuck into the Shadescar Rift and entered Kimmeros, the dark tunnels and caverns deep beneath the surface of the world, where the voices from the scroll told Belazeel he would find the dungeon that contains the magical prison.

There, in a region called the Winding Way, they met the black dragon Kezzorex who had become trapped in the Winding Way. Belazeel offered



the beast riches, magical treasure, and most importantly, a way back to its original home, if he would assist the wizard. The dragon told him what he knew of the tunnels beyond the Winding Way and agreed to keep any newcomers from interfering with the wizard's plans.

As Belazeel delved deeper, he encountered a group of kobolds from the Blackwing tribe. He magically charmed the kobolds' chieftain and convinced him to send several of the kobolds, including the trapsmith Garalgek, to aid him. Belazeel found the entrance to the place known as the Heart of Stone and blasted through the strange rock formation there, opening the first chamber of the dungeon that holds the Basilisk Shroud.

With the kobolds' help, Belazeel survived the dungeon's traps and entered the central chamber. Taking his bodyguard inside, Belazeel communed with his hidden masters and studied the hall's ancient secrets, readying himself to free the Sorceress. He is convinced that when the Sorceress is free, she will teach

him the secrets that granted her such immense power that an entire civilization once trembled at the mention of her name.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins after the PCs have entered the dreaded Shadescar Rift. The heroes find themselves in the midst of a conflict between a community of svirfneblin, also known as deep gnomes, and a tribe of the primitive reptilian humanoids called lizardfolk. A fight has broken out in what is usually a neutral trading zone known as the Winding Way, but Belazeel's meddling has disrupted the balance of power.

Emboldened by Kezzorex, who favors the lizardfolk, the reptilian creatures decided to take control of the Winding Way. The svirfneblin are their main obstacles. The PCs must choose a side and help their new allies before they can get the help they need in tracing Belazeel's steps. However, even if they succeed, the black dragon blocks their path.

If they make the right choices, the PCs have the opportunity to find weapons that can help them against the dragon. They can use the information they gained from Revien, the Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna, to help them choose correctly, but if they don't, they must rely on their wits and the weapons they brought with them.

After defeating the dragon, the heroes can continue through the tunnels beyond the Winding Way until they come to the Heart of Stone, the entrance to the lost dungeon. Belazeel and his forces have already broken in, so the heroes must face his kobold allies and the dungeon's formidable defenses. Then, they must awaken powerful forces—energies drawn from other planes of existence—to open the doorway into the dungeon's final chamber.

There, Belazeel works his magic, trying to release the Sorceress and become her apprentice. If they cannot keep her from escaping, the PCs will be only the first to fall before her arcane might. The stakes have never been greater. Threll and, perhaps, all of Aeva will suffer the consequences of the PCs' failure. Now is the time for wisdom, cunning, and courage. Now is the time for heroes.

### STARTING THE ADVENTURE

When all the players have their character sheets, are gathered around the gaming table, and are ready to begin, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

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*Following the visions of the Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna, your search for Belazeel takes you deep underground into the lands that scholars call Kimmeros. With the blessing of King Ambrose, himself, you passed through the great wall surrounding the Shadescar Rift and entered the great fissure, a place with a frightful reputation.*

*Darkness claims your path almost immediately after entering the fissure. Sounds echo from tunnels and cracks in the walls, but it is difficult to make out anything from the sounds, especially the direction they come from. Sometimes it sounds like water flowing through the tunnels, sometimes it sounds like language, even though you can't make out the words, and sometimes it sounds like large creatures following you from a distance. Your own movement adds to the strange collection of echoes as well.*

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If the PCs succeed on a DC 10 **Intelligence (Nature)** check, they notice that the rock suddenly shifts in material, as if another rock formation had been ripped from its foundation and shoved into place here.

The GM may want to stress the need for dungeoneering equipment, such as ropes and other climbing equipment, and especially light sources for characters without darkvision. If the party has not already purchased necessary lanterns or torches, allow them to return to the surface to make their purchases.

## PART ONE: THE WINDING WAY

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Creatures more comfortable in the subterranean environment, like svirfneblin and lizardfolk, stayed in their underground lairs, and have maintained an uneasy peace to allow traffic to pass through The Winding Way, an area named for its meandering course through the Shadescar. A recent earthquake closed off a major section of the route, leaving the lizardfolk and svirfneblin stranded and increasing tensions between the two groups.

## THE ORACLE'S CLUES

Before the events of *The Wizard's Dungeon*, agents visited the Oracle of Sol'ithmanna and learned valuable information from him. If the players have already completed the previous adventure, they know the following information, based on how many of the tests they passed. If you are running this adventure as a stand-alone, roll percentile dice. On a roll of 90% or higher, the agents passed five tests. On a roll of 75% or higher, they passed four tests. Otherwise, they passed only three tests.

**No Tests Passed:** Belazeel is in the Shadescar Rift. He knows how to use the Green and White Serpent Keys to "lift the Basilisk Shroud." (If the PCs attack Revien, this is the only information they get.)

**One Test Passed:** The "Basilisk Shroud" is an ancient magical prison crafted by a group of spellcasters. Belazeel hopes to open this prison and free the being known only as the Sorceress. She was imprisoned by her enemies because her lust for power led her to commit terrible deeds. Belazeel hopes that she will reward him for freeing her by teaching him her secrets.

**Two Tests Passed:** In her search for power, the Sorceress used forbidden magic and transformed herself into a terrible monster. Her return to power would bring disaster—first to Threll and, then, to all of Aeva.

**Three Tests Passed:** The Sorceress will be at her weakest when she first emerges from the Basilisk Shroud. If the PCs cannot stop her then, the world will face great danger.

**Four Tests Passed:** Another powerful creature waits for the PCs in Shadescar Rift. Belazeel has an ally in the dark caverns. They must overcome this evil or turn it aside if they hope to succeed in defeating Belazeel and the Sorceress.

**Five Tests Passed:** There are tools with which to fight this enemy. The gnomes know where to find them, but they dare not tread where they are kept.

This balance fully tipped when Kezzerrex, a mighty black dragon, passed through the subterranean region's thin border between Aeva and another world. The dragon got stuck underground, unable to return to his home world or to physically escape through the narrow underground passageways, so he reformed his cavernous home into a fetid swamp.

The lizardfolk's holdings happened to be nearby, and the creatures viewed the dragon as a god. They sought to please Kezzerrex by waylaying travelers and gifting him with stolen treasure. They refused to invade the svirfneblin camp as the gnomes proved to be too tough for them in large numbers, but the dragon emboldened them enough to pick off stragglers without fear of repercussion.

This set the scene for Belazeel's arrival. The wizard took time to learn about the general lay of the land, so he knew about the svirfneblin-lizardfolk feud and Kezzerrex's existence. Avoiding the svirfneblin, he entered the lizardfolk encampment, name-dropping Kezzerrex and impressing the lizardfolk with his own magic. The lizardfolk left Belazeel alone, and he passed unmolested to an audience with the dragon. Belazeel played to Kezzerrex's ego and created an alliance, promising untold wealth and freedom to the dragon if he prevented anyone from meddling with his plans. He also told Kezzerrex that a group of do-gooders was dogging his steps and they might be in search of a cache of weapons useful against the dragon—a cache carefully guarded by the svirfneblin.

Shortly after, Kezzerrex ordered the lizardfolk to obtain the treasure held by the svirfneblin. The lizardfolk sent out the first wave to defeat the gnomes, and the PCs arrive just as the battle is underway.



## 1. ARRIVAL

No one has explored the underground areas of the Shadescar Rift; at least, no one has returned from a journey very far into the Rift to divulge what they have learned. Therefore, rumors and legends are all that inform people about the area below the surface. Certainly, the bizarre creatures disgorged by the Rift inform some of those rumors.

The party takes a steep, twisting path from the surface. Many tunnels shoot from the main path, leading to dead ends. The creatures they see along the initial path are strange, but harmless things that scuttle away from the characters as they approach. Eventually, the path levels off and, after a tight squeeze, deposits the characters at a landing where the adventure starts.

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*The narrow, rocky passageway forces you to squeeze through a small opening that gives way to a large, rough stone chamber. Limestone stalactites and stalagmites, beaded with water from the ambient*

*humidity, dot this chamber. However, they do not impede movement. The darkness and thick stone columns make it difficult to see beyond the chamber.*

While not the most accommodating area, this chamber is large enough to serve as a location where the characters can rest and recover. Other than albino bats that stir from their roosts in the 10-foot-high ceiling at the presence of bright light, the cave is empty of creatures. Crawling through the northwestern opening to the tunnel leading to the surface requires two squares of movement. Three tunnels branch out from this cave and lead to the same general area.

**Development:** Allow the characters to attempt a DC 10 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. Those who succeed hear a scraping noise, providing them with a warning about the earth elemental in the nearby passage. Anyone who gets 15 or higher on the check hears yells and the faint clash of weapons from the battle between the svirfneblin and the lizardfolk.

If the characters make no effort to move stealthily through this section of the cavern, they alert the earth elemental to their presence.

## 2. EARTHEN CASTAWAYS (1,600 XP)

The boundary between Aeva and the world beyond is thin in the Shadescar Rift and occasionally links to a plane where earth elementals rule. Occasionally, less-powerful elementals are deposited here until the border weakens again, allowing them to escape. One such creature has been avoiding the intensifying warfare between the svirfneblin and lizardfolk while it searches for a release from its imprisonment.

*A maze of granite pillars leads to this section of the cavern, which contains mounds of rock, as if some large creature had dug them out of the ground and replaced them. Water drips from the stalactites hanging precariously over this chamber.*

Other than a section of floor-to-ceiling flowstone (the triangular feature at the southeastern corner of this encounter area), the cavern's features are the same as those at the arrival point.

**Creatures:** The elemental has been digging through the cavern floor to find its way home. If the characters are noisy when they approach and do not attempt **Dexterity (Stealth)** checks, the elemental hears them and hides under the surface. It waits for an approaching character before springing out of the ground to threaten the PCs. The elemental speaks Common in rumbling tones. He demands that they go away and leave them to their work, but he will not let them just pass through. He is angry and just wants them to go back the way they came.

If the PCs decide to make peace with the

elemental, the creature listens long enough to allow one **Charisma (Persuasion)** check. Since it is quite angry about its current plight, the DC for the check is 17. If the PCs fail to appease the elemental, a fight begins.

The elemental focuses its attacks on one character at a time and switches when its current opponent falls, or another opponent harms it. The elemental suspects it will never return home; out of anger and grief, it fights until it is destroyed.

### EARTH ELEMENTAL

*Large elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.



STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA

20(+5) 8(-1) 20(+5) 5(-3) 10(+0) 5(-3)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** thunder

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Terran

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Earth Glide.** The elemental can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

**Siege Monster.** The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Development:** The sound of combat is much more noticeable here, only requiring a DC 10 **Wisdom (Perception)** check for a character to notice it.

If the characters resolve their conflict with the earth elemental diplomatically, the elemental tells them the earth is "sour" and lets the PCs know that it is trying to go home. If the PCs return later and mention Kezzerrex, the elemental comes to believe that the dragon is at fault for its plight, and it will come to the party's aid when the PCs fight Kezzerrex. If the PCs defeat the elemental, there is a 25% chance each day that another earth elemental crosses from their home plane to this area.

## 3. GRAND MELEE (300+ XP)

This cavern served as a waystation for traders and travelers along The Winding Way. As the lizardfolk controlling the area to the southeast grew more belligerent, fewer people made the journey here. After the earthquake, the svirfneblin and lizardfolk left this cavern alone, but both sides kept watch over it to make sure neither side sent an invasion force. The svirfneblin had no intention of breaking the unspoken treaty and had planned to survive until they could mount an expedition toward the surface. However, Kezzerrex's presence (and some not so subtle urging by the dragon) emboldened the lizardfolk. The lizardfolk brought most of their number to take the svirfneblin compound, and the gnomes responded with a troop of their own.

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*The floor slopes down and away from the tunnel's tight confines to open into a grand cavern. The clash of weapons sounds well before the scene of lizard-like humanoid in battle with stone-colored gnomes. The mutual foes are so intent on their fight they do not notice your intrusion.*

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This chamber is much larger than the others the PCs traversed to get here. The ceiling reaches 20-foot high in this area. When this chamber was in heavier use before the earthquake, travelers cleared out the stalagmites and stalactites that obstructed them. Now that few people visit this area, stalactites have formed and reach down 10 feet, but they do not create an obstruction. The omnipresent albino bats dart around near the ceiling, provoked by the noise below. A wide passageway leads south toward the svirfneblin encampment and two narrow tunnels lead to the east toward the lizardfolk holdings.



**Creatures:** Because of the earthquake, neither side has a very sizeable force, but there are enough creatures on each side to overwhelm the party. At the beginning of the combat, there were 12 lizardfolk and 10 svirfneblin (SRD). Their numbers have dwindled down to 8 each, as the svirfneblin benefitted from their *blur* spells to avoid the lizardfolk's attacks. However, with that advantage running out, the tide has begun to turn.

The PCs have three basic choices during this combat. **First**, they could just observe the fight and not interfere. PCs who watch the combat notice that the lizardfolk are cruel fighters. They gloat when they drop a svirfneblin, and care nothing for their comrades, seeking to steal a fatal blow to an opponent in a transparent attempt to boost their individual reputations. Meanwhile the svirfneblin show concern for their compatriots. In this case,

one minute after they arrive, 3 lizardfolk remain standing over their slain foes and loot their bodies before retreating through the southeastern tunnel.

The **second** option is to help the lizardfolk, who take advantage of the short-term alliance, but take credit for defeated foes (as above) or turn on the PCs during combat.

The **last**, and best, choice is to aid the svirfneblin, who welcome the strangers coming to their rescue. Svirfneblin fight in cooperation with the PCs and distract lizardfolk away from fallen PCs.

If the party chooses to fight, simulate the mass combat by pitting the PCs against 3 of whichever creature they attack. During the combat, the lizardfolk dispatch 1 svirfneblin each round, while the svirfneblin drop 1 lizardfolk every 2 rounds. If the PCs manage to kill their foes while some lizardfolk are

still standing, they can take the fight to the remaining lizardfolk. The party earns 100 XP for each additional lizardfolk they defeat.

Narrate the action occurring around the PCs, describing the relief when a svirfneblin is victorious over a lizardfolk or the exulting bellows when a lizardfolk kills a svirfneblin. If the PCs ally with the svirfneblin, describe how the gnome divides his or her attention between the foe the PC faces and the opponent faced by the svirfneblin.

When 1 lizardfolk remains, it attempts to flee. The svirfneblin do not give chase and ask the PCs to leave it and avoid running headlong into a trap. The svirfneblin fight to the death to prevent the lizardfolk from advancing to their camp.

### LIZARDFOLK (3)

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)
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**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spiked Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

### SVIRFNEBLIN (DEEP GNOME) (3)

Small humanoid (gnome), neutral good

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 16 (3d6 + 6)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)
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**Skills** Investigation +3, Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Gnomish, Terran, Undercommon

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Stone Camouflage.** The gnome has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

**Gnome Cunning.** The gnome has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The gnome's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day each: *blindness/deafness*, *blur*

### ACTIONS

**War Pick.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Poisoned Dart.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Development:** If the PCs come to the svirfneblin's rescue and there are survivors, the gnomes offer the PCs a meal and rest at their encampment. The party will not be able to convince them to press the fight against retreating lizardfolk.

If the PCs do nothing to interfere in the battle or if they help the lizardfolk, the surviving lizardfolk prefer to escape with their victory and do not engage the party. They plan to recover from their injuries and return later to attack the svirfneblin camp. The lizardfolk do not reward the party but leave some svirfneblin gear behind. PCs who check the fallen svirfneblin may can make a DC 10 **Wisdom (Medicine)** check to discover that one of them survived. If they restore him to health, he thanks them and asks to be taken back to his home.

#### 4. SVIRFNEBLIN BASE

Besides any surviving svirfneblin from the combat above, this base has 4 able-bodied svirfneblin who remain behind to protect children and the infirm, as well as their leader, the Speaker of Stones, who has had dream-like interactions with the faerie seer, Revien, also known as the Oracle of Sol'Ithmanna, and she knows about the PCs' quest to stop Belazeel.

*Two tunnels surround a massive stone pillar, cutting off this cavern from the rest of The Winding Way. Phosphorescent fungi lining the cavern walls illuminate it in faint purple, and an odor like raw potatoes permeates the cavern thanks to rows of pale*

#### ADVANCED SPELLCASTING

Some of the creatures in this adventure have spells not covered by the basic rules and have been adjusted as a result. If you are playing with the standard rules, feel free to use the standard monsters from the SRD complete with their usual spell lists.

#### NEW SPELL

If you're using the starter rules, the svirfneblin use a spell you haven't seen before. *Blindness/deafness* is a spell usable by svirfneblin, who will share the secret of the spell with characters who treat them well. *Blindness/deafness* is a 2nd-level cleric or wizard spell. They will also share *Blur* with the party's wizards.

#### BLINDNESS/DEAFNESS

*2nd-level necromancy*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Range:** 30 feet

**Components:** V

**Duration:** 1 minute

You can blind or deafen a foe. Choose one creature that you can see within range to make a Constitution saving throw. If it fails, the target is either blinded or deafened (your choice) for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make a Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 2nd.

*mushrooms. The fungi thrive in the damp conditions. Straw juts out from several curtained alcoves along the western and southern walls. A smoldering pit topped by an iron cauldron sits next to a sheet of flowstone near the northeastern entrance to this cavern.*

This cavern supported a much larger contingent of svirfneblin, cut off from a more sizable band because of the earthquake. Several svirfneblin have fallen to illness and combat with the lizardfolk, reducing the community's numbers precariously. The gnomes had attempted to bargain with the lizardfolk to work together to clear the rubble blocking the rest of The Winding Way, but the lizard-like humanoids claimed they were content with the situation and demanded the entirety of the svirfneblin treasure hoard as payment for their assistance.

The alcoves serve the svirfneblin as semi-private sleeping quarters. However, since many alcoves are no longer in use, the svirfneblin allow the PCs to use them if they stay and rest. Several tunnels exit the chamber to the east, funneling into two tunnels that lead to the svirfneblin treasure. The pale mushrooms are edible, but the phosphorescent, purple fungi are not. The glowing fungi provide a soothing ambience for the svirfneblin, but do not shed enough light to help PCs unable to see in the dark.

**Creatures:** If the PCs arrive unescorted, four combat-ready svirfneblin threaten them. They normally attack lizardfolk on sight, but they attempt to frighten off other intruders. If the PCs take no offensive action, they may attempt to calm the cavern's protectors with a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check. If this check fails, the svirfneblin give the party one more chance to leave before launching an attack with poisoned darts and *blindness/deafness* spells before closing into melee. The svirfneblin fight to the death to protect their families and their leader.

If the PCs managed to save any svirfneblin in the previous combat, even if they did

not participate and merely revived the sole survivor, surviving gnomes vouch for the PCs and allow them to talk to the Speaker of Stones, a wizened female svirfneblin who has led her band for over fifty years.

### **SVIRFNEBLIN (DEEP GNOME) (4)**

*Small humanoid (gnome), neutral good*

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 16 (3d6 + 6)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

**Skills** Investigation +3, Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Gnomish, Terran, Undercommon

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Stone Camouflage.** The gnome has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

**Gnome Cunning.** The gnome has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The gnome's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

1/day each: *blindness/deafness*, *blur*,

### **ACTIONS**

**War Pick.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Poisoned Dart.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Development:** Should the PCs befriend the svirfneblin and gain an audience with the Speaker of Stones, she is happy to answer any questions they have. The Speaker of Stones can also remind the PCs about any of the clues Revien gave them, if the players have forgotten them. She walks over to the flowstone by the cauldron and touches it during the conversation to “learn what the stone knows.” Possible questions and her answers follow:

*What happened here?* “Our band moved closer to the surface to greet visiting upworlders. The earth chose to test us by cutting us off from the rest of our people, and the Betrayers of Stone have made our return impossible.”

*Have you seen any “upworlders?”* “No, but the stone tells me that terrible creatures live near the surface and deter visitors. You and the mage are the first that we are aware of.”

*Who are the “Betrayers of Stone?”* “The lizard people live near the fallen stone that blocks The Winding Way. They are warlike and have become much more aggressive with the arrival of the mage and the awakening of the Shadow Doom.”

*What is the “Shadow Doom?”* “The stone speaks of a mighty beast trapped in its cavern. It allied with the mage, and it will try to keep you from reaching him.”

*What is the treasure that Revien mentioned will help against Belazeel’s ally?* “Ah, yes. Our treasure trove is no longer ours, but the chamber’s foundation spoke of powerful items that will aid in battle with the Shadow Doom.”

*The treasure is no longer yours?* “The deceivers took our cave and attack anyone who tries to touch the treasure. They look like the chest that contains our wealth.”

*How can we tell the deceivers apart from the other chests?* “You must look carefully at the chests,

because they are quite clever at disguising themselves. They wait until someone gets close to them or the other chest before they attack.”

*What can we take from your treasure?* “It is no longer ours, so by defeating the deceivers, you win the right to the treasure. Let your compassion guide you in choosing how much you decide to share with us.”

*How do you know Revien?* “I have never met the seer personally, but his dreams have settled into the stone, which tells me of his words. I have likewise imparted messages to him.”

*Where is Belazeel?* “He and his companions have passed beyond the Heart of Stone. The stones who speak to me can no longer see him, but I can tell you how to find the Heart.”

## 5. THE FALSE CHESTS (900 XP)

This area holds the svirfneblin’s former wealth. However, the current residents, a pair of mimics, make it impossible for the svirfneblin to claim their treasure.

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*Cobwebs cover every surface of this disused chamber in which three wooden chests sit against the eastern wall. As opposed to the rest of the underground area, this section is fairly dry.*

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Other than the two tunnels leading into this area from the west, two tunnels exit to the north. The northeastern tunnel emanates considerable heat that evaporates any moisture.

**Creatures:** The left and right treasure chests are actually hungry mimics, which have enough patience to wait for a PC to approach (requiring the PCs to succeed at a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice it). If the PCs have received warning from the Speaker of Stones and attack the chests at a distance, the mimics end their ruse and counterattack. The mimics stand their ground until the PCs leave or they kill them.

## MIMIC (2)

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 15 ft.

**STR** DEX **CON** INT **WIS** **CHA**

17 (+3) 12 (+1) 15 (+2) 5 (-3) 13 (+1) 8 (-1)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Damage Immunities** acid

**Condition Immunities** prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The mimic can use its action to polymorph into an object or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Adhesive (Object Form Only).** The mimic adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the mimic is also grappled by it (escape DC 13). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

**False Appearance (Object Form Only).** While the mimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

**Grappler.** The mimic has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

## ACTIONS

**Pseudopod.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the mimic is in object form, the target is subjected to its Adhesive trait.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

**Treasure:** The real chest contains a *potion of fly*, a +1 *warhammer*, a *dragon slayer longsword*, a *shield of acid immunity* (see sidebar) and 275 gp.

The *dragon-bane longsword* adds +1 on attack and damage rolls and also deals +3d6 damage to dragons. If none of the characters can use a longsword, change the weapon to a type that at least one of them can use.

## 6. HOT JUNCTION (1,400 XP)

Another area where the boundary between the Material and other planes is thin, this area touches on a fiery plane. The atmosphere is inhospitable to most visitors, but two hellhounds, which passed through the boundary and got stuck here, enjoy the heat.

*Fissures in the ground bubble with lava in this unbearably hot cavern. The lava illuminates the room in an eerie red. Yellow moths, apparently accustomed to the blistering temperatures, flit about the brighter areas of lava. Occasionally, a gout of lava traps one, and it struggles to free itself from the molten material.*



## NEW MAGIC ITEM: SHIELD OF IMMUNITY

The *shield of acid immunity* is a great treasure, one of seven shields created for a group of long-forgotten warriors. The full item stat block presented here can be used with the full 5E rules, but even if you are using simpler rules, you can use the description in the stat block to explain how the shield functions.

The *shield of acid immunity* was created especially for this adventure by BJ Hensley as one of the *Trail of the Apprentice* Kickstarter backer goal rewards.

### SHIELD OF IMMUNITY (ACID)

**Armor (shield), rare (requires attunement)**

This shield is round in shape and crafted of a silvery metal. Its face is coated in a deep green and depicts a vicious black dragon rearing back to attack. This shield can be activated once per day to shield its bearer from acid-based attacks, providing immunity to acid for no more than 6 rounds. If the shield is destroyed or the wielder disarmed the immunity is nullified.

For each 6 points of energy damage the shield absorbs, it can store 1d6 points up to 5d6. At any point within 24 hours after damage is stored the wielder can take an action to activate the shield causing the black dragon on its face to rear back and spew the stored energy causing up to 5d6 points of damage to all enemies in a 30-foot line. A DC 14 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage. If the energy is not used within 24 hours it dissipates and must be stored again.

The cracks in the ground do not inhibit the PCs' movement, but the lava that belches forth from the cracks proves dangerous (see hazards below).

**Hazards:** This area has two dangers. The first is the tremendous heat, reaching over 140 degrees Fahrenheit. This heat deals 1d4 points of damage per minute (10 rounds) the PCs spend in the area. Any PC who takes damage also gains 1 level of exhaustion. An exhausted PC gains disadvantage on ability checks. If they gain a second level, their speed is halved. Exhaustion is removed after a long rest.

The worse hazard comes from the bubbling lava that spews forth from the cracks at random intervals. Each round the PCs spend here, roll a d100. On a result of 01-50, lava splashes on a random PC, who takes 2d6 points of fire damage (DC 14 **Dexterity** saving throw for half damage).

**Creatures:** Unless the party takes precautions to move quietly into this area, the pair of hellhounds is aware of their arrival. Each hellhound hides in one of the chambers next to the passage leading to this area and waits for two or more PCs to get in range of its breath weapon. The PCs must succeed at a DC 11 **Wisdom (Perception)** check or be surprised. The hellhounds were part of a larger pack and work together while they wait for their breath weapons to replenish. They flank a single opponent, usually the toughest looking foe unless another PC deals cold damage to them.

The hellhounds want to protect their territory, but they don't wish to perish in combat. If either hellhound is reduced to 8 hit points, it slinks to the back of the chamber and points its nose at the treasure they have accumulated.

## HELL HOUNDS (2)

Medium fiend, lawful evil

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (7d8 + 14)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +5

**Damage Immunities** fire

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Infernal but can't speak it

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The hound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The hound exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Treasure:** The hellhounds managed to sneak a *potion of protection from energy (acid)*, a *potion of protection from energy (fire)*, and a ruby worth 25 gp, from the chest before the mimics were aware of their presence.

**Development:** If the PCs retreat, the hellhounds do not follow them, since they like this area and hope that a way home will present itself.

## 7. LIZARDFOLK OUTPOST (200 XP)

When The Winding Way was open to all subterranean travelers, this area served as a guard post for creatures that wanted to keep the route free from trouble. When the earthquake sealed off this section of caverns from the rest of the underground area and stranded the lizardfolk and svirfneblin, the lizardfolk quickly took control.

*Narrow tunnels converge from the west before branching to the north and southeast at another solid rock wall. The sound of cave crickets comes from further to the east, but this junction is quiet.*

The tunnels are more cramped than the others in this level and measure between five and seven feet tall. Other than that, they are free of obstacles.

**Creatures:** The idle chatter of the two lizardfolk watching this location gives them away until they hear the PCs. Still, they press themselves against the stone (located at 'X' on the map) until a PC enters the junction, at which point they each throw their readied javelins. A PC can notice them with a successful DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. One of the lizardfolk moves in to attack, while the other throws javelins at foes. If one of the lizardfolk falls, the other attempts to escape.



## LIZARDFOLK (2)

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

15 (+2)   10 (+0)   13 (+1)   7 (-2)   12 (+1)   7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spiked Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Development:** If a lizardfolk escapes, the otyugh in the chamber to the southeast ignores it. The otyugh also ignores combat in this area, confident that the lizardfolk will feed it the remains of anything they defeat. The fleeing lizardfolk quickly arrives at the larger encampment to warn its comrades stationed there.

## 8. THE CLEANER (1,800 XP)

An otyugh, a bizarre creature that feeds on trash and waste, makes its home in this fetid chamber. The underground denizens found that the creature was fairly docile as long as they provided it with “food,” so they left it here rather than dispatch it. The lizardfolk keep the otyugh fed, so it allows them unrestricted access through its home.

*The stench in this cavern is overwhelming. Piles of rotting trash litter the cavern’s floor. Pale cave crickets hop throughout the refuse; their chirruping going silent at your intrusion.*

A curtain of flow stone and a basalt pillar make for tight entrances to this cavern. A tunnel arcs around the pillar to the north, and a tunnel to the southwest quickly turns to the southeast and leads further down The Winding Way and toward the lizardfolk camp.

**Creatures:** The otyugh (SRD) knows every creature that feeds it by scent. It does not recognize the PCs and is displeased by their presence. The otyugh makes no attempt to hide from the PCs and angrily points one of its barbed tentacles at its maw when they enter the chamber. If a character feeds the creature at least two pounds of garbage per party member, he or she may attempt a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check (the check receives a +5 bonus if the garbage is particularly odorous). If the check succeeds and the PCs don’t attack it, the otyugh allows the PCs to pass. The otyugh loudly snorts at each character who passes it as it sniffs them to remember their scents.

The otyugh pursues PCs if they decide to leave the cavern, potentially surprising those who think they can safely squeeze through the tunnels and leave the large creature behind.

## OTYUGH

Large aberration, neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 114 (12d10 + 48)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16(+3)	11(+0)	19(+4)	6(-2)	13(+1)	6(-2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Saving Throws** Con +7

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Otyugh

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Limited Telepathy.** The otyugh can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 feet of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

**Compression.** The otyugh can squeeze itself into a five foot by five foot square without penalty.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack:** The otyugh makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its tentacles.

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until the disease is cured.

**Tentacle:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and restrained until the grapple ends. The otyugh has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

**Tentacle Slam:** The otyugh slams creatures grappled by it into each other or a solid surface. Each creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and be stunned until the end of the otyugh's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn't stunned.

**Treasure:** Among the refuse is a forgotten jade necklace worth 480 gp.

**Development:** If the PCs mollify the otyugh, it will never attack again unless they provoke it.



## 9. ENEMY COMPOUND (1,000 XP)

This area once served as a neutral trading post for The Winding Way. The lizardfolk lived in the cavern north of this location, but other creatures kept them in check. As this section of The Winding Way saw fewer travelers, the lizardfolk became more aggressive and started taking over the cavern, especially as their original home became swampy due to an intrusion from the Plane of Water. Shortly after they started asserting themselves, a quake cut this region off from the rest of The Winding Way. With virtually no opposition from the svirfneblin, the lizardfolk claimed this area as their own.

*The claustrophobic tunnel winds for over one hundred feet before widening as it turns east. Beyond a circular pillar, a large irregularly shaped cavern can be seen. Several bedrolls haphazardly cover the ground around a lit campfire. A large pile of rubble sits in this chamber's southeastern corner. Occasionally, a rock tumbles to the ground from the pile.*

The cavern's inhabitants enjoy the area's restricted entryways: a basalt pillar blocks the western passage and rubble completely closes off the southeastern entrance. The lizardfolk don't worry about an incursion from the northern tunnel, thanks to the threats presented by Kezzerrex and the will-o'-wisps.

Despite the disarray in the cavern, nothing other than the campfire creates an obstacle for PCs moving about the cavern.

**Creatures:** Gurrlog leads an ever-dwindling contingent of lizardfolk. He is supported by three lizardfolk (and a fourth, if the lizardfolk escaped from the outpost). Gurrlog has established himself as leader through intimidation, even occasionally making

an example of a lizardfolk who failed him. Therefore, the other lizardfolk follow him unquestioningly. Gurrlog tries to attack from hiding to benefit from his sneak attack, and his minions set up flanks for him afterward. If Gurrlog runs out of allies, he moves to attack from range.

The lizardfolk give no quarter, and none surrender, considering the twin threats of Gurrlog and Kezzerrex. The lizardfolk meet any attempt at negotiation with guttural laughter.

One of Belazeel's kobold underlings is here when the PCs arrive. She was sent to negotiate with the lizardfolk for additional supplies, since the bored kobolds are rapidly eating their way through the stores they have on hand. When she notices the PCs, the kobold retreats through the cave to the north.

### LIZARDFOLK (3)

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (4d8 + 4)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

15 (+2)   10 (+0)   13 (+1)   7 (-2)   12 (+1)   7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spiked Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## GURLAGG, LIZARDFOLK BOSS

*Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 60 (8d8 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)
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**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Hold Breath.** Gurrlag can hold his breath for 15 minutes.

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn, Gurrlag deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Gurrag that isn't incapacitated and Gurrlag doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Gurrlag makes two melee attacks, each one with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Spiked Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

## KOBOLD

*Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 5 (2d6 - 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
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7 (-2)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)
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**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the kobold has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Pack Tactics.** The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Sling.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Treasure:** The lizardfolk are supposed to give all their wealth to Kezzerrex as a show of fealty, but Gurrlag has kept a few trinkets for himself. A small pouch contains a *pearl of power*, and a pair of onyxes worth 175 gp each.

**Development:** The escaping kobold warns Kezzerrex about the approaching PCs before heading further down to inform their contingent's leader, Garalgek, that the PCs have made it this far.

The rubble takes 24 hours of effort to clear, but it leads to the main portion of The Winding Way. That area is beyond the scope of this adventure. However, if the PCs return after defeating Belazeel and inform the svirfneblin that the way is clear, the gnomes begin the effort to clear the rubble. The svirfneblin thank the PCs for enabling them to reunite with the larger band, confirming that the heroes have made allies in the dark tunnels below.

## 10. EATER OF FEAR (1,600 XP)

Another planar conjunction touches this location, this time to a plane populated by air elementals. Two malevolent will-o'-wisps haunt the cavern and take advantage of a gas trap that induces fear in humanoid.

*Cool breezes break up the stuffiness of the rest of this subterranean area. The wind seems to come from all directions with no particular source evident. Bats fly at the top of the tall ceiling and catch downdrafts bringing them ground-ward.*

A narrow tunnel leads north out of this area, and the air becomes damp near this exit.

**Trap:** A pocket of dense air (in the areas indicated with "T") contains material that causes humanoid creatures to become paranoid and fearful. When a PC disturbs the air, it swirls around and affects a 10-foot-square area (the labeled squares and the two squares immediately south of them). The gas dissipates and resettles after 10 minutes. Creatures such as the lizardfolk that are aware of the gas jump over it when they pass through here.

The gas trap can be detected with a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** and can be disabled with a DC 15 **Dexterity** check using thieves' tools. Any character in the area of the gas has to make a DC 14 **Charisma** saving throw or be frightened for 1d4 rounds.

**Creatures:** The will-o'-wisps inhabiting this area are recent castaways from their home plane. They enjoyed toying with the terrified lizardfolk that would pass through here. However, Kezzerrex made a deal with the creatures to leave his allies alone in return for sending hapless arrivals from below through the will-o'-wisps' lair.

The will-o'-wisps wait invisibly for PCs to stumble into the fear gas before launching its attack. They follow characters who leave their lair while they still suffer from the frightened condition. If the will-o'-wisps are reduced to 8 hit points or less and no opponent is suffering from the frightened condition, they become invisible again and dart away from the PCs.

### **WILL-O'-WISP (2)**

*Tiny undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19

**Hit Points** 22 (9d4)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

1 (-5)   28 (+9)   10 (+0)   13 (+1)   14 (+2)   11 (+0)

**Damage Immunities** lightning, poison

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Consume Life.** As a bonus action, the will-o'-wisp can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that has 0 hit points and is still alive. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against this magic or die. If the target dies,

the will-o'-wisp regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

**Ephemeral.** The will-o'-wisp can't wear or carry anything.

**Incorporeal Movement.** The will-o'-wisp can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

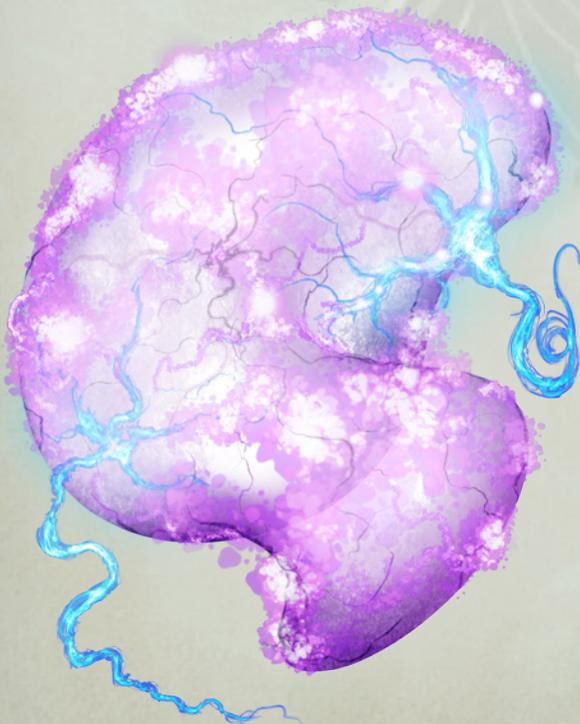
**Variable Illumination.** The will-o'-wisp sheds bright light in a 5- to 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The will-o'-wisp can alter the radius as a bonus action.

## ACTIONS

**Shock.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

**Invisibility.** The will-o'-wisp and its light magically become invisible until it attacks or uses its Consume Life, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

**Development:** If the PCs manage to flee from the will-o'-wisps, the creatures have a 50% chance of remaining here, as the border between the Shadescar Rift and their plane thins enough to allow it to return home.



## 11. PEST CONTROL (150 XP)

The strongest connection to a plane in this level of the Shadescar Rift is to the plane of elemental water. In addition to creating a fresh pool of water controlled by Kezzerrex, it also produced the swampy terrain that the dragon enjoys as its lair. The swampy conditions also attracted a group of bloodsucking stirges.

*After leaving the wind-filled chamber to the south, this tunnel becomes stagnant, warm, and damp. Pools of water, fed by dripping stalactites, collect in the tunnel, and the ground becomes spongier the further north the tunnel travels. Unlike the majority of these subterranean caverns, there are no signs of life.*

The tunnel is confined in height as well as width, only reaching 7 feet tall. While the water is a nuisance that soaks boots and other footwear, it does not restrict movement.

**Creatures:** The stirges cling to the ceiling awaiting prey. If the kobold passed through here, it stirred the creatures awake, but not in time to attack. Stirges are deterred by the lizardfolks' tough scales, so they never bothered them when they came through. However, they readily accept the meal provided by the PCs when they arrive. PCs must succeed at a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice the creatures. Each stirge attacks a different PC if possible. If a stirge successfully drains blood for two rounds it erratically flies out of the characters' reach and leaves the PCs alone for the remainder of this encounter; PCs still get XP for surviving the attack.

### STIRGE (6)

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

4 (-3) 1   6 (+3)   11 (+0)   2 (-4)   8 (-1)   6 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### **ACTIONS**

**Blood Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the stirge attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the stirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

The stirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

**Development:** Assuming the stirges get their fill of blood, they won't attack again for 8 hours, so surviving PCs can pass through here safely during that time.

## **12. KEZZEREX'S LAIR (2,900 XP)**

The watery plane bordering here dumped a considerable amount of brackish water into this cavern and created a strange underground swamp. Kezzerex was transported from his marshy home into this location.

*Muck and water cover the entirety of this enormous cavern's floor. The pungent, sour smell of acid permeates the cavern, and the cavern's walls are pitted with holes. The ceiling reaches into the dark, beyond the range of normal vision. Everything is still and quiet, here, as if in anticipation of a momentous event.*

The cavern's vaulted ceiling reaches 120 feet, allowing Kezzerex plenty of room to maneuver. Two tunnels in the southwest lead out of this location, one traveling due west and further underground, and the other going due south to a pool of fresh water.



A wall, virtually identical to the adjoining walls, conceals a small storeroom that has been forgotten by most of the residents here (the Speaker of Stones knows about it, but she has not heard from the stones in this cavern since Kezzerrex's arrival, so it slipped her mind). A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check notices this secret entrance.

**Hazard:** All green squares represent shallow bog. A PC must spend 2 squares of movement to move 1 square in the shallow bog, and **Dexterity (Acrobatics and Stealth)** checks have disadvantage. Kezzerrex is not affected by these restrictions.

**Creatures:** Kezzerrex grew frustrated with his inability to escape the cavern, but the lizardfolk he displaced gave him plenty of diversion. He used them to build up his treasure hoard and enforce his will on The Winding Way. The lizardfolk worship him as a deity, which he vainly accepts. When Belazeel entered this cavern on the way to the Basilisk Shroud, the wizard stayed the dragon's wrath by proposing an alliance, wherein Belazeel would send the dragon home with a sizeable treasure in return for dealing with the pesky do-gooders dogging him. Belazeel has no intention of honoring the deal, but he managed to convince the dragon of his sincerity. All the same, if Kezzerrex dispatches the PCs and doesn't receive his reward, he will personally hunt down the wizard and make him pay, if he can.

The dragon's keen senses allow him to detect the PCs' arrival. His first action is to activate a one-use gem provided by Belazeel that creates a 50-foot radius of magical darkness, rendering all non-magical light sources ineffective. It also overrides *light* spells. A *light* spell cast from a 3rd level slot or higher returns the light conditions to normal in its radius of effect.

When fighting, Kezzerrex uses his breath weapon to catch the largest number of PCs in the line. He attacks PCs who can see through the darkness and flies to maneuver away from dangerous opponents. Kezzerrex is too proud to surrender and fights until the PCs bring him down.

While Kezzerrex fights the PCs, he taunts them. Select one of the following on Kezzerrex's turn or devise your own taunt.

"You are but buzzing insects to me, an annoyance I intend to swat."

"I haven't had a good fight in a while. It looks like I'll have to wait longer."

"I hope there's a main feast to go with the appetizers that you are."

"You are fools if you think you can defeat me."

### **KEZZERREX, YOUNG BLACK DRAGON**

*Large dragon, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 127 (15d10 + 45)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +3, Cha +5

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +5

**Damage Immunities** acid

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Amphibious.** Kezzerrex can breathe air and water.

### **ACTIONS**

**Multiattack.** Kezzerrex makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.



# The Heart of Stone

1 square = 5 ft.



# The Winding Way



PART 5: THE WIZARD'S DUNGEON

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

**Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6).** Kezzerrex exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Treasure:** Kezzerrex didn't take his hoard with him when he arrived, so he only has a modest pile of treasure provided by the lizardfolk. Most of the hoard is material wealth (1,500 gp, two black opals worth 400 gp each, and a silver bracelet worth 700 gp), but the PCs gain a couple of magic items: a *wand of fireballs* (fully charged), a +1 *light crossbow*, and 20 silver bolts.

In the secret chamber, PCs find an *amulet of health*, an *ioun stone of insight*, and a *dancing mirror* (see sidebar).

### 13. FRESH WATER

Another outlet from the plane of water creates this tranquil pool where the PCs can replenish supplies and recuperate.

*In stark contrast to the brackishness of the dragon's lair, this circular pool is completely clear and looks refreshing. Fungi clinging to the wall bathe this chamber in a pearlescent glow.*

The entire chamber is filled with water, but the tunnel leading into the chamber acts as a ledge permitting PCs to drink from the pool. The water here is mildly charged with healing, due to a strange connection with the plane associated with life energy. PCs who drink from it heal 7 (2d6) points of damage and remove any conditions they currently have. A PC can only benefit from the pool once per day.

## NEW MAGIC ITEM: DANCING MIRROR

### DANCING MIRROR

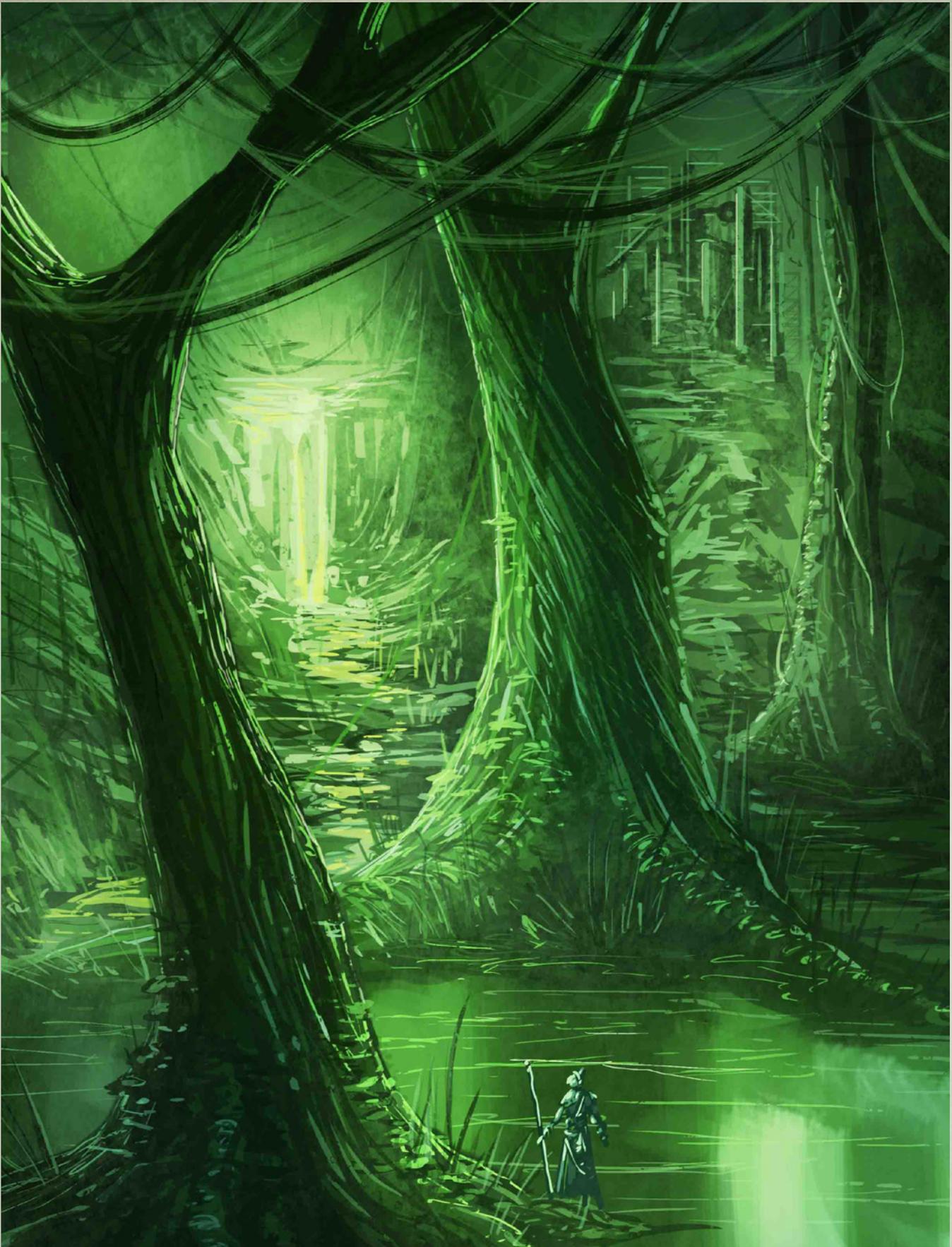
*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

The looking glass in this gold and silver-framed hand mirror is about a foot in diameter. Three times per day, the user can place the mirror at the desired position and let go. The *dancing mirror* maintains that relative position, even if the user moves and turns about. The effect lasts for 9 rounds. If placed in a position that allows the user to see a target in the mirror, the user can avert his gaze from that target while maintaining the ability to see it, avoiding gaze attacks and other abilities based on sight.

## PART TWO: THE HEART OF STONE

Leaving Kezzerrex's domain and the relative safety of the Winding Way, the PCs must descend into the dark tunnels and face the dangers that lurk there. After overcoming the Rift's horrible denizens, they arrive at the entrance to the Heart of Stone, the dungeon where the Sorceress was imprisoned.

Once inside, they quickly learn that Belazeel has entered the dungeon's final chamber and is working to free his future mentor. The PCs must follow his footsteps, unlocking the magic to reach the Basilisk Shroud. Only then can they face their long-hidden enemy and bring him to justice.



PART 5: THE WIZARD'S DUNGEON

## PLANAR ADVENTURES

Many tabletop roleplaying games share a common idea of a “multiverse.” The world the characters know is only a small part of an infinite reality. Different regions called “planes” represent pure forms of ideas, energy, and materials that make up the world we know. Typically, only higher-level adventurers can explore the planes, but there are ways you can add a taste of these strange places to your game.

While you can always introduce creatures like elementals or other monsters summoned from different planes, it can also be fun to let your PCs experience some of the conditions they might find there. Whether they are spontaneously created by the forces of the multiverse or built by powerful spellcasters, some locations, like this dungeon, have strong connections to one or more planes. Such places can hold great danger and wondrous treasures, making them perfect places to send brave adventurers.

### 2A. THE DEEPER DARKNESS (2,300)

As the party traverses the darkened tunnels of Kimmeros, they eventually encounter one of the creatures that give the Shadescar Rift such a terrible reputation.

*The journey beyond the Winding Way takes you through tunnels that widen and narrow at irregular intervals. Occasionally, you must cross deep chasms, cracks in the earth that dive far deeper than your lights can reach. Small chambers and short, narrow side tunnels occasionally branch off the main passage, but you occasionally find clues that keep you on the right path.*

*The distant sounds of running water and the hollow sound of an underground wind occasionally rise above the sounds of your footsteps crunching*

*on the rough stone floor. Sometimes, you hear other sounds, making you cover your light sources to avoid detection. At those times, you can often see that tiny patches of glowing moss provide some light, though certainly not enough for a human to see well by.*

Have the PCs roll a DC 15 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. All the characters notice that the sounds in the tunnel have suddenly changed, but success prevents the party from being surprised and to see the lodmaw when it is still 30 feet away. If not, the PCs are surprised and encounter distance is only 15 feet away from the PCs farthest in front.

*As you approach a bend in the tunnel, you realize that every sound you make seems to reverberate, echoing back toward you more loudly than before. The source of the strange phenomenon reveals itself, as a bizarre creature with a round body boasting a wide mouth filled with teeth and supported by many tiny legs, barrels toward you.*

**Creatures:** The monstrosity the PCs have encountered is a lodmaw, an insatiable creature with a huge, toothy mouth that echoes any sound near it. It prefers to roll over its victims, and it uses a stunning bellow from its cavernous mouth to soften up its opponents. The lodmaw has tiny legs that barely hold the creature up, making it susceptible to powerful blows from bludgeoning weapons.

Characters can attempt a DC 10 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check to identify the magical beast, based on old reports about an attack on the walls surrounding the Rift, and know about its bellowing attack. If the result of the check is 15 or higher, the character also knows that bludgeoning weapons can knock it backward. A result of 20 or higher reveals that scholars think there are different kinds of “maw” creatures lurking in Kimmeros.

## THE LODMAW: A TEAM EFFORT

The lodmaw is included in Mike Welham's *Fiends of the Shadescar Rift*, which he created as part of the *Trail of the Apprentice* Kickstarter backer rewards. The name and basic concept for this monster were created by two backers, the father and son team, Bruce and Luca Tartaglia.

**Body Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., any number of target target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Bellow (Recharge 3-6).** The lodmaw can let loose a horrendous roar from its cavernous body. All creatures in a 15-foot cone take 14 (4d6) points of thunder damage or half with a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail their save are stunned for 1 round and deafened for 1d6 rounds.

## LODMAW

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d10 + 48)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

20 (+5)   10 (+0)   16 (+3)   2(-4)   14 (+2)   10 (+0)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Knockback Vulnerability** If the lodmaw is struck with a bludgeoning weapon, it moves 5 feet away as if shoved, or 10 feet on a critical hit. If it collides with a solid object during this movement, it takes 3 (1d6) damage and its movement is stopped.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Strength check or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lodmaw may make one body slam attack against it as a bonus action.



## 2B. THE HEART OF STONE

At long last, the PCs arrive at the “Heart of Stone,” a place avoided by the denizens of Kimmeros. The cave holds the entrance to a lost dungeon where spellcasters once wove powerful magic to lock the Sorceress away from their world.

*A side passage from the main tunnel winds downward into the earth before opening up into an oblong cavern, about thirty feet wide and nearly as high. Flowstone spreads out from the base of one wall, creating a mostly-flat floor that angles down slightly to one side. Two pieces of cracked and broken stone, the two halves of what was once a massive slab of basalt covered in countless runes and mystical carvings, lie on either side of a dark opening in the cave wall. On one side of the room, in a corner farthest from the broken seal, lies a strange, lumpy mass of what looks like brown cloth and leather that sparkles slightly.*

*Whatever happened here, even those who have no training in the arcane can still sense the remnants of the powerful magic emanating from the ancient stones.*

**Treasure:** The skeletal remains of a long-dead adventurer lie nearby, slowly being covered with a fine layer of crystal. The skeleton wears a ring with a silver lion crest, marking him as a member of the Silvermane family line. PCs surpassing a DC 10 on an **Intelligence (History)** deduce that these are the remains of Jorn Silvermane, a warrior who disappeared over 75 years ago after he set out to find the former knight Parif Kinslayer, who had turned to evil. The fates of both men were unknown. Jorn had a magical hammer, a family heirloom of the Silvermanes, that was blessed by a high priest of Losinia. The ring is worth 15 gp on its own, but could sell for ten times that much to a collector. Sven Silvermane, whose family runs a curio shop in Port Fairglade, will give the PCs 100 gp each in credit at his shop if they return it to him.

## 2C. THE DUNGEON

*The Heart of Stone dungeon is very large. Each of the rooms is a hemisphere with a diameter of 60 feet. The rooms are arranged to form an ancient symbol representing all of reality, with each chamber magically attuned to a different plane of existence. The tunnels connecting the different rooms are 10 feet wide.*

**Light:** Except where noted in the room’s description, the entire complex is unlit. Stone sconces on the walls once held torches, but they have long since rotted away. The kobolds have no need of light and Belazeel carried his own lights with him. As with most of their journey through Kimmeros, the PCs must provide their own light sources.

**Language:** A strange effect of the dungeon’s magic is that characters can understand other spoken languages as though they are under the effects of a *tongues* spell. However, the magic doesn’t apply to writing that characters bring into the dungeon.



**Activation Rituals:** In each room of the dungeon, the PCs must carry out a ritual to activate the magic for each plane to which the room is attuned, by interacting with a magical focus pillar at the room's center. Most of the rituals are fairly simple, but in many of the rooms, the PCs must first pass a test of some kind to reveal the pillar. When the pillars are activated, some of the rooms take on characteristics of their associated planes and magic works differently in the room. Each room's description explains those effects.

You can decide how long the rooms stay active, depending on how well your players coordinate their actions. A good window is 24 hours, which gives the PCs time to rest before activating the final chamber and facing Belazeel. However, if the players are having a difficult time or the dice just aren't going their way, you can extend that time.

The rooms do not have to be activated in any particular order. When all of the rooms are activated, the magic opens portals in each of the elemental and positive and negative energy chambers. All the portals take the PCs directly to the Basilisk Shroud, which stay open for five minutes. The PCs will have access to the other chambers during the final battle with their enemies and may find clever ways to benefit from the rooms' traits. After the time limit the portals close, the rooms go dormant and their tests reset. To reopen the portals, they must go through all the tests and activation rituals again. Belazeel is confident that the Sorceress will have the power to escape the dungeon once she is free.

## COMPLEX ENCOUNTERS

If you have run the earlier adventures in *Trail of the Apprentice*, you have already GMed several gaming sessions and dozens of encounters. If this campaign arc is your first foray into GMing, the encounters presented here are probably the most complex ones you have run. Don't worry; you're ready. The puzzles, traps, and NPC encounters presented here make use of a lot of rules, but they're all things you've seen before. You can do it.

The planar effects that take place in each room can be great flavor elements. They may not play a role in other parts of the adventure unless the PCs decide to use them to their advantage. It is most likely that players will take advantage of the healing in the positive energy chamber, but the other rooms can help clever players, too. Have fun with the effects and don't worry too much about getting the rules exactly right. The important thing is to keep things descriptive and entertaining, for the players and for you.

### 2C-1. CHAMBER OF SHADOWS (500 XP)

*This entry hall was sealed for millennia. Belazeel and his allies broke the magical seal and stormed in. This room, representing the Plane of Shadow, known to the scholars of Aeva as the Umbral Realms. Although there are no traps in the entryway that pose a threat to the PCs, danger does lurk in this room.*

*This hemispherical room is roughly 60 feet across at its widest point. The walls are decorated in strange and disturbing carvings, depicting a twisted landscape that looks "wrong," somehow. Above you, the ceiling is dark, like a starless night sky. Tendrils of dark gray smoke curl down from the darkness.*

In the center of the room, a circular platform holds a basalt pillar, perhaps 3 feet high. The top of the plinth is carved into the shape of a smooth sphere. Characters that might be letters slither over the sphere's surface.

PCs can make a DC 15 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check to recognize the depictions on the walls as those of the Umbral Realm, the twisted version of the Material Plane that overlaps it.

**Creatures:** A group of 5 darkmantles (SRD) moved into this chamber after Belazeel smashed open the door. They lurk in the magical darkness covering the room's ceiling, hoping to feast on the kobolds or any others who might pass through here, again. When the PCs reach the middle of the room, the darkmantles cast their darkness auras and attack their prey. A DC 10 **Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check identifies the creatures.

### **DARKMANTLE (5)**

*Small monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 22 (5d6 + 5)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

16 (+3)   12 (+1)   13 (+1)   2 (-4)   10 (+0)   0 (-3)

**Skills** Stealth +3

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** --

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Echolocation.** The darkmantle can't use its blindsight while deafened.

**False Appearance.** While the darkmantle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a cave formation such as a stalactite or stalagmite.

### **ACTIONS**

**Crush.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage, and the darkmantle attaches to the target. If the target is Medium or smaller and the darkmantle has advantage on the attack roll, it attaches by engulfing the target's head, and the target is also blinded and unable to breathe while the darkmantle is attached in this way.

While attached to the target, the darkmantle can attack no other creature except the target but has advantage on its attack rolls. The darkmantle's speed also becomes 0, it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed, and it moves with the target.

A creature can detach the darkmantle by making a successful DC 13 Strength check as an action. On its turn, the darkmantle can detach itself from the target by using 5 feet of movement.

**Darkness Aura (1/Day).** A 15 foot radius of magical darkness extends out from the darkmantle, moves with it, and spreads around corners. The darkness lasts as long as the darkmantle maintains concentration, up to 10 minutes (as if concentrating on a spell). Darkvision can't penetrate this darkness, and no natural light can illuminate it. If any of the darkness overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell creating the light is dispelled.

**Activation Ritual:** When the PCs approach the pillar, the swirling symbols on the sphere resolve into writing that, surprisingly, they can all read. The words say, "Give shade to Shadow." In order to activate the focus, the PCs simply need to move a light source so that one or more shadows fall over the sphere. They may even do this by accident. Casting an illusion spell on the sphere works, as well. The sphere is immediately surrounded by shadowy energy and emits a dark gray mist.

**Planar Effect:** When this room's magic is activated, spells that create light are impeded. Any active light spells are cancelled and must be cast again. Additionally, the ranges of natural light sources are halved.

*Magic:* The DC for illusion spells cast here receives a +1 bonus.

**Development:** Unless the PCs manage to avoid fighting the darkmantles or fight them without making any noise, the kobolds in area 2C-2 hear the PCs coming and prepare their defenses. The PCs will have almost no chance of catching the kobolds by surprise unless they leave the dungeon and wait at least an hour before moving into the next room.

## 2C-2. CHAMBER OF THE WORLD (2,900 XP)

*The majority of Belazeel's kobold contingent waits here, guarding against any who might be following the wizard. They might actually be surprised to see the PCs, though the fight with the darkmantles likely tips them off. If the kobold who had been trading with the lizardfolk escaped, she has already informed Garalgek about the adventurers. The PCs don't have to fight the kobolds, and may even be able to learn valuable information from them.*

*A quick glance around the room reveals that the walls are covered with highly detailed murals depicting a verdant forest and rolling green hills. Lifelike animals, most of which you recognize, hide behind tree trunks or graze peacefully on tall grass. A basalt pillar with a spherical top rests in the middle of the room.*

The PCs' investigation of the room is cut short by the short barking warning of the room's small inhabitants.

*Eight kobolds stand guard here. Four of them hold spears and two hold crossbows, all pointed at you. These six are split evenly, with each group standing on either side two more kobolds, one with bright blue scales and the other with red ones. The blue-scaled*

*kobold steps forward.*

*"Who are you? Why are you here?"*

The PCs may be surprised to find that they can understand Garalgek. He warns the PCs not to move and demands to know who they are and why they have come.

**Creatures:** Garalgek's chieftain assigned him and his companions to guide Belazeel to the Heart of Stone and assist the wizard. However, the kobolds are getting tired of waiting for Belazeel and being so close to the strange rooms beyond this one makes them nervous.

Garalgek would normally follow his orders without question and merely attack the PCs, but his interactions with Belazeel and the way the wizard manipulated Garalgek's chieftain make him question the wisdom of following him. He has a bad feeling about the situation and is looking for an alternative. If the PCs can convince him that helping Belazeel is a bad idea, he and his tribesmen will change sides and help the PCs.

The PCs must succeed on a DC 15 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check to get Garalgek and the other kobolds to stand down. They can work together to improve their chances. If they succeed on a DC 20 check, Garalgek becomes friendly and offers to tell them what he knows. The PCs can also try a DC 20 **Charisma (Intimidation)** or trick the kobolds using whatever schemes they can come up with, but the kobolds become hostile later on. It will be harder to intimidate them and the PCs may have to fight them when they are weaker. If the PCs fail the attempt to influence him, Garalgek orders the kobolds to attack.

## GARALGEK, KOBOLD ROGUE

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 18 (studded leather, shield)

**Hit Points** 97 (15d6 + 45)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

18 (+4) 18 (+4) 16 (+3) 10 (+0) 12 (+1) 15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6

**Skills** Athletics +10, Intimidation +5

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Garalgek has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Pack Tactics.** Garalgek has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of Garalgek's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Sneak Attack.** Once per turn, Garalgek deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Garalgek that isn't incapacitated and Garalgek doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Special Gear.** Garalgek wears a *cloak of protection*.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Garalgek makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

**Spear.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. and range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

## KOBOLD SPELLCASTER

Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 38 (7d6 + 14)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

11 (+0) 14 (+2) 14 (+2) 10 (+0) 12 (+1) 15 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)



**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the spellcaster has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Pack Tactics.** The spellcaster has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Spellcasting.** The spellcaster is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The spellcaster has the following Sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *light, prestidigitation, ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *darkness, scorching ray*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The spellcaster makes two melee attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## KOBOLD (6)

*Small humanoid (kobold), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 5 (2d6 - 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

7 (-2)   15 (+2)   9 (-1)   8 (-1)   7 (-2)   8 (-1)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the kobold has disadvantage on attack rolls, as

well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Pack Tactics.** The kobold has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the kobold's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

## ACTIONS

**Longsword Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Activation Ritual:** Just as in the Chamber of Shadow, letters form on the sphere atop the pillar. These letters read, "Give movement to the World." The PCs must spin the sphere, which continues to spin, while giving off a soft, green glow.

**Planar Effect:** When this room's magic is activated, any extraplanar creatures or objects are driven out. Creatures cannot be summoned with magic and previously summoned creatures must attempt a **Wisdom** saving throw (DC 15) to avoid being banished.

**Development:** If the PCs convince the kobolds or trick them into helping, Garalgek tells the PCs what he knows about the dungeon. Belazeel forced him to go into each room to locate and disarm any traps he could, so he has picked up valuable information. He knows that each room has a central focus, which he calls a "magic tower." There are "tests" in some of the rooms to make the focus appear. Even in the rooms where there aren't "tests" there are traps. He tells the PCs they have to do something to each focus in order to activate the magic there.

He didn't see what Belazeel did to all of the towers.

*Chamber of Shadow:* “No tests there. Belazeel just put a candle behind his back to make the magic work.”

*Chamber of the World:* “This one is easy. You just spin the round part.”

*Chamber of the Astral:* “There is no test, here, but there is a trap. Lots of silver wires that can cut you. Belazeel said that using ‘silver strands’ was a funny joke.”

*Chamber of the Ethereal:* “No test here, either. That big fighter found the trap, though. Got punched by an invisible fist. Very funny!”

*Chamber of Negative Energy:* “The man with black eyes’ will ask you a question. If you answer correctly, you can use the magic tower. I didn’t hear Belazeel’s answer, but I saw him put something on the pillar.”

*Chamber of Fire:* “The floor is really hot. Belazeel flew over it, but there may be other ways to cross it.”

*Chamber of Water:* “The blue-skinned woman wants something in exchange for her help. Belazeel gave her a magic ring. He seemed angry.”

*Chamber of Wind:* “You float in this room, but you can think your way to where you want to go. Watch out for the little winged beasts.”

*Chamber of Earth:* “You have to get across the bubbling pool. Belazeel flew over it, but it looked like it was really hard for him. Things melt if they fall into the bubbling pool.”

*Chamber of Positive Energy:* “You have to put the gems in the right place on table. The magic in that room felt good...for a little while.”

*How do we get to Belazeel?* “When all the magic is working, portals open to what he calls ‘the Basilisk Shroud.’ It only stayed open for a little while, though.

Belazeel and the other man went in, but haven’t come out. We were going to stay for a few more days, in case he is still alive and comes back out.

Garalgek won’t go back into the other chambers with the PCs. He and his companions stay in this chamber while the PCs explore. If they are friendly, they might share their food and provide basic healing and guarding duties for them. Overall, the PCs should learn that these kobolds are not evil by nature, but try to follow orders because that’s the best way to keep the peace in their tribe.

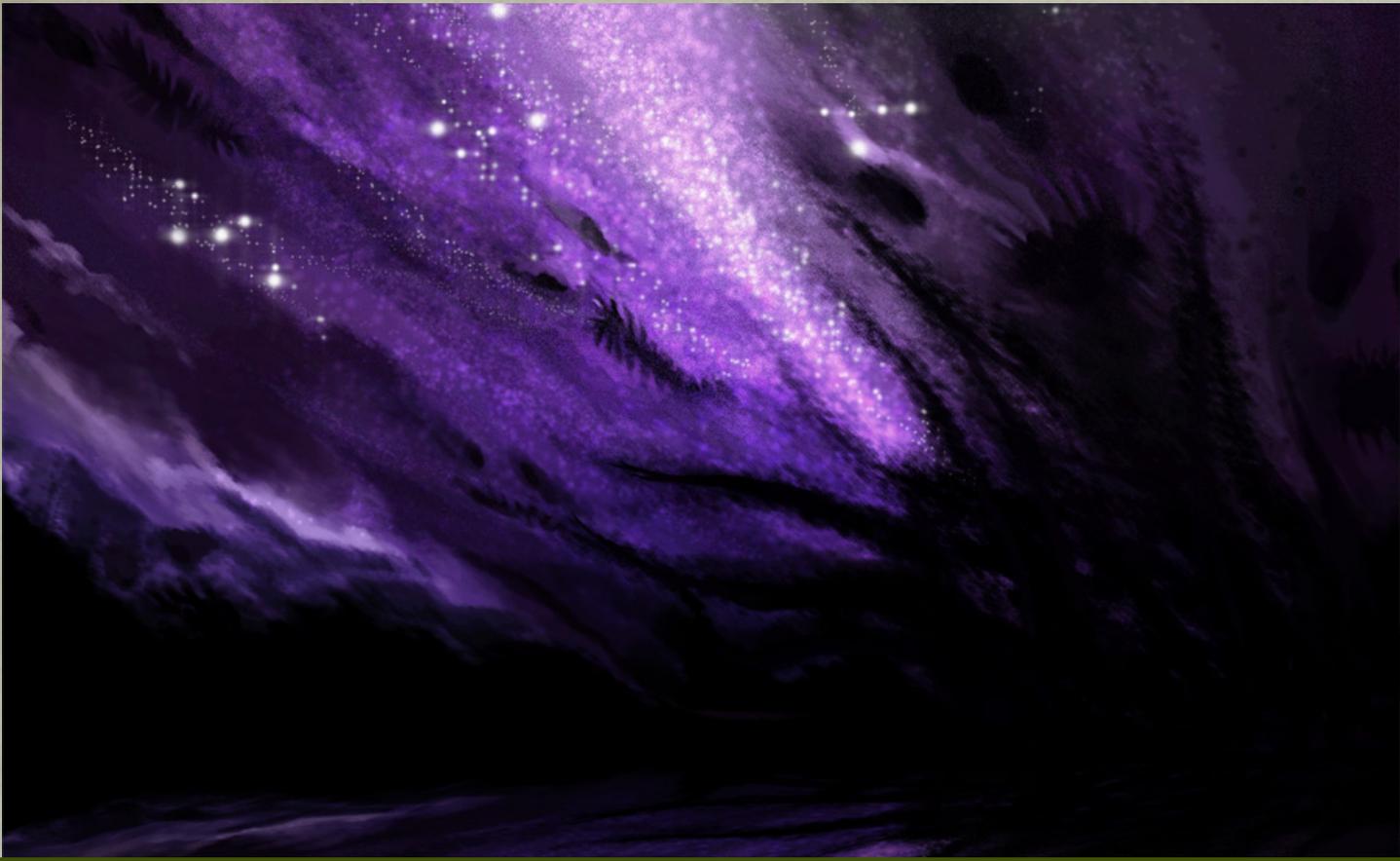
### 2C-3. CHAMBER OF THE ASTRAL (1,800 XP)

This room represents the vast, open space that is the Astral Plane, a realm through which beings usually travel in spirit form.

*This hemispherical chamber is dimly lit by a strange, pale illumination from the walls and floor. Striking purple mists swirl across every surface, above and below you, as though you are looking out into a cloud-filled expanse. Strands of silver stretch from one side of the room to the other, moving and shifting, occasionally touching, but never tangling. The center of the room holds a low platform and a basalt pillar topped with a sphere.*

A DC 10 **Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check confirms that this room is connected with the Astral Plane. The silver strands represent the cords said to connect astral travelers to their bodies, which remain on the Material Plane.

**Trap:** The illusion covering the walls and floor not only provides an amazing view, it also hides the mechanism of this room’s devious trap. Thin grooves cut into the stone allow the silver strands stretched across the room to move in a complex pattern. Anyone stepping more than 5 feet beyond



the chamber's entryway must make a DC 14 **Dexterity** saving throw to avoid tripping on a moving wire and falling onto several others and suffering severe cuts.

Moving through the room requires a DC 15 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. Failure prevents the PC from moving forward. Failure by 5 means the PC must attempt a **Dexterity** saving throw against the trap's effect. PCs who stand still for one round must attempt the **Dexterity** save, as well. Failure on this save results in being cut by 1d4 strands, each dealing 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage.

Each PC who observes the moving wires for one round can attempt a DC 10 **Intelligence** check to notice that they move in a complex pattern. PCs who succeed can anticipate the strands' movements, giving themselves or an ally advantage on **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** checks to move toward the central pillar.

Disarming the trap by cutting the strands is dangerous, because they are under extreme tension and may snap back and slash the one who cut the strand.

**Activation Ritual:** The letters on this pillar form the words: "Give mind to Spirit." Anyone proficient in **Intelligence (Religion)** or **Intelligence (Arcana)** can guess that this phrase relates to meditation. A PC must place her hands on the sphere and meditate for one round to activate the magic, causing the sphere to take on a purple glow, like the clouds in the walls' images.

**Planar Effect:** When this room's magic is activated, age, hunger, thirst, or afflictions (like poisons, curses, or diseases) have no effects. If a creature is affected by one of these when they enter the room, the effect stops, but resumes functioning when the magic is deactivated or the creature leaves the room.

**Magic:** When the magic of this room is activated, spells and magic abilities that normally require an action can be cast as a bonus action, allowing the caster to cast another spell or perform another action in the same round. Spells with casting times of 1 full-round action or longer are unaffected.

**Treasure:** The silver strands are actually crafted of mithral, a very valuable substance. Cutting the strands is very risky, requiring about 24 separate DC 15 **Dexterity** checks (thieves' tools apply), but the gathered strands provide enough mithral wire to create one mithral shirt.

## 2C-4. CHAMBER OF THE ETHEREAL (1,800 XP)

*This room represents the misty realm that coexists with the Material Plane.*

*This chamber's curving wall is covered in a continuous image that gives the impression that you are standing in a large, crystalline dome, through which you can see hazy, indistinct objects like trees, large rocks, and what may be the rectangular shapes of buildings.*

*The center of the room holds a circular platform with another basalt pillar and carved sphere.*

PCs can attempt a DC 10 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check to determine that this room is aligned with the Ethereal Plane.

**Trap:** The first character that steps on the floor within 10 feet of the focus pillar is targeted by a fist made of pure force. The trap makes a ranged spell attack with a +8 bonus, dealing 5d4 force damage on a hit. Additionally, the target must make a DC 10 **Constitution** saving throw or be pushed 10

feet away from the pillar. The trap can be noticed with a DC 18 **Wisdom (Perception)** check and can be disarmed using thieves' tools with a DC 18 **Dexterity** check. The trap resets automatically after 1 minute.

**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere coalesce to form the words, "Give force to Emptiness." Characters can attempt a DC 10 **Intelligence (Arcana or Religion)** to know that objects on the Ethereal Plane can be affected by physical force, as long as the source of that force is on the same plane or in the form of force energy. The PCs must strike the sphere with a hand, weapon, or force spell, like *magic missile*, and deal at least 1 hit point of damage to it. Physical attacks must deal at least 9 points of damage to overcome the stone's damage threshold of 8. When the magic is activated, the sphere takes on the appearance of a clear crystal ball.

**Planar Effect:** Once the room's magic is activated, any creature in or entering the chamber instantly becomes ethereal. This has no effect on combat if both combatants are in the room, but it is difficult to attack targets outside the room or be attacked by them.

**Magic:** While the room's magic is activated, spell effects behave normally when cast on targets in the room with the caster, but only force spells affect non-ethereal targets outside the room, and vice versa.

## 2C-5. CHAMBER OF WIND (1,800 XP)

This chamber is tied to the plane of elemental air.

*This room seems to be completely spherical, except for the narrow ledge that encircles the chamber's equator. The curved walls are the color of a clear, blue sky, and the room is filled with light that seems*

to emanate from the very air, itself. You suddenly feel as though your limbs and equipment are a little lighter.

A tall column rises from the floor to the center of the room. A short pillar with a spherical top rests in the middle of the platform atop the column.

**Puzzle:** Aside from the small area around the edge of the room, there is no gravity here. As soon as they move away from this “ledge”, the PCs begin to float. At first, it seems they have no control over their movements, but any PCs succeeding on a DC 10 **Wisdom** check realize that if they imagine which way is down, they fall in that direction. They must be careful not to get too high, because if they hit the room’s walls, they will take falling damage.

After they realize their situation, PCs can attempt DC 16 **Wisdom** checks, once per turn with no action required, to change the direction again, allowing them to fall in any direction they wish or to walk on whatever surface they desire. If they are clever, the PCs can simply choose to make the sphere’s lower half the ground, then change their perception to allow them to walk up the pillar. However, while they try to figure all of this out, an air elemental attacks them.

**Creatures:** An air elemental is bound to this room. As soon as the PCs leave the ledge, the elemental appears.

PCs affected by the elemental’s whirlwind who have mastered the room’s subjective gravity can attempt a DC 16 **Wisdom** check with disadvantage to change gravity’s direction and prevent the whirlwind from pushing them away.

The elemental fights the PCs until they leave the room or until they activate the room’s focus.

## AIR ELEMENTAL

Large elemental, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 90 (12d10 + 24)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 90 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Auran

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Air Form.** The elemental can enter a hostile creature’s space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Whirlwind (Recharge 4-6):** Each creature in the elemental’s space must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 15 (3d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage and is flung up 20 feet away from the elemental in a random direction and is knocked prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or takes the same damage and be knocked prone. If the saving throw is successful, the target takes half the bludgeoning damage and isn’t flung away or knocked prone.

**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere coalesce to form the words, “Give breath to Air.” The PCs must breathe or somehow blow air onto the sphere. When the focus is activated, the sphere turns misty white, like a pure, bright cloud.

**Planar Effect:** Aside from the subjective gravity, the only noticeable planar effect when the focus is activated is that the air seems fresher and cleaner here.

**Magic:** Spells or spell-like effects that use, manipulate, or create air are enhanced.

### ENHANCED AND IMPEDED MAGIC

Several chambers of the dungeon have qualities similar to the planes they represent. One effect is that certain spells and magical effects are enhanced, while others are impeded.

**Enhanced Magic:** An enhanced spell is treated as if one spell level higher if applicable, or gains +1 to its DC failing that. If neither effect can apply, it is cast as normal.

**Impeded Magic:** In order to cast an impeded spell, the caster must roll 1d20 + their proficiency bonus + their spellcasting ability modifier. The DC for the roll is 10 + the spell’s slot’s level). If the check fails, the spell does not function and the prepared spell or spell slot is lost.

## 2C-6. THE CHAMBER OF NEGATIVE ENERGY (1,800 XP)

This is the chamber associated with the Negative Plane, a place where all life is consumed and destroyed.

*The walls and floor of this chamber are smooth and black, simultaneously giving you the feeling of oppressive closeness and vast emptiness. Your light reaches feebly into the room, revealing a central, circular platform, which appears to be completely bare.*

As the PCs approach the platform, the room’s guardian appears.

*A disc-shaped portal—so black that it almost hurts to look at it—opens in front of you. What appears to be a human man steps out of it. His skin is pale, wrinkled, and dry like parchment stretched over ancient bones. He regards you with solid black eyes, then extends one hand, bidding you to stop. His other hand wields a cruel-looking longsword.*

*“Step no further until you have answered my query.”*

**Creature:** A DC 10 **Intelligence (Religion)** check reveals this creature to be a wraith (SRD), an undead creature sometimes found bound to tombs. Wraiths can drain the life force of their victims, either with their touch or with a strike from the weapon they wield.

### BEORWYN, WRAITH

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 67 (9d8 + 27)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren’t silvered

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Incorporeal Movement.** The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Life Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Create Specter.** The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

**Puzzle:** The wraith asks the PCs to solve a riddle. If they succeed, he will answer 3 questions, then wave his hand to the platform, causing the pillar to rise from the floor. He then disappears. If they fail, he attacks them. Even if they defeat the wraith, the pillar will rise, but they must activate its magic on their own.

**The Riddle:** "A king once demanded that his servant prove his loyalty by choosing to enter one of three rooms. The first room was full of raging fires. In the second room waited dozens of assassins with poisoned blades. The third

room was full of lions who hadn't eaten in years. Which room should the servant have chosen?" The answer is the third room. Lions that haven't eaten in years are a danger to no one.

**Conversing with the Wraith:** The PCs have an opportunity to learn something about Belazeel and the rest of the dungeon. Beorwyn answers truthfully, but may be cryptic in his responses. It is impossible to know exactly what questions the PCs will ask, but you should be able to base your answers on the information presented in the rest of the adventure.



**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere come together to form the phrase, “Give death to Death.” To activate the pillar’s magic, the PCs must cast an *inflict wounds* spell, or pour a vial of poison on the pillar. Belazeel used the poison method. If the PCs befriended or defeated Garalgek, they can get a vial of poison from him. The sphere turns pitch black when activated.

**Hazard:** When the focus pillar is first activated, it emits a pulse of decay. This pulse deals 2d6 points of necrotic damage to all living creatures within 30 feet (DC 14 **Wisdom** saving throw for half damage).

**Planar Effect:** After the pillar is activated, living creatures in the room take 1 point of necrotic damage each round. Conversely, undead creatures gain 2 hit points per round, up to their maximum hit points.

**Magic:** Spells or magic abilities that deal necrotic damage enhanced. Effects that heal or do radiant damage are impeded here.

**Treasure:** If the PCs defeat Beorwyn in combat, he drops his +1 *longsword* before disappearing.

## 2C-7. CHAMBER OF FIRE (1,800 XP)

This chamber is connected to the plane of elemental fire.

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*The domed ceiling of this circular chamber reflects the dull red glow of embers that cover most of the floor. Except for a narrow walkway around the edge and a circular platform in the center of the room, the entire floor is covered with stones and coals that seem to burn with their own internal fire. Occasional goutts of flame erupt from them. The air above the floor shimmers with heat, and the room echoes with hissing and popping sounds.*

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**Hazard:** To reach the activation pillar, the PCs must cross the field of hot coals. The coals are considered difficult terrain (each square counts as 2 squares of movement). Characters simply walking across the coals take 1d6 points of fire damage each round and must make a DC 10 **Dexterity** saving throw to avoid catching on fire. If the character catches on fire, she must make another **Dexterity** save. Failure results in another 1d6 points of damage; the character must continue making saving throws until she succeeds, at which point the fire is out.

PCs can attempt a DC 15 **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check to minimize contact with the coals, which halves the damage taken and grants advantage to the **Dexterity** save. The easiest way to overcome this hazard is to fly, if the PCs have the means to do so.

**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere form the words: “Give fire to Fire.” The PCs must apply some sort of flame to the sphere, which begins to glow bright red. PCs on the platform when the pillar is activated gain immunity to fire for 1 minute.

**Planar Effect:** After the pillar is activated, the temperature in the room suddenly increases to dangerous levels. Individuals in the room automatically take 1 point of fire damage each round, unless they have some kind of protection against fire.

**Magic:** Spells or magic abilities that use, manipulate, or create fire are enhanced in this chamber. Effects that use, manipulate, or create water are impeded here.

## 2C-8. CHAMBER OF WATER (5,400 XP)

This chamber is associated with the plane of elemental water.

The walls and ceiling of this hemispherical room are covered in murals that represent a vast sea, teeming with a variety of aquatic life. With the exception of a narrow ledge around the edge of the room and the circular platform in the center, the rest of the floor is covered with a shallow pool of water.

The water in the pool is only a few inches deep. It doesn't impede movement.

**Puzzle:** When the PCs approach the platform, a giant woman with smooth blue-green skin appears in a burst of water and mist. The woman introduces herself as Amvati, Daughter of the Crashing Waves. She is a water genie, a powerful outsider from the Plane of Water. Like some other genies, water genies are known for their ability to grant wishes. She tells the PCs they must give her magic of great power before she will give them access to the room's pillar.

The PCs have a few choices. They might comply with the request at the risk of losing a potent item against Belazeel. They could try tricking the genie into believing she received a powerful item, but she is very difficult to fool. She finds the first attempt to fool her amusing, but won't have patience for another attempt.

The PCs may come up with an alternative means of placating the genie by speaking with her. For example, they may find out that the genie is trapped in the room and could offer to free the genie from her imprisonment (a binding offer that would compel them to make good on the promise). Amvati can grant one PC a wish, which he might use to free the genie.

**Creature:** Any character proficient in **Intelligence (Arcana)** knows that genies are powerful creatures.

The genie doesn't really want to fight, so if the PCs attack, she summons two water

elementals and then disperses her form into the water in the chamber, remaining that way until the PCs conclude their business and leave.

## **WATER ELEMENTAL (2)**

*Large elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 114 (12d10 + 48)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious



**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Aquan

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Water Form.** The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Freeze.** If the elemental takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Whelm (Recharge 4–6).** Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If it is Large or smaller, it is also grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the elemental's space.

The elemental can grapple one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at one time. At the start of each of the elemental's turns, each target grappled by it takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. A creature within 5 feet of the elemental can pull a creature or object out of it by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength and succeeding.

**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere form the phrase: "Give water to Water." The PCs need only scoop up the water from the pool and pour it over the sphere. It will begin to emit a deep blue light.

**Planar Effect:** The room doesn't fill with water or anything else dangerous, but natural fires are immediately extinguished and any creatures

made of fire take 1d6 points of damage each round they are in the room.

**Magic:** Spells or magic abilities that use, manipulate, or create water are enhanced in this chamber. Effects that use, manipulate, or create fire are impeded here.

## 2C-9. CHAMBER OF EARTH (CR 6; 2,400 XP)

*This room is connected to the plane of elemental earth.*

*The walls and ceiling of this hemispherical room appear to be roughly hewn from the bedrock of the world. You suddenly feel as though your limbs and equipment are a little heavier.*

*With the exception of a narrow ledge around the edge of the room and the circular platform in the center, the rest of the floor is covered with a shallow pool. The greenish liquid in the pool occasionally bubbles and hisses, filling the air with a sour smell. Small, flat stones dot the surface of the pool. A pillar with a spherical top rests in the middle of the room's central platform.*

**Puzzle:** The PCs must cross the acid pool to reach the center of the room. However, gravity in this room is stronger than usual. Characters jumping from one platform to another have disadvantage on **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** checks. PCs with the ability to fly must make DC 10 **Dexterity** checks to avoid falling.

The acid is several inches deep. Characters who fail any of the above checks make no progress and come in contact with the acid, taking 1d6 points of acid damage (DC 10 Dexterity saving throw for half). Characters who fail a check by more than 5 actually fall into the acid and take 5d6 points of damage per round.

Anyone in a square adjacent to the acid must roll a DC 10 **Constitution** saving throw or take 2 points of damage each round, unless they are immune to poison or acid. Affected creatures are safe as soon as they move away from the acid.

The PCs can make this task easier by fashioning bridges or carrying stones from outside the dungeon to fill in gaps between the stepping stones.

**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere form the phrase: “Give earth to Earth.” Placing rock, dirt, metal, crystal, or acid on the sphere activates the room’s magic. The platform is covered in a fine layer of dirt, which can be sprinkled onto the sphere, which magically absorbs the material or object. Otherwise, the PCs will probably have to use something they are carrying. When the focus is activated the sphere turns a deep, rich brown color.

**Planar Effect:** After the focus is activated, the air here becomes heavy. Air-breathing creatures must attempt a DC 10 **Constitution** saving throw or find that they are unable to breathe, as though they were suddenly buried alive. Affected creatures can hold their breath for one minute, plus a number of minutes equal to their Constitution modifier, but must exit the room before they begin to suffocate. When their breath runs out, they can take no more actions or movement, but the creature can survive an amount of rounds equal to their Constitution modifier. At the beginning of their next turn, they drop to 0 hit points and begin dying.

**Magic:** Spells or magic abilities that use, manipulate, or create earth are enhanced in this chamber. Effects that use, manipulate, or create air are impeded here.

## 2C-10. CHAMBER OF POSITIVE ENERGY (CR 4; 1,600 XP)

This chamber is connected with the Positive Plane, a vibrant plane filled with the very energy of life and abundance.

*The walls of this hemispherical room are covered in a latticework of channels and rivulets. Golden energy seems to course and flow through these rivulets, casting the entire room in a warm glow. At the center of the room, there is a slightly elevated platform, with a rectangular pillar or table on one side. Something atop the table glitters and sparkles in the light of the room.*

**Puzzle:** A diagram engraved on top of the stone table forms the shape of the dungeon. Depressions at each node of the diagram are meant to hold gems. Ten spherical crystals rest in a line of depressions below the diagram. The PCs must place the correct crystal in niches corresponding to the node’s elemental nature. Players may remember that each time they activated one of the other foci, the sphere for that room changed or emitted a certain color (see the table below). This is a clue for where to place the gems. When all of the crystals are in their proper places on the diagram, the focus pillar for this chamber rises from the center of the platform.

PLANE	CRYSTAL
Shadow	Smoky Gray
Material	Green
Astral	Purple
Ethereal	Clear
Negative	Black
Earth	Brown
Air	White
Water	Blue
Fire	Red
Positive	Gold



**Activation Ritual:** The symbols on the sphere form glowing golden words: “Give life to Life.” The PCs must cast a *cure wounds* spell, expend a use of Channel Divinity, or pour a *potion of healing* on the sphere. Alternatively, a PC can use a blade to deal 1 point of damage to her hand and place her own blood on the sphere. When activated, the sphere shines with a brilliant, golden light.

**Planar Effect:** When the magic in this room is activated, it becomes charged with positive energy and grows in power. Living creatures in the room immediately receive 3d8 points of healing and gain 2 hp per round spent in the room. Living creatures in the room automatically feel the energy in the room increasing and can make a DC 12 **Wisdom** check to realize that conditions might become dangerous before long.

After the first minute, the energy intensifies. Creatures in the room take 5 (2d4) radiant damage per round.

**Magic:** Spells or magic abilities that use, manipulate, or create healing or radiant damage are enhanced in this chamber. Effects that use, manipulate, or create necrotic damage are impeded here.

### 2C-11. THE BASILISK SHROUD (5,900 XP)

When the PCs activate the final chamber’s focus, a portal opens in each of the dungeon’s “energy” rooms (earth, air, fire, water, positive, and negative). The edges of each portal are the same color as that room’s activated sphere, surrounding what appears to be an opening into a short hallway leading to a larger chamber beyond. The PCs have at last reached the dungeon’s final chamber, where Belazeel is about to release the Sorceress from her prison.

**Interlude:** As the PCs pass into the Basilisk Shroud, they may be caught briefly within a temporal distortion. If the PCs are in bad shape, you can use this sudden twisting of time and space

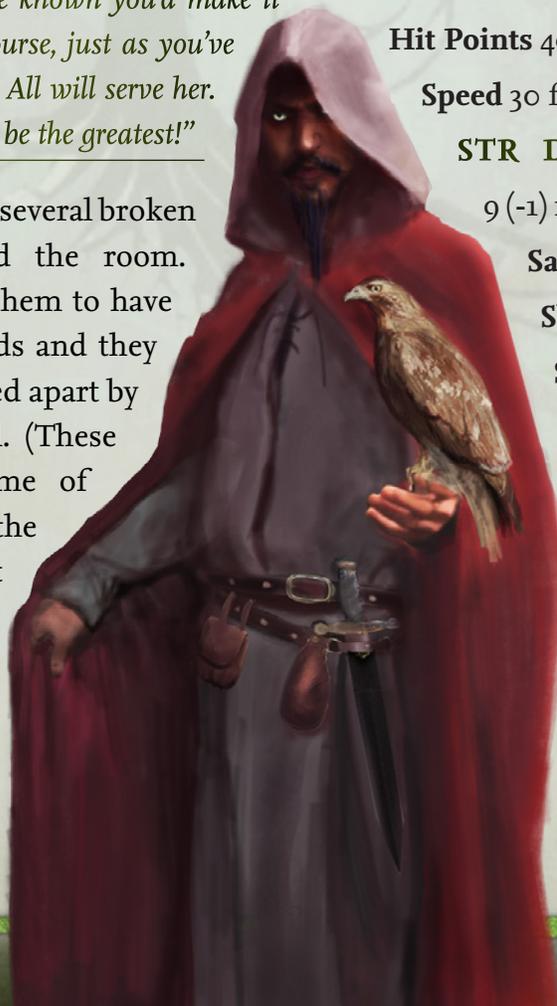
to help give them a boost before the final battle. While in this distortion, the PCs gain the benefits of a long rest in the blink of an eye. However, this does not remove penalties from poisons, energy drain, or other ongoing effects. However, any spells or effects the PCs used to prepare for the coming battle are still in effect, as though they had been restored and expended again.

*This room is decorated with a snake motif, including four fang-like statues that erupt from the ground around a central dais. On the dais stands a figure in black and gray robes. An armed warrior stands nearby. Behind that figure, you recognize the forms of the Green and White Serpent statues, but the two statues appear to have been twisted together to form a cylinder. Incredibly, the statues have also grown. In fact, as you watch, they continue to grow, reaching a height of ten feet or more.*

*The robed figure turns toward you and pulls back his hood, revealing a man with a black beard and eyes that glow with some intense power.*

*“Resourceful. I should have known you’d make it this far. You’re too late, of course, just as you’ve always been. She will be free! All will serve her. And of all her servants, I will be the greatest!”*

The PCs may also notice several broken statues scattered around the room. Close inspection reveals them to have been statues of humanoids and they appear to have been blasted apart by something very powerful. (These are the remains of some of the heroes who battled the Sorceress in the attempt to imprison her eons ago. Ultimately, the forces of good prevailed, but many brave souls were lost that day.)



As the PCs arrive, the magic drawing the Sorceress into the world is already at work. The PCs can parley or jump right into a battle with the wizard and his henchman. While the rest of the action takes place, however, the PCs can see the gigantic serpent statues begin to uncoil, letting brilliant white light escape from between them.

**Creatures:** When portals into the Basilisk Shroud open, Belazeel immediately casts a *fly* spell on himself. At the start of battle, he casts *false life* on himself, then casts *conjure minor elementals* to summon an azer. During the rest of the battle, he flies around the room using his spells to blast his enemies.

Jubal is a skilled warrior who uses nimbleness to attack and move back out of range of his opponents, when he can.

### **BELAZEEL, HUMAN WIZARD**

Medium humanoid (human), Neutral Evil

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with mage armor)

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

9 (-1) 14 (+2) 11 (+0) 17 (+3) 12 (+1) 11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Infernal

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Spellcasting.** Belazeel is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *false life, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *blink, lightning bolt, fly*

4th level (1 slot): *conjure minor elementals*

## ACTIONS

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + piercing damage).*

## JUBAL

*Medium humanoid (human), Neutral Evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (plate)

**Hit Points** 65 (14d8 + 28)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +5, Perception +2

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Challenge** 4 (1,800 XP)

**Nimble.** When Jubal hits a foe with a melee attack, that foe may not make opportunity attacks against Jubal this turn.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Jubal makes two warhammer attacks. If he has a shortsword drawn, he can also make a shortsword attack.

**Silvermane's Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.*

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.*

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.*

## REACTIONS

**Quick Dodge.** After Jubal is hit with a melee attack, he may move 5 feet. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

## AZER

*Medium elemental, lawful neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 39 (6d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Saving Throws** Con +4

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Ignan

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Heated Body.** A creature that touches the azer or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

**Heated Weapons.** When the azer hits with a metal melee weapon, it deals an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage (included in the attack).

**Illumination.** The azer sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

## ACTIONS

**Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 3 (1d6) fire damage.*

**Development:** Three rounds after the fighting starts, or sooner if Belazeel is near death, The Sorceress finally escapes from her prison. Read the following on Belazeel's turn.

*The serpent statue column separates completely and the two snakes rise upward, then into tight coils on either side of a brilliant column of white light. They instantly solidify and remain still. A dark form moves within the column of light.*

*Belazeel moves to the dais and kneels, raising his hands and face toward her in glorious rapture. "Welcome, Mistress! May you reign..." His words are cut off by a scream which ends in a rasping sound as his flesh suddenly turns to stone.*

*Beyond him, the dark figure steps forward, revealing a tall woman with very pale skin, wearing a plain white gown. The woman's most striking feature, however, is the mass of writhing snakes atop her head. All of the serpents' heads turn, matching their mistress's intensity as she looks upon you with utter disdain.*

*"So. Now that I am at last free, will you serve the Sorceress, or will you die?"*

The players should recognize that the Sorceress is a medusa, or something like one, at least. A DC 15 **Intelligence (history or nature)** identifies the basic powers she might possess, although they already know that she can turn victims to stone. In the meantime, they must decide how to deal with her.

Jubal immediately pledges his loyalty to her. He doesn't want to suffer the same fate as his former master. The Sorceress merely smiles and bids him to kneel. She then turns to the PCs and awaits their answer. If they refuse, she orders Jubal to attack the PCs, then enters the fight, blasting the PCs with force bolts and targeting them with her petrifying gaze.

While she fights, she threatens the PCs, saying things like:

"You cannot defeat me. Even after countless years of imprisonment, my power is mighty!"

"You should have surrendered when you could. Now, you will meet your end!"

"I will crush you, then I will take my rightful place as ruler of this world!"

## THE SORCERESS

*Medium monstrosity, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 127 (17d8 + 51)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Infernal, Sylvan

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Petrifying Gaze.** When a creature that can see the Sorceress's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the Sorceress, the Sorceress can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if the medusa isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the medusa until the start of its next turn, when

it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the Sorceress in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

If the Sorceress sees herself reflected on a polished surface within 30 feet of it and in an area of bright light, the Sorceress is, due to her curse, affected by her own gaze.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Sorceress makes either three melee attacks—one with her snake hair and two with her force dagger—or two ranged attacks with her force bolts.

**Snake Hair.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

**Force Dagger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) force damage.

**Force Bolts.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d8 + 2) force damage

The Sorceress is prideful and overconfident. Her eons of imprisonment have weakened her, temporarily robbing her of any spellcasting abilities and leaving her only with the innate magical attacks her unique form grants her. The PCs have a chance to defeat her now, but if they fail she will soon regain her full strength and pose a serious threat to Threll.

**Treasure:** Among the villainous Belazeel's belongings is a scroll made of black parchment. It is inscribed with runes and symbols in a strange, greenish-silver ink. This is the *Black Scroll*, which Belazeel took from Lanimar Academy many years ago. Using the scroll allows a spellcaster to contact vile creatures from another reality. However, these creatures may or may not be interested in helping the spellcaster. The Academy will pay 3,000 gp as a reward for returning the scroll to their archives, where they promise to keep it under better security.



## NEW MAGIC ITEM: ORB OF KNOWLEDGE

### ORB OF KNOWLEDGE

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

This 4-inch diameter sphere appears to be made of opal or a similar iridescent gemstone. The sphere contains knowledge once possessed by great spellcasters from another world. The sphere can be used three times per day as a *pearl of power*. Additionally, three times per day, the user can hold the sphere and concentrate for 1 round to gain advantage on a single **Intelligence (Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion)** skill check.

In addition to the equipment carried by Belazeel and Jubal, which survives the Sorceress's petrifying gaze, this chamber holds other items of valuable. A number of weapons and magic items are tucked into niches around the room, treasures that once belonged to ancient heroes from a lost world. The PCs find a *+1 shortbow*, a *+1 longsword*, an *orb of knowledge* (see sidebar), a suit of *+1 studded leather armor*, and a *staff of healing* (fully charged). They also find a small chest containing 1,500gp in gems.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the characters succeed in defeating Belazeel and the Sorceress, the portals leading out of the Basilisk Shroud solidify into permanent tunnels—there is no longer a need to keep the chamber locked away from the multiverse. If Jubal survives the battle, he surrenders to the PCs, who can turn him over to Threllish authorities when they return to the surface.

If they didn't kill the kobolds, Garalgek and his cohorts are impressed by the PCs' abilities. They allow the heroes to pass and return to the surface world. In fact, Garalgek offers to escort them back to the Winding Way before he and the other kobolds go back to their tribe.

When the Sorceress falls, the two serpent statues return to their original shape and size. The PCs can take the White Serpent back to Lord-Mayor Samuel Wolfe in Port Fairglade, and the Green Serpent, to the sage Ithamar Ruggles in Corbin. The leaders in both towns will want to know the details of their adventures. They or other contacts the PCs have made over the course of their adventures may have other missions for them, once they have had time to recover.

## CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

Although *The Wizard's Dungeon* is the conclusion of the *Trail of the Apprentice* story, there are a number of options if the GM and players wish to continue the campaign based on the events of this story.

With the death of Kezzere and without Belazeel around stirring things up, life in the Winding Way settles back into relative peace for a while. However, the disruptions caused by Belazeel's presence and the activation of the ancient magic at the Heart of Stone could have unforeseen consequences. More trouble may be brewing in the depths of the Shadescar Rift.

If the PCs helped the svirfneblin against the lizardfolk, the Speaker of Stones can contact the heroes in their dreams to tell them of dangers rising within the dark tunnels of Kimmeros.

The PCs can quickly learn that the *Black Scroll* actually belonged to Lanimar Academy and may want to return the item. If they don't, word might get around that they have recovered the item. The Academy contacts the PCs and offers a reward for returning it. However, other forces in Threll would like to get their hands on the scroll for more nefarious reasons, and their offers won't be nearly as polite.

If the PCs research the Silvermane signet ring and *Silvermane's hammer*, they can return the items to Sven Silvermane and his family. This might lead them off on a quest to discover what happened to Parif Kinslayer after he entered the Shadescar Rift. Was he transported to another realm? Did the strange magic of the Rift alter him in some way? If he is somehow still alive, has he allied himself with other dark forces to enact plans against Threll?

If the victorious PCs weren't already members of the Zekerian Order, word of their bravery soon reaches the Order's ears. The PCs may receive offers of membership—and the future missions that go along with that membership. The kingdom always needs heroes who are willing to risk great danger to stop evil and protect the innocent.

If the Sorceress escapes, it is likely that the PCs won't be around to find out what happens. However, other adventurers will soon discover that another dark power has entered the world. Monster attacks from within the Shadescar Rift will increase as the Sorceress gathers new minions and learns what she can about the world into which she has awakened. The schemes she sets in motion could be the source of an entirely new campaign.



PART 5: THE WIZARD'S DUNGEON





*I'm just saying we could have stayed at that tavern a little longer. The tower hasn't collapsed after three hundred years. It probably won't topple over today."*

*Suren heaved a sigh. "We're on a mission to explore the tower, Molly, not to sample every fruit pie in Southern Threll."*

*"Who says we can't have more than one mission?"*

*Breaking the treeline, the company halted. The sight before them shoved aside all thoughts of blueberry pie.*

*The immense tower thrust upward, its spiraling walls nearly disappearing in the clouds above. The lower floors, which should have served to support the weight of everything above, had been ripped open by some terrible force.*

*"Incredible," breathed Tyrea. "The power holding everything together—who could have built this? And why?"*

*"Maybe we'll find out," said Suren. The alchemist reached up to place a hand on her friend's shoulder. "That is, after all, why we're here." She moved past the elf, carefully choosing her footing on the rocky path. The others followed.*

*Molly stole an upward glance at the tower. "I wonder if we'll find any good recipes in there." The red-haired fighter balked at Suren's disapproving glare.*

*"What? Even ancient spellcasters had to eat, didn't they?"*

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: TERRALLIEN GAZETTEER

### INTRODUCTION

Terrallien is a land both old and new. The kingdom of Threll is less than 150 years old, established after only a few centuries of settlement on the continent. The lands beyond Threll's borders are strange and filled with hostile creatures, some totally new to the world of Aeva. Their presence is even stranger because, until 1,500 years ago, a thriving civilization spread across the continent. But a terrible disaster befell those lands. Settlers have found new places to build their homes, but they do so in the shadows of broken monuments and ancient ruins with no ties to the people who once lived here.

Determined to set the course of their own destinies, the people of Threll draw on the rich resources of this new land and build a new civilization to replace the old one. Along the way, they uncover mysteries and face many dangers. They are aided by heroes from all walks of life. Some of those heroes take up the life of adventurers, seeking glory, treasure, and clues to help them understand what really happened to the lands they now call home.

### CHARACTERS

The people of Threll are descended from colonists who came from many different places to settle these lands. Although colonists came into conflict with one another in the past, they were eventually united under one government. Their shared history of struggle to survive and build safe homes where they and their families can prosper helped Threll become the strong nation it is, today.

### RACES

The world of Aeva hosts numerous races, but those who settle the world's cities—or take up life as adventurers—usually come from a smaller group.

**Humans:** Humans are the most common of all the world's races. As on other worlds, Aeva's humans are ambitious and resourceful, traits that helped them gain prominence, despite their shorter lifespans. Most of the colonists who first settled Threll were humans. Though many other races are now citizens of the kingdom, humans still make up the majority of Threll's population.

Humans often become adventurers to satisfy their passion for gold, glory, and knowledge, but also because of an innate need to face and overcome great challenges, either alone or as part of a group.

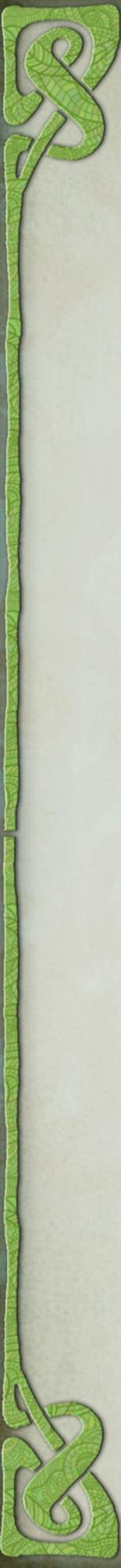
**Halflings:** Halflings are not as common as humans, but are part of most Threllish communities. Halflings share a similar outlook with humans, though halflings are feistier and tend more toward optimism. Larger towns and cities usually host halfling communities, called “bantam towns,” where they can build homes, shops, and other necessities suited to their smaller stature. There even are some rural towns and villages built and populated almost entirely by halflings.

Halflings often become adventurers out of simple curiosity. They appreciate the fine things that a dragon's hoard can buy, but also love the idea of being able to tell the tale of how that wealth was acquired.

**Dwarves:** Aevan dwarves are not as numerous as humans or halflings, but they are widespread. The dwarves were once part of a single empire ruled by a supreme sovereign, the Grand



APPENDIX 1: THE LAND OF TERRALLIEN



Emperor, also called the Son of Mountains. The Dwarven Empire covered huge areas of Kimmeros, the Aevan underworld. Centuries of political infighting and the constant pressure of subterranean threats eventually shattered the empire. Seeking new opportunities and a reprieve from constant fighting with orcs and other monsters, whole communities of dwarves left their underground homes and settled lands near the surface-dwelling races. Being long-lived and stubborn, however, these dwarves maintained most of the traditions of their Kimmerosian kin.

Dwarven adventurers often seek wealth and power with which they can influence the politics in their home communities. Some dwarves look for ways to restore the fractured Empire to its former glory, either with magical strength or by building a reputation that draws like-minded warriors to them.

**Elves:** The elves of Aeva are descendants of a race of beings who came from beyond the stars and ruled the entire planet before the time of humankind. Eventually, however, that race moved on to other worlds. They left behind scattered outposts of elves who cared for the primal forests and other biomes where they lived. Their long lifespans allowed them to develop keen understanding of the processes of nature and magic, but gave them a perspective on life that makes it difficult for them to other races.

Adventuring elves seek some greater knowledge of the world, either by visiting a place unlike any they have been or by exploring places similar to their homelands. Elves who settle in Threll are curious about the lands of Terrallien. They are fascinated by the continent's strangeness and also by the

tenacity of the “younger races” as they try to build lives here.

**Other Races:** There are many other races on the world of Aeva. Gnomes, with their connection to the world of Faerie, are sometimes seen among the people of Threll. For some reason, Threllish families seem to have more aasimars, tieflings, and other children born with influences from other planes, though such occurrences are still very rare. People traveling across the kingdom may encounter other, even more unusual races. Having originally come from all over the world and needing to rely on each other for survival, the Threllish are usually willing to accept those who might be seen as odd or strange, unless the stranger is threatening or dangerous to be around.

## CLASSES

Adventurers and other folk around the world have learned to harness many different abilities and use them to overcome incredible challenges.

**Clerics:** In Threll, most clerics serve one of the “true gods.” These entities are divided into three “spheres”—Celestial, Terrestrial, and Mortal—and represent different aspects of life and reality. Clerics go on adventures to help share the power and wisdom of their deity, teach others about their faith, and fight their deity's enemies. Evil clerics, however, serve powerful forces—Arch Devils, Demonic or Daemonic Lords, or other beings that, while not truly gods, can grant worshippers the power to spread their evil in the world.

**Fighters:** Whether leading troops in the Royal Army, serving as elite members of the city guard, or hunting monsters and treasure

in the wilds, fighters fill an important role in Threll. Their combat skills and familiarity with a variety of weapons and tactics make them valuable. Traditions of combat prowess and battle readiness are strong in the kingdom, harkening back to the colonies' earliest days when warlords protected their lands from dangerous monsters, bandits, and the forces of other warlords.

**Rogues:** Rogues are often viewed with distrust and not without good reason. Skilled rogues certainly can take up jobs as pickpockets, burglars, and smugglers, and they number among the ranks of many gangs and thieves' guilds. But many rogues put their abilities to better use, sneaking into dangerous lairs and ancient ruins, disarming nefarious traps, and even using their knowledge to outwit other rogues.

**Wizards:** The study of the arcane is a time-honored pursuit, and not all wizards are confined to libraries. The colonists who first came to Terrallien brought wizards whose magic and knowledge helped them deal with the challenges of building communities in uncharted lands. Since then, wizards have continued to gather lore, explore mysteries of the universe, and imbue objects with extraordinary properties. After completing their apprenticeship, many young wizards leave their masters and lead an adventuring life, hoping to find new secrets and puzzles to solve before they settle down and take on apprentices of their own.

**Barbarians:** Threllish barbarians take their lessons from the traditions of warrior people from around the world. Though others might expect them to be uncultured brutes, barbarians in Terrallien can be quite comfortable in

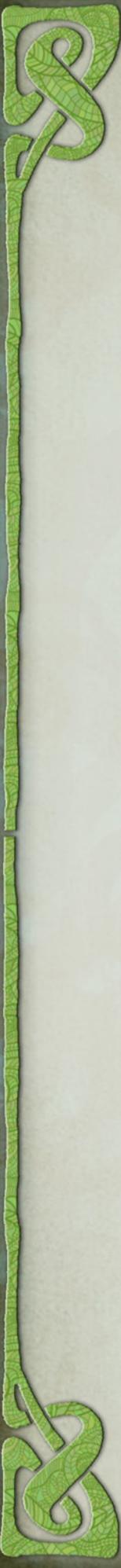
civilized society. These warriors have simply learned to harness the power of their inner rage to accomplish great deeds. Barbarians often become adventurers, however, because they do feel more comfortable away from towns and cities, where they can fully unleash their fury upon worthy foes.

**Alchemists, Gunslingers, Witches, and Others:** Though they aren't as common, many other classes appear in Threll. Alchemists live in most large towns and cities, crafting bizarre objects and materials to assist, delight, and amaze. Gunslingers are relatively new to the world, but their daring and skill with firearms make them valuable allies against the forces of darkness.

Witches are often distrusted because they are sometimes associated with hags, who have done great harm to Threll in the past. Although the true source of a witch's power is strange and mysterious, those who use those powers to do good can be a great help to Threll's people.

## LANGUAGES

Threll's history of colonization, trade, and exploration exposed its citizens to many languages. Everyone in Threll speaks the Common tongue, even if they do so with an accent. Dwarves and elves have their own languages, as do halflings, though they rarely use it anymore. Scholars also learn the languages spoken by the creatures of other planes. In general, characters can speak any language found in the *5e Core Rules*, as well as languages from other sources, as allowed by the GM. Future products for the *Terrallien* setting may introduce other languages, as well.



## HISTORY

Terrallien's history is not long, but the roots of the tale run into the distant past. Understanding the past may give clues to the present, but such understanding only highlights how strange the continent is. The search for answers about what happened here many centuries ago is what drives many explorers and scholars, both native-born Threllish ones and those from across the sea.

Although the world's ancient past is full of noteworthy events, Threllish history really began in 2398 by Orthodox Reckoning (OR), when the continent was still known as Ilsgardien and dominated by the nation of Virloria. The Virlorien people were prosperous and powerful. They traded with all the nations of the Malnovari Empire and beyond, exchanging advanced magic and technology with the world. However, in the spring of that year, trade ships bound for Virlorien ports returned home with their cargo, reporting that they had encountered a terrible mist as they approached land. The ships sailed on, but never found their ports of call. Some ships disappeared completely. In the weeks and months that followed, many speculated on what happened to the Virloriens, but no answers ever came.

Over the next thousand years, brave adventurers mounted expeditions to find and explore lost Ilsgardien, but none succeeded. None, that is, until the expedition of 3429 OR. Abigail Rowland, the sea captain who led that expedition, found a pristine land, full of natural resources. She reported encountering strange monsters, some familiar and others unlike anything ever seen on Aeva. Her team explored the continent for

several days before retreating to their ships and returning home with artifacts that bore no connection to Virloria or any other known civilization that existed on Ilsgardien. As far as anyone could tell, the entire continent was completely changed. Scholars renamed the continent "Terrallien."

Sadly, Captain Rowland died on her second expedition to Terrallien, but over the next hundred years many followed in her wake. In 3684 OR, approximately 300 settlers from northern Malnovaria arrived on Terrallien's shores, led by Sir Devon Freemantle, seeking the chance to start new lives in untamed lands. They built homes on the shores of Elverin Bay and, against all odds, they survived the first winter. With Spring came construction of stronger homes and defenses against marauding beasts, as well as ships with more settlers who had learned of the colony's initial success. Soon after, all the kings and queens of Malnovaria sought the Emperor's permission to claim territory and grant land to their subjects.

The Emperor commissioned surveyors to explore the Terrallien continent and within a decade, they reached the edges of what would eventually become Threll. Although the lands in eastern Terrallien were harsh, settlers quickly learned that the territory beyond the Westwatch Mountains were even more dangerous. The Emperor could grant his subjects the rights to land all over the continent, but the colonists realized there were some claims they could not hold.

A famous lesson on the folly of trying to hold land beyond the mountains is the tale of Ellisam. Established as a fiefdom ruled by Lady Mari Stuart and her brother, Davi the

Younger, the colony rested at the western mouth of a pass through the Sunstone Peaks. The siblings fought constantly, both against encroaching monsters and against each other. Their rivalry became so fierce that they spent more time scheming than they did securing their lands. They failed to recognize the signs of impending danger and were completely unprepared when a horde of nightmarish creatures attacked from Darkvale Forest. Great warriors went to Ellisam's defense, but Ellisam Keep fell to the raiders. Many believe that the heroes' magical weapons and armor still lie there, but none have yet dared to cross the mountains and enter the keep for fear of awakening whatever creatures still dwell within.

Over time, colonies east of the mountains came to be led by Governor Generals, warlords who raised armies for defense and trained militias to fight. Unable to expand their territories further west, colonists drew upon old grudges and lingering homeland pride to spark border conflicts and territorial disputes and steal land from other colonies. The governments under the Malnovari Empire played the colonies against one another while profiting from the fighting.

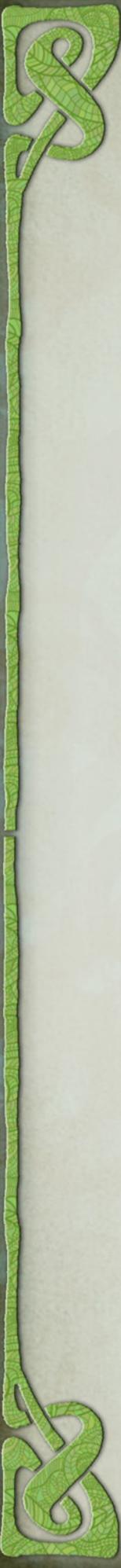
Eventually, however, through alliances or conquest, the many colonies coalesced into a few large regions. Governor General Salathiel Hearn, leader of Threll, rose above the others. Skilled in both war and politics, he controlled the other governors' ambitions, established the Threllish Compact, and pushed back against Imperial meddling. Previously content to let the governors fight among themselves while continuing to conduct trade and send wealth back "home," the Malnovari Emperor realized

that the establishment of a strong, centralized colonial government could keep him from exploiting Terrallien's resources. In 3834 OR, he began preparing to send forces west to reestablish imperial rule. Those preparations never came to fruition.

On the first dawn of 3835 OR, people around the world awoke to two suns rising in the sky. The suns lit the world both day and night for months before both finally set at nightfall on the Summer Solstice. Scholars have yet to explain what caused the event, but history would mark "Two Suns" as a bad omen in Malnovaria. By 3836, major calamities struck nearly every nation in the empire. Earthquakes, freak storms, monster attacks, and stranger phenomena shook the foundations of society across the continent. Terrallien, however, was unaffected, even as worse disaster struck.

In 3838 OR, sailors on their way to Malnovaria encountered a ship full of dead sailors and passengers. Documents found onboard reported that a horrific plague had devastated the empire. The colonial ship's cleric sent word, telling the mainland about their find, but the ship and crew were never heard from again. Travel from Malnovaria dwindled to almost nothing, and the colonists established a strict quarantine system and called on Losinia's clerics to protect them from the plague.

The colonies received no visitors from the empire for two years. Lady Governor Isobel Claybourne, who had succeeded General Hearn as leader of the colonies, announced that the Imperial government was defunct or dead and declared herself Isobel I, Queen Regnant of Threll. She affirmed the Threllish colonial capital of Solaerin as the seat of



power for the new nation and kept the other Governor Generals in place. With a single edict and a negligible amount of resistance from within, Threll established independence from Malnovaria.

It wasn't until 3875 OR that ships from the east appeared off the coast of Threll. After a period of quarantine, they were permitted to enter port. Sailors reported that the plague that ravaged the empire had subsided, but nations once united under imperial rule were at war. No Malnovarian government had the resources to claim dominion over the former colonies, so King Cyrus I declared that Threll would never again submit to the rule of any nation of Malnovaria and would remain a fully autonomous state in perpetuity.

Today, in 3987 OR, after over 100 years of independence, Threll is a thriving kingdom standing on the threshold of a great continent, but prevented from expanding there by dangerous monsters and ancient, terrible secrets. The current king, Ambrose I, must deal with the usual political challenges, but has begun seeking brave heroes who can revive the spirit of adventure once shared by the explorers who opened Terrallien half a millennium ago. In the meantime, there are secrets and treasures to be uncovered within Threll's borders, for those with the wit and strength to explore the mysterious ruins scattered across the land and survive the dangers inside them.

## GEOGRAPHY

The Kingdom of Threll lies at the eastern edge of the Terrallien continent, on the coast of the Estenian Ocean. Stretching over three hundred miles inland at its widest point, and about 800 miles from north to south, the terrain features fertile tidelands, coastal plains

with rolling hills, mostly-navigable rivers, dense forests, and swamps and marshes. The weather is mild for most of the year, with long growing seasons, though summers tend to be hot and humid. Winters bring occasional snow, but usually only in the northern and western parts of the country.

Even though Threll is a small country, there are still far too many places within its border to describe all of them in a few short pages. The adventures in this book give information about some important places in Threll, but the sections that follow will tell you a little more about this young nation, as well as a few of the people and things you can find there.

## NORTHERN TURELL

Threll's northern border is roughly defined by the Northern Wall mountains in the west and by the Syvithian and Silversheen Rivers in the east. The crown claims all of Pegasus Bay as Threllish territory, although this is disputed by the faerie court in the Feyweald, which extends its protection to the aquatic fey living in the bay. This region's western border is defined by the Sunstone Peaks and its southern edge is marked by the northern shore of the Thurm River, which flows down to the mouth of Elverin Bay.

Northern Threllish folk rely on Elverin Bay for much of their livelihood. The bay provides a bounty of fish and other seafood. It also serves as a major thoroughfare for ships moving up the Lashelenite and Imlenite Rivers. The lands around these important rivers are generally flat with rich soil. Farmers grow a wide variety of crops and raise sheep and cattle.

**Solaerin:** Threll's capital city stretches inland from the northern shore of the Lashelenite

River, in the middle of a wide bend it makes toward the south. Solaerin is a bustling city, with a population of over 20,000 people. The royal palace dominates the city's center and serves as the home of the current ruler, **King Ambrose I** (LN male human aristocrat 8). King Ambrose is generally well-liked by the people and seems to be trying to serve their best interests.

Recently, the king has spoken publicly of the need to expand Threll's borders, both north and west. While this has been the goal of nearly every ruler in Threll's history, none made any significant progress. King Ambrose, however, has managed to gain the support of the Zekerian Order, which increases the possibility of launching a successful expedition into the lands west. While many are excited about the prospect of increasing Threll's size and stature, others fear that a push into Darkvale Forest and beyond will awaken dangerous forces there. In particular, the Captain of the Royal Guard, **Kryndal Levik** (LG paladin 7 of Faerghal) is worried for his king's safety, both from those dark forces and from those who fear them enough to work against the king's plans.

**Monastery of the Five Winds:** Due south of Port Fairglade, on a small hill overlooking wide fields of wheat, sits a squat stone building surrounded by a high wall. This building houses a group of monks who have dedicated themselves to mastering ancient traditions brought by the monastery's founder from the distant continent of Kaukhaset.

Seeking perfection of body and spirit, the Five Winds monks train in hand-to-hand combat techniques and meditation. It has been said that the master who started the

## THE ZEKERIAN ORDER

Founded just over 300 years ago, the Zekerian Order has grown as the kingdom of Threll has developed. Members of the Order are known as Knights, but do not gain their status from the king or queen. Instead, they are trained and empowered by the Order's leadership, whose purpose is to protect and aid the people of Threll. They are loyal to the Crown only as long as the Crown serves the people. If players decide to be members of the Zekerian Order in your game, that PC gains a *Zekerian amulet* as a sign of their membership and a ward against the dangers they face.

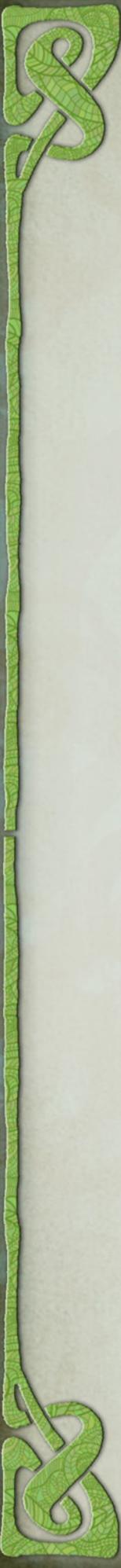
### ZEKERIAN AMULET

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

This silver amulet is crafted in the shape of a shield and emblazoned with the image of a shooting star crossing a night sky. Once per day, as a bonus action, you can draw power from the amulet to heal 1d8+1 points of damage, as though you had received a cure wounds spell.

Alternatively, if you would be reduced to 0 hit points and have not yet used the amulet that day, the magic activates automatically. If the healing is enough to restore you to 1 or more hit points, you remain conscious, do not fall prone, and can otherwise act normally on your next turn.

Five Winds order was taught by a powerful monk in Partlaun, a city in Kaukhaset's Renthian Valley. The soldiers of that distant valley are legendary for their skill in combat, and rumors say that the Five Winds monks' techniques are what give the Renthian soldiers



their strength. When they are not training, the monks work the fields and perform other chores to maintain the monastery.

Visitors to the Monastery of the Five Winds are always met by a man who goes by the strange name of **Virtuadept** (N male old aasimar monk 9). If they wish to enter, the visitors must answer Virtuadept's questions, which always relate to some sort of moral dilemma. Those who cannot answer satisfactorily are not admitted. Virtuadept's true nature is a mystery to those familiar with the monastery, because in the century since it was built, he doesn't seem to have aged a day.

**Feyweald:** The Feyweald is a dense forest nestled on the peninsula between Northrunner Sound and Elverin Bay to the west and Pegasus Bay and the Estenian Ocean to the east. Since the first explorers landed on Terrallien, the Feyweald has had a reputation for strangeness, wonder, and, all too often, danger. It seems the land here is more strongly tied to the Realm of Faerie than any other location in Threll. Visitors to this enchanted place often tell tales of the land suddenly changing shape, trees and other landmarks moving on their own, and time speeding up or slowing down without any sense of rhyme or reason.

The Feyweald's reputation suits the forest's fey residents just fine, because it helps keep out intruders who might otherwise spoil the land's raw, untouched beauty. However, when Threllish citizens do enter the woods and go missing, their friends and relatives either turn to King Ambrose I to deal with the problem or take matters into their own hands, sparking terrible conflicts with the fey.

The queen of the Feyweald is a powerful

nymph, named **Pryozha** (N female nymph sorcerer 7). Recent events within the Feyweald have forced Queen Pryozha to acknowledge that something strange is happening in both the Feyweald and throughout Threll. She now believes that she and her subjects may have to work with mortals in order to overcome whatever threats are building on the horizon. The queen's handmaiden, **Leelou** (NG female pixie), now serves as an emissary to the court in Solaerin.

**Sunstone Peaks:** Although they serve as a barrier against incursions by the things that lurk in the west, the Sunstone Peaks also hold great dangers for those who move beyond the foothills into the mountains. They are said to be riddled with caves and tunnels that house several tribes of orcs, as well as other monsters.

Freemantle Pass also runs through the Sunstone Peaks. Although it represents the easiest route through the mountains, the pass has not been used since before the founding of Threll. The eastern mouth of the pass, which lies west of the headwaters of the Vethmar River is guarded by a fort with a well-armed garrison and commanded by **Captain Dorothea Weston** (NG female human fighter 6). The other end of the pass opens into what was once the territory of Ellisam. All that remains of the Stuart family legacy there is a ruined keep that seems empty but still radiates a tangible aura of danger and foreboding.

## CENTRAL THRELL

The lands between the Thurm River to the Serpentine make up Threll's central region. Central Threll is slightly warmer than the

northern parts of the country. The land doesn't usually see frost until the late Fall, and other than the higher elevations, most areas don't see freezing temperatures until well into Winter. Most of the year, however, the weather is dominated by frequent fog, especially along the coast.

The gentle climate makes this region the major producer of the kingdom's agricultural resources, with wheat, corn, barley, oats, and hay being plentiful enough to provide for the people and the large herds of livestock that roam the coastal plains and rolling foothills. Those same hills also host several vineyards, which have grown to prominence after many years of being cut off from the more famous wines from Malnovaria.

Central Threll's forests provide wood for paper, as well as tar, pitch, and other products vital for construction of homes and ships. The coastal regions are known for glass production, due to their long, sandy beaches and the great quantities of seaweed that grow offshore—glassmakers burn the seaweed to create soda ash, which is a vital component of glass production.

**Queenspoint:** The largest city in central Threll is the port of Queenspoint, on the southern shore of the Thurm River. While most of Elverin Bay lies in northern Threll, the mouth of the bay is due east from Queenspoint, making this city one of the most influential places in the entire country. The city provides travelers from around the world with their first impression of Threll—a cosmopolitan place where hard work has created great prosperity, which in turn allows for the advancement of artistic and intellectual pursuits.

The greatest example of those pursuits is Queenspoint's jewel, Lanimar Academy. Founded in 3819 OR, the academy has educated men and women in law, politics, history, science, and the arcane arts for over almost two centuries. Students travel from all over Threll and other parts of the world to study here, especially wizards or those who wish to master the secrets of alchemy.

Lanimar Academy is also known to be a storehouse for many of the strange and wondrous artifacts recovered from the ruins scattered across Terrallien. The prospect of studying such amazing items draws many to Queenspoint, such as **Malachi Jackson** (NG male human wizard 4) and **Elias Jordan** (CG male human fighter 4). Malachi's knowledge of the arcane is matched by his friend's skill with a blade. Although Malachi is a talented student, the pair's love of revelry and dance



makes them more a fixture at the local taverns than in the school's libraries. Still, rumors are circulating that Malachi discovered a hidden map that will lead to a previously-unknown vault somewhere along the banks of the Greenmist River. Those same rumors also indicate that the vault has already been claimed by an ancient green dragon whose foul breath is blamed for the strangely-colored fog that gives the river its name.

As a center of trade, Queenspoint hosts a number of fascinating shops, where people can purchase some of the valuables recovered by adventurers from around the world—at least, items that the Academy doesn't gather up for "safe keeping." One of the most famous shops in Queenspoint is Silvermane's Fine Vendibles. This shop is run by **Sven Silvermane** (LG male human cleric 6 of Losinia) and his wife, **Brittany** (NG female elf wizard 5). Their daughter, **Emily** (CG female half-elf bard 2), also works in the shop, but spends most of her time playing music and entertaining the customers with adventure tales.

The family recently opened a storefront in Port Fairglade, which bears the same name and sells strange and interesting products, just like the larger and better-known shop in Queenspoint.

The Silvermane family name is well known in Central and Northern Threll, because Sven's ancestor, Jorn Silvermane, was a valiant

defender of the common folk, especially against the scourge of undead that occasionally arise. His most famous nemesis was **Parif Kinslayer** (CE male skeletal champion fighter 8), who betrayed the Knights of Hagwatch Tower many years ago. Legends say he was transformed into an undead horror, so Jorn set out to put his magical hammer to work against the vile monster. Jorn was never heard from again.

**Solitude:** The Threllish countryside is dotted here and there with many small communities. Their close proximity makes it easy to get help from a nearby town when problems arise. However, there are still hamlets and villages located deep in the forest or in a valley at the foothills of the mountains where few travel. The folk there are independent and sometimes have reputations for being strange or even hostile to outsiders. The folk of Solitude is one such village.



Solitude sits on the edge of the Silverwood, a large stand of silver maple trees, whose leaves seem to shine brightly in the sunlight, as though they were actually made of silver. The folk of Solitude tap the trees for their sap and make syrup which they gather in late-Winter and sell in the Spring. Solitude's maple syrup is famous throughout Threll and is sought after by the nobility and the finest inns and taverns. A single bottle will often sell for 10 gold pieces or more.

A professor at Lanimar Academy has come to believe that there is something unique about the syrup's properties, but hasn't been able to determine what makes it so special. He traveled to Solitude a year ago to observe the villagers as they collected the sap and prepared the syrup, but when the mayor discovered why he was there, he and several others ran him out of town and told him that no one other than the folk of Solitude are permitted to enter the Silverwood.

Solitude's mayor, **Liam O'Sullivan** (N male human expert 7), is said to have moved from northern Threll after he lost his family in an orc attack a few decades ago. He is especially hostile toward those who worship Losinia, who he blames for failing to protect his family. Whatever secrets the Silverwood contains, the residents of Solitude mean to keep them for themselves.

**Felldragon Sound:** Both the Dragontail and Wingrake Rivers empty into this large basin of water on Threll's coast. Unlike much of Central Threll's coastline, the land around Felldragon Sound drops suddenly into the bay, creating cliffs and steep embankments around most of its perimeter. The bay and nearby rivers gained their names when

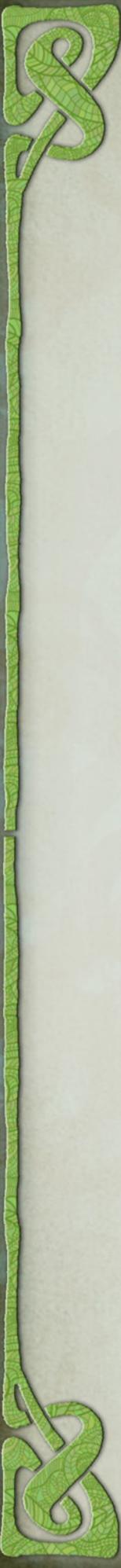
Captain Rowland discovered it in 3430 OR. As they entered the bay, the lead ship came under attack by a massive dragon. Though heavily damaged, the vessel fired on the beast and sent it plummeting into the water.

Captain Rowland's expedition never saw the dragon again, but ships have occasionally gone missing in the bay in the centuries since that encounter. Some believe that the dragon survived the attack and now secretly takes its revenge on all the humanoids who have come to Terrallien in the centuries since it was first defeated.

**Valorite Sound:** This large body of water is protected from storms and heavy seas by a ring of low islands several miles off the coast. Passage through the islands can be treacherous, and navigators who know the way are paid well for their guidance. However, even the least experienced sailor knows about the Sentinel Lighthouse and the mystery of Sentinel Bay.

Sentinel Lighthouse has been a critical navigation marker for those making the passage into and out of Valorite Sound. A small town grew up around the lighthouse and the nearby bay. The fishermen there made their livings by gathering the squid and octopus that teamed within the bay's waters. Now, however, that town is abandoned.

Ten years ago the entire population vanished, leaving all the buildings intact and the lighthouse brightly lit. No trace of the townsfolk has ever been found. Stranger still, the octopus and squid that used to make up the majority of the fishing industry in Sentinel Bay have been noted as acting strangely, sometimes appearing to move and work in a coordinated manner, as though controlled by



something in the briny deep.

The disappearance of the Sentinel Bay residents is a deeply troubling mystery. It disrupted a segment of the fishing trade, forcing sailors from more distant communities to enter Sentinel Bay to fill the demand for octopus and squid in certain Threllish communities. But the superstitious fishermen stay clear of the town, never landing there if they can help it and certainly never staying there overnight. They likewise shun the lighthouse which has stayed inexplicably lit, day and night, ever since the disappearance.

Given that the light is still lit, and the demand for the bay's seafood is still being met, the crown has been slow to send an expedition to determine the truth of what happened. Rumors say that the king refuses to do so for fear of awakening the wrath of whatever struck the people there. But if the stories about the cephalopods' strange behavior are true, something more sinister is happening. Eventually, the king will have to act and will likely send in members of the Zekerian Order to investigate.

**Westwatch Mountains:** The Westwatch Mountains are part of the same range that runs the length of Threll's western border. These mountains are rich with coal and ore, however, and provide critical resources for life and industry throughout the kingdom. The Westwatch mines are largely run by dwarves, who know the secrets of building sturdy tunnels and hunting out the best veins of ore better than any other race. They also know how to handle most of the dangers of Kimmeros. However, Terrallien's strangeness isn't limited to the surface world, and the dwarves sometimes encounter things even they have never seen.

Garrisons of Threllish soldiers are scattered throughout the Westwatch Mountains and make regular patrols to keep orcs or other monsters from getting too close to the mines or into the settled lands within Threll's borders. Although they cannot stop every incursion, and monsters from Darkvale Forest and elsewhere have been able to harass citizens all the way to the coast, at times, the soldiers' presence keeps the monsters from crossing in large numbers. Foremen from nearby mines sometimes call upon a garrison for help in dealing with especially dangerous creatures. If the soldiers encounter something they don't understand or can't handle on their own, their commanders send messages to the Zekerian Order or Lanimar Academy to ask for assistance.

### SOUTHERN TIRELL

The final region of the kingdom stretches from the Serpentine all the way down to the Lazwardine River. Closer to the mountains, Threll's southern border is marked by the Thundermarch River, whose headwaters lie somewhere within the Fangridge Mountains and flow southeast before entering the Stormwalk. By the time travelers from the north have moved far into this region, they have encountered a subtropical climate that is humid and hot in the Summer and relatively mild, but wet, in the Winter. Conditions are exceptional for agriculture and lumber and pulp wood production, as well as hunting and fishing.

Inland, amidst the foothills of the Fangridge Mountains, Threllish masons cut marble from rich quarries. The high quality stone provides strong, decorative material for art and architectural projects all over the country.

Mines that produce numerous minerals and other natural resources are scattered around the region, as well.

Although the region is far enough away from the Stormwalk to avoid the worst of the dangerous hurricanes that regularly assault the lands farther south, some of that area's turbulent weather does occasionally shift north. The people of Southern Threll have learned how to keep themselves safe from the strong winds and lashing rain.

**Fangridge Mountains:** The Fangridge is the final portion of the mountain range separating Threll from the rest of the Terrallien continent. In addition to its role as a barrier against large numbers of monsters who would otherwise march in from the west, the mountain range is rich with mineral resources. As in the Westwatch Mountains, dwarven communities oversee and operate most of the mines.

However, several communities of gnomes have taken advantage of another gift the mountains have to offer. Hidden among deep valleys lie caves that serve as roosts for immense bat colonies. Most of these are normal bats, but in a few places, the animals have grown to monstrous size. Although the giant bats can be dangerous, their caves provide a nearly endless supply of guano, which is useful to wizards as a spell component but also a vital ingredient for making gunpowder. Whole communities have sprung up around these caves, most of which were started by gnome alchemists. Now, alchemists of many races apply their talents to create the gunpowder for the kingdom's cannons and firearms.

**Squallguard:** Threll's southern coastline hosts many small port communities, but there

are actually very few large ports in the region. The closer one gets to the Stormwalk, the more dangerous the seas become. Few settlements can survive the beating from the weather for very long, which is why Squallguard has taken on an almost legendary status in Threll. It is a vital port that moves trade goods to and from Southern Threll and ensures the livelihood of many citizens along the Lazhwardine, Veldurillian, and Killdevil Rivers.

The port is tucked into an inlet several miles from the mouth of the Killdevil River. The harbor's position protects it from the heaviest seas and its waters are deep enough to handle the wide variations in water depth that often accompany hurricanes. Thick, stone walls on the south and eastern sides of the city provide some protection and the city leadership ensures that all buildings are crafted to withstand the most powerful winds.

Because it is so dangerous to sail the waters near the Stormwalk, especially during hurricane season, only the most hardened sea captains will brave the trip year-round. These are men and women who aren't easily frightened and who have no problem putting young, upstart sailors or anyone else in their place. The city's residents aren't pushovers, either. People who aren't tough enough to withstand the conditions in the city don't stay long. Still, there are many notable folk who call Squallguard home.

For example, **Eleazer Farlander** (N male human wizard 9) is a spellcaster of some renown, mostly for his invention of a magical flask that allows the user to maintain a small supply of whatever drink she prefers. Squallguard is also home to **Jimmy Kane** (CN male half-elf sorcerer 4), a strange spellcaster

whose abilities seem to have a strong connection to the region's storms. Locals say that he is trying to assemble a sea-going expedition to investigate the offshore origins of the hurricanes that batter the Stormwalk.

Anyone who knows Squallguard well is also familiar with **Marhelwin** (NG female human fighter 3), the young captain of the *Reefskimmer*. She's known throughout town as having a wit that's as sharp as the cutlass hanging from her belt. The blade, itself, is a strange sight, with a steel basket hilt tempered to a golden shimmer and patterned to look like the skin of a pineapple. The sword's quillon is a brilliant green and in the motif of pineapple leaves, curving out from the blade in an array of sharp barbs designed to catch enemies' blades and protect the wielder. Rumors persist that Marhelwin's blade is actually the magical weapon once owned by the legendary Captain Pineapple, whose rather humorous name belies a dangerous and terrible reputation. However, no one knows how she might have come to own the sword.

**The Unfallen Tower** One of the most curious examples of the strange ruins that scatter the lands of Threll—and presumably, the rest of Terrallien—is the Unfallen Tower. The twisting structure rises from a wide clearing, surrounded by otherwise dense woodlands. The tower stands almost 500 feet tall, and scholars estimate it would be about 100 feet in diameter at its base, if the base were intact. However, the tower's dimensions are not as strange as the fact that it is still standing at all, since a massive chunk seems to have been ripped out of its lower levels. The hole, which is probably more than 150 feet tall, cuts through the tower, all the way to a central column and

### NEW MAGIC ITEM: FARLANDER'S EVERFULL FLASK

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

This magical flask is a favorite among the wealthiest ship captains, who prize its ability to provide them with their favorite beverage, even on long voyages or in ports where they wouldn't be able to purchase it on their own.

exposes walls that indicate the structure has many rooms inside it. The column is crafted of a strange material, like a metal that never rusts and resists attempts to damage it.

On the ground, some parts of the rubble indicate that there are passages leading down into the ground. Scholars have speculated on the purpose of the tower, and most believe that it was once used as a nexus to collect some kind of force or energy from the surrounding environment and, probably, channel it somewhere below, but debris cluttering the area hampers exploration. After the disappearances of several workers hired to clear out the stone, expeditions hoping to uncover the tower's secrets have had a hard time hiring laborers.

Scholars and arcanists believe that the tower could provide valuable insight into Terrallien's past—information that could help shape Threll's future. With that in mind, **Seymour Godfrey** (NG male human wizard 7) at Lanimar Academy has formed a committee and hopes to convince the Zekerian Order to mount an expedition to explore the tower. Seymour often has difficulty finding support for his plans, due to the fact that his familiar, a strange cat-like creature named El'lis, is

incredibly fond of practical jokes. The goal of exploring the Unfallen Tower, however, has also attracted the interest of **Kathrine Waltson** (NE female human alchemist 6). The alchemist, called Katie by her peers, has spoken openly against some of Godfrey's other ambitious plans, but she is actively helping the wizard in this endeavor. Seymour is so excited to have support from any quarter, however, that he hasn't stopped to ask why Katie would want to help him now.

## THE WORLD BEYOND

There are certainly many places left within Threll's borders to explore, but this kingdom is only a small part of a much larger world. Those who follow their own path or who take up the call put out by King Ambrose I may uncover the land's deepest secrets, but only if they are willing to face its greatest dangers.

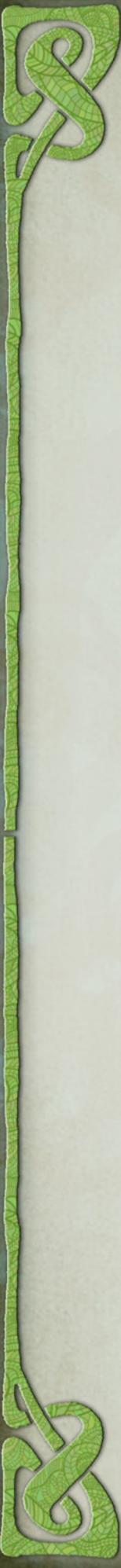
**The Terrallien Wilderness:** All who venture beyond Threll's borders enter a world outside the protection of the royal army and without the hope of quickly finding assistance in a nearby town, village, or farmhouse. There may be some brave and foolish folk who have built homes in the wild, but there are also creatures who will fool travelers in order to bring them within reach of hidden claws and fangs. For those who are willing to take the risk, there are many places that the king would like his subjects to explore, in the hope of finding ways to tame the land and create more opportunities for his people.

*Great Northern Wood:* Just beyond Threll's northern-most reaches lies a vast expanse of untouched woodland. Early exploration revealed the forest contained many different species of trees. In particular, they noted pine

trees that would make excellent masts for ships. Surveyors would mark certain trees for cutting, but they would return with teams of woodcutters to find that the trees had moved or were missing altogether.

It didn't take long after that to discover that the entire woodland was under the protection of a powerful group of druids. These druids seem to be led by an even more powerful entity, perhaps a primal fey spirit or something more sinister. Whatever the thing is, it commands its followers to drive out all intruders, which prevents Threll from benefitting from the forests bounty. Kings and Queens have tried many tactics, especially promising to be good stewards of the land, but the druids will not relent in defending the territory by any means necessary. Powerful people in Threll would like to know if creature that claims to rule the wood has sinister designs. And if so, they would offer substantial rewards to those who could put an end to its dominion in the north.

*The Stormwalk:* South of Threll, the land is covered by a soggy marsh, created by heavy rains that pass through at least a few times a week. The land is dotted with the tall stumps of what must have once been strong trees. Only low scrub brush and swamp grass grow there, now, because anything bigger is torn down by powerful winds or shattered by lightning from the storms that rage through. Although Threll's people have experienced hurricanes in the past, the tempests that strike the Stormwalk are not part of any normal weather pattern. These storms form somewhere off the southeastern coast of the continent year-round and rush inland, tearing a path across the land and dumping enormous amounts of water.



While it seems impossible that anything should be able to live in such conditions, rumors persist that there are tribes of lizardfolk, boggards, and other, stranger races dwelling in the lands of the Stormwalk. There are also tales of monsters, of course. Diviners who have sought to explore the region with their minds describe creatures of bizarre aspect, whose minds reflect the chaos of the storm and seek to corrupt everything they touch.

With such inhospitable conditions and dangerous threats, the Stormwalk represents a powerful obstacle to Threllish expansion. Scholars have yet to even begin to pierce the secrets that lie there, and even powerful spellcasters have been unable to influence the weather for any great amount of time. Anyone who could discover a way to stop the never-ending march of destructive weather across the land would be lauded as some of the greatest heroes in the world.

*Darkvale Forest:* If the Feyweald could be described as the land where children's faerie tales come true, then Darkvale Forest is the place where their bad dreams are brought to life. This gigantic forest, whose trees have blackened, twisted trunks or tower high above to block out the light of the sun, is a dark and foreboding place, that seems to have a life of its own—an intelligence that seeks to corrupt and destroy those who enter its boundaries. The things that live within the forest hide in shadows, moving with stealth and always remaining just out of sight. They seem to do this, not for fear of being seen, but to strike fear in the hearts of their prey before they attack.

The forest is the first barrier between Threllish settlers and the rest of the continent. Scholars are not sure what the monsters that dwell within Darkvale Forest are, but all agree that they must be dealt with or those who venture beyond the wood will never be able to trade goods and supplies with Threll, even if they survive the initial journey through the accursed place.

*The Black Spine:* Beyond Darkvale Forest lies a ridge of stone peaks, the tallest of which is like a massive spire reaching high into the clouds. These mountains have only been mentioned in rare journals, tales recorded by the few explorers who managed to delve deep into the Terrallien wilderness and return with their lives. The odd thing about these accounts is that in every case, the mere sight of that single peak filled the viewer with terrible dread. In at least two of the journals, the writers said they felt as though they were looking at bony protrusions growing from the back of an unfathomably large beast. One even claims to have seen the mountains heave upward, as though the creature had breathed deeply before exhaling a massive sigh.

Most journals say nothing more about the mountains, because their writers either turned back or chose to look for a way around them. Only one journal speaks of the approach to the mountains. The writer described the sight of dark cave mouths scattered across their steep faces—and of the strangely-colored lights that emanated from some of those caves after night fell.

*The Hinterlands and the High Plains:* Beyond the Black Spine lie the uncharted lands of a broad continent. The charted coast of Terrallien conforms roughly to the maps of old Ilsgardien, even if many of the land's geographic features do not. No other powers of the world have established colonies there, for none have yet found a place that combines the natural defenses and hospitable environment that Threll enjoys. However, explorers do know that there are more ruins and strange features scattered across the land's interior. There may yet be clues that explain what happened here, what caused the land to become what it is now. If the rippling effects of those events from long ago pose a danger to the people of Threll, the heroes who uncover such secrets may help prevent another tragedy from occurring.

**Other Continents of Aeva:** Terrallien isn't the only continent on the planet Aeva. For example, most of Threll's original settlers came from Malnovaria, across the Estenian Ocean. Similarly, Threllish ships frequently make journeys to trade with the people of other lands.

To the south, Eskaenturu boasts dense jungles and wondrous civilizations, both old and new. Even farther and to the southeast, lies Akhutan, covered in great deserts and ruled for millennia by generations of god-kings. Threllish nobility are fascinated by Akhutani history and often journey there to explore known sites or to search for places that have yet to be discovered. In fact, when Lord-Mayor Samuel Wolfe of Port Fairglade discovered the tomb of King Udimu, he was actually searching for a place called the Shrine of Karrathuj Ames, or "The Shrine of the Golden Destiny."

Said to be guarded by a terrible sphinx, the shrine was dedicated to the Akhutani goddess of destiny (now thought to be an aspect of the god Aion). The legends say that once every century, a supplicant may gain the goddess's favor by performing a certain ritual within the shrine. Lord-Mayor Wolfe had to return home before he found the shrine, but he believes he was close to uncovering its location. If he were to meet a group of adventurers he could trust, he might send a second expedition to succeed where he failed.

This is but one of countless adventures that heroes might find as they learn more about their world. All around the world, the people need heroes to show them courage, compassion, and honor. There are riches and treasure to be found, great secrets to be uncovered, and wonderful opportunities to help those in need, whether one stays close to home in Threll or ventures out into the world beyond.

## APPENDIX 2: FIENDS OF THE SHADESCAR RIFT

Until recently, only those who dared plumb the depths of the Shadescar Rift discovered, and met their demise at the teeth and claws of, the terrible monsters dwelling there. It appears that Belazeel's schemes have awakened something within the Rift. The monsters have grown bolder and more dangerous. It will not be long before many of them make their way up to the surface to threaten the good people of Threll.

### FANGBAT

*Small monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 54 (12d6+ 12)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

7 (-2) 14 (+2) 12 (+1) 2 (-4) 12 (+1) 8 (-1)

**Damage Resistances** piercing, slashing

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The fangbat makes two melee attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target takes 3 (1d6) necrotic damage at the start of its next turn.

**Fang Spray (Recharge 5-6).** The fangbat releases fangs in a 10-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Although it appears to be undead, a fangbat is a living creature, a collection of bones and teeth formed in the shape of a bat. Its strange mind renders it immune to spells that only affect creatures with intelligence. Fangbats lurk in caves and tree tops waiting for victims, and swoop down, spraying fangs from their wings when they first attack. A fangbat inflicts wounds that continue to bleed, potentially causing its victims to die from blood loss.



## FOUL NEEDLER

*Tiny fiend, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 35 (10d4+10)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

2 (-4) 14 (+2) 12 (+1) 13 (+1) 10 (+0) 12 (+1)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Language** -

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Sting.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 round.

**Antagonize.** A target within sight must make a DC 9 Wisdom saving throw or spend its next turn moving as close as possible to the foul needler and making a melee attack against it.

In the realms where it originated, the foul needler served more powerful fiends. After finding itself in the Shadescar Rift, it discovered intelligent humanoids, the foul needler revels in its ability to enrage its victims and remain out of the way as they wear themselves out trying to attack it. When it becomes brave enough to attack, the venom on its needle-like stinger induces terrible itching that forces its victims to scratch at the wound while ignoring everything around them.



## LODMAW

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d10 + 48)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

20 (+5) 10 (+0) 16 (+3) 2 (-4) 14 (+2) 10 (+0)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Knockback Vulnerability** If the lodmaw is struck with a bludgeoning weapon, it moves 5 feet away as if shoved, or 10 feet on a critical hit. If it collides with a solid object during this movement, it takes 3 (1d6) damage and its movement is stopped.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must make a DC 14 Strength check or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lodmaw may make one body slam attack against it as a bonus action.

**Body Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., any number of target target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

**Bellow (Recharge 3-6).** The lodmaw can let loose a horrendous roar from its cavernous body. All creatures in a 15-foot cone take 14 (4d6) points of thunder damage or half with a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Creatures that fail their save are stunned for 1 round and deafened for 1d6 rounds.

A lodmaw is an insatiable creature with a huge, toothy mouth that echoes any sound near it. It prefers to roll itself over its victims, and it uses a stunning bellow from its cavernous mouth to soften up its opponents. The lodmaw has tiny, legs that barely hold the creature up, making it susceptible to powerful blows from bludgeoning weapons.



## MAESTRO FIEND

*Medium fiend, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 150 (20d8 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

18 (+4) 15 (+2) 16 (+3) 17 (+3) 14 (+2) 15 (+2)

**Skills** Perception +6

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Abyssal, Infernal

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The fiend's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14). The fiend can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: *cause fear*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray*

1/day each: *dispel magic*, *suggestion*

**Terrifying Inspiration.** The fiend is more terrifying to its allies than their foes. As long as the fiend is visible, allies gain advantage on attack rolls, and saving throws against being frightened or charmed.

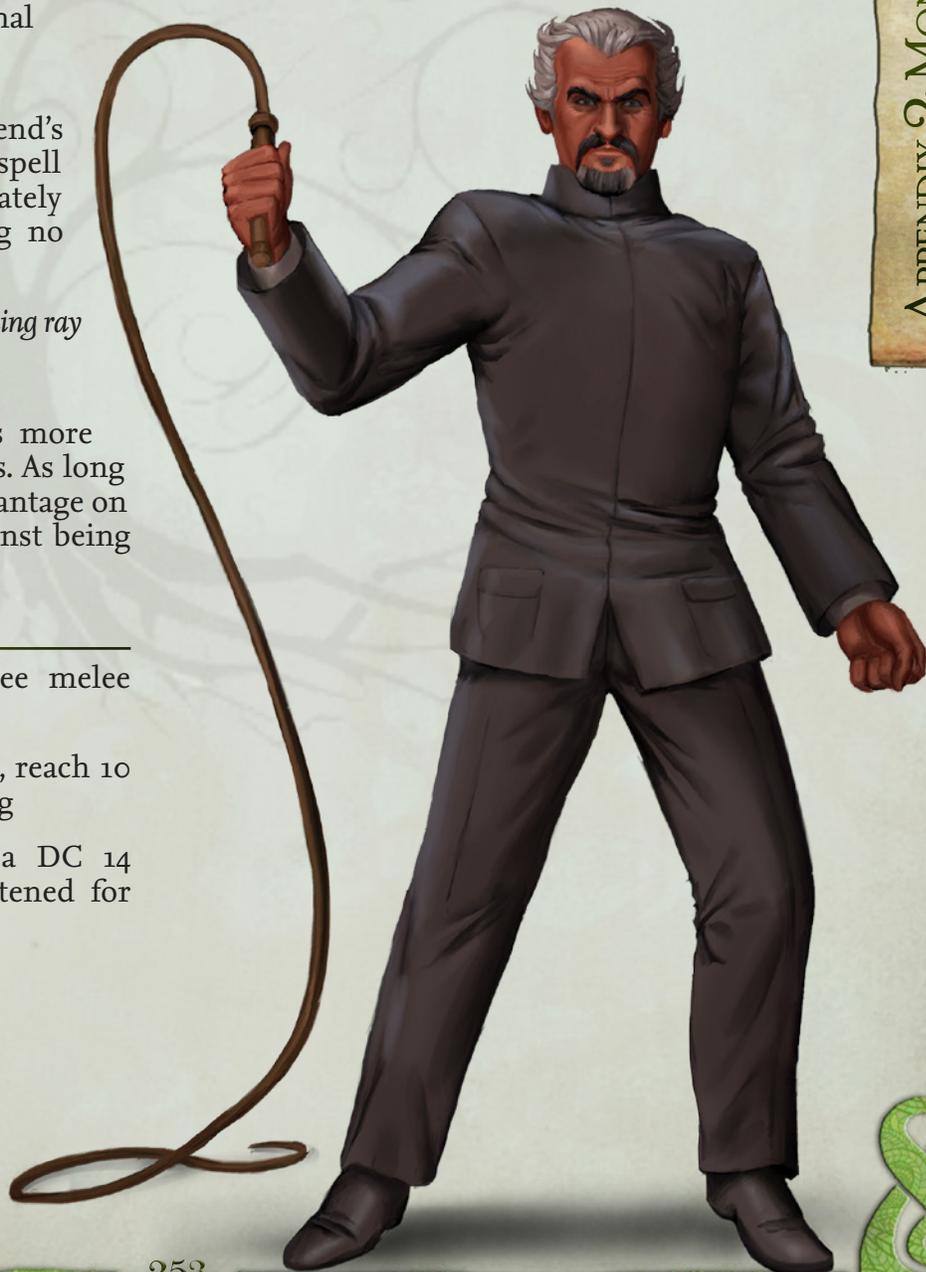
## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The fiend makes three melee attacks.

**Whip.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing

damage. The target must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for one round.

A true monster, the maestro fiend demands to be obeyed by those it sees as lesser beings, which means everyone it meets. It has no allies, only minions who fear retribution from it if they decide to break ranks. Despite its nasty reputation, the maestro fiend is hardly ever encountered alone.



## SCISSOR TOAD

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 119 (14d10 + 42)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

18 (+4) 12 (+1) 17 (+3) 2 (-4) 12 (+1) 11 (+0)

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

### ACTIONS

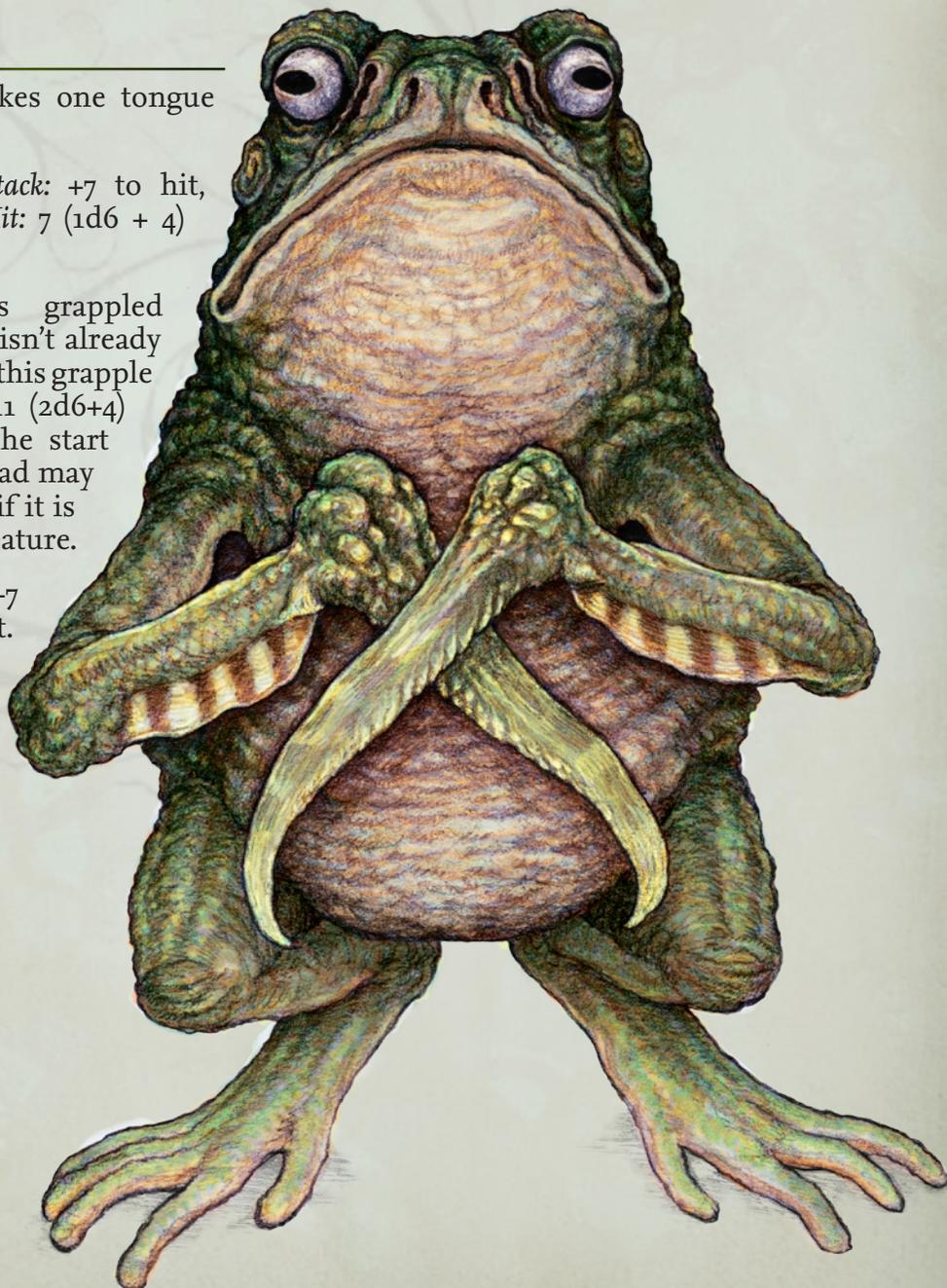
**Multiattack.** The toad makes one tongue and two claw attacks.

**Tongue.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning

damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 13) if the toad isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the creature takes 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns. The toad may only make tongue attacks if it is not already grappling a creature.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage

From the back, this gray toad appears to be an ordinary, albeit gigantic, specimen. However, it balances on front limbs made of razor-sharp cartilage. When prey is out of reach, it grabs it with its sticky tongue to reel it into its slashing arms.



## SLUDGEMAKER

Medium elemental, unaligned

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 90 (12d8 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

18 (+4) 8 (-1) 16 (+3) 7 (-2) 14 (+2) 8 (-1)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Wisdom (Perception) 12

**Languages** Terran

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Earth Glide.** The sludgemaker can burrow through nonmagical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

**Enveloping Sludge.** Anyone hitting the sludgemaker with a melee weapon attack must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or the weapon becomes stuck to the sludgemaker's body. A stuck weapon may be unstuck with a DC 13 Strength check.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack:** The sludgemaker makes two slam attacks.

**Slam:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Mire.** The sludgemaker converts natural stone in a 20 foot radius into sucking mud. Any creature in the area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled (escape DC 13). The ground is treated as difficult terrain for 10 minutes afterward.

Seemingly a large ball of mud given humanoid shape, a sludgemaker hides beneath stony surfaces as it waits for victims. The sludgemaker can soften the ground to make it act like quicksand, making it easier to attack its trapped victims.



## YALDRID

*Large undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 90 (12d8 + 36)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Wisdom (Perception) 10

**Languages**

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Stench.** Any living creature that begins its turn within 30 feet of the yahldrid must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute, gaining disadvantage on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. If a creature succeeds on its save, it is immune to that yahldrid's stench ability for 24 hours.

### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the yahldrid can't bite another target.

**Swallow.** The yahldrid makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the yahldrid, and it takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the yahldrid's turns. The yahldrid can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If the yahldrid dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

A yahldrid looks like an enormous, segmented worm made of partially-melted yellow candle wax. This undead creature tries to eat everything in its path, seeking to satisfy an appetite it can never fill. Its continual rotting state gives off a reek that betrays its presence but also weakens its enemies.



## HAGS, AN ANCIENT MENACE

*The crones of the Black Beast Coven huddled around their cauldron, the vessel from which they had called down pestilence, harsh weather, and countless other troubles onto the people of the Imlenite River for years. Their hateful gazes were full of arcane power and fury. Zenami stepped forward to unleash Losinia's wrath upon them, but the illusory figures only hissed and snarled as they faded from view. The hags had seen them approaching, watched them cut their way through the ranks of their minions, and were ready. Then they came, shrieking and uttering words of foulest magic. The battle was at last joined—a battle in which the fate of generations would be decided.*

— from *A History of Hagwatch Tower*

Hags are vicious monsters that look like hideously deformed crones. Because of their appearance, some people think hags are just old women with dangerous and evil magical powers, but such misconceptions are foolish. Ignorant folk make terrible assumptions about harmless wise women living solitary lives, and those who would hunt a hag underestimate the depths of their quarry's evil. Some would-be heroes doubt themselves, and whole communities can turn against a woman who could be an ally.

Hags revel in such confusion. Above all, they wish to corrupt and twist all that is good until it breaks. People, animals—anything can be a target for a hag's manipulations. Some say even the land around a hag's lair changes in response to her evil.

## HISTORY & LEGEND

Nearly every culture has legends of hags or creatures like them. Some believe they are the kin of the fey, but the spirits of nature passionately refute such tales. Primitive and monstrous races sometimes worship hags, but such devotion is usually created by magic or after generations of domination through fear.

Scholars disagree on hags' true origins, but many hags around the world share a common belief in a dark patron. They claim to be blessed with their vile gifts by a powerful entity, which they call "Byora." Byora is a hidden deity who cannot or will not grant spells to her priests. But the hags believe that when she once again turns her gaze upon the world, Byora will make them masters of all. Fortunately, scholars have found no evidence that Byora exists and propose that she is merely part of a shared fantasy created and propagated by hags.

Hags have haunted the lands of Terrallien since before the arrival of settlers in 3684 OR. They harassed the settlers, but didn't become a real problem until 3764 OR, when the Black Beast Coven seized control of the Dread Marsh and surrounding area. They terrorized the region for nearly 20 years until a band of heroes entered the marsh and fought the creatures in their own lair. Only Sir Cyphus Parke survived that campaign. In 3784 OR, two years after he and his friends broke the coven, he used the treasures he found in the Dread Marsh to fund construction of Hagwatch Tower, the headquarters of a knightly order dedicated to defending the people of Threll against hags and their minions and, especially, against the formation of another hag coven.

The land has seen many changes in the centuries that followed, but the Knights of Hagwatch Tower continue to stand guard against evil. They learn to identify and destroy hags, but also fight other monsters when there are no hags to be found. Hagwatch Knights are known as grim guardians of civilization. They share what they know, help the people protect themselves, but trust no one. Hags are deceitful and always seek to destroy, especially those who oppose them.

## ECOLOGY

Hags are found in just about any part of the world. They live alone, unless they are part of a coven, but also prefer to live close enough to civilization to spread corruption and fear. Though they differ in size, appearance, and other characteristics, all hags have certain characteristics in common.

All hags look like terrifyingly ugly old women, though they are larger than most humans and live far longer. Some hags look less human than others, but many enjoy using their appearance to fool others and delight in frightening their prey by revealing their true nature at just the right moment. Most hags can magically change their appearance, making themselves look like normal old women or even beautiful ladies. Hags might use disguises to live among common folk, enjoying their handiwork up close as they corrupt the community from within. This can be dangerous for the hag, however, because certain magic can pierce her disguise.

All hags also have the ability to see in the dark. This makes them excellent hunters and gives them an advantage over their favorite prey, humans. Although some hags

have the power to steal souls, all hags are man-eaters. There are many kinds of hags, but the most common are green hags, sea hags, and annis hags.

**Green Hags:** Rumored to be descended from a corrupted nature spirit, green hags are the most common among their hideous sisters. Dwelling in swamps and bogs near towns or villages, they often pass themselves off as wise women and offer potions and other magical aid in exchange for specific items or favors, which are usually far more costly than the paltry magic the hag provides. Hags have the innate spell-like abilities to change their appearance, breathe under water, understand and speak any language, make themselves invisible, and send messages to others on the wind. They can also imitate the sounds of animals of the



swamp and forest. Most dangerous, however, is that a green hag's very touch can drain her enemies' strength until they cannot even move to defend themselves.

**Sea Hags:** Though not nearly as common as green hags, sea hags threaten the communities along Threll's coastlines often enough that people there move carefully along the docks and jetties, always looking out for dark shapes, that might be a sea hag preparing to attack. They are careful not to look too closely, however, for sea hags are so hideous that even looking at one can drain a person's strength. Not only that, but her gaze can carry the power of the evil eye. Evidence suggests that there are sea hags who dwell within the fresh or brackish waters of Threll's rivers, though none have confirmed such tales.

**Annis Hags:** Stronger and more physically powerful than their sisters, annis hags, sometimes called black hags because of their iron-like skin, are the third most common of the creatures to trouble the people of Threll. Their rarity is countered by the fact that annis hags are the most violent of their kind. Annis hags can change their appearance like green hags, but also have the ability to create a thick cloud of fog around themselves, which they use to disorient foes before attacking with their vicious claws.

One special power claimed by all hags is their strength in numbers—particularly if that number is three. When three hags of any type gather, they can form a coven, which grants them the ability to combine their magical powers and cast vile spells or conduct evil rituals. A coven of hags can change the weather, create zombies, gain visions of the past, present, or future, glean knowledge

from beings outside of the Material Plane, and work other dark magic to terrorize the lands around their lair.

## FEARFUL WHISPERS

Most villages have tales of "old women of the wood" that parents use to keep children from venturing too far or being too trustful of strangers. Some of those tales are based on actual events or people in the village's history. While few of those tales come from encounters with actual hags, some of them do.

**Dark Chessa:** Those who fish the waters of the Elverin Bay spin tales of a sea witch whose skin is a mottled greenish brown and slimy, like that of a great eel. Most discount the stories, but abandoned boats sometimes wash up on the shores around Elverin Bay, and fishermen pound the water with oars or bowhooks before looking over the side to gather traplines, just to make sure they don't accidentally meet the hag's gaze.

**The Coldmere Witch:** The swamp just upriver from the Riverside-Corbin crossing of the Imlenite River has always been a strange place. Even in mid-Summer, when the rest of Threll swelters in the heat, the Coldmere's plants still have a rime of frost on them until well after sunrise. Many say that the swamp is claimed by a hag whose magic is as cold as her cruel heart, but no one has yet determined the true cause of the swamp's unnatural chill.

**Redclaw Annie:** The people of Riverside scare each other with tales of a monster that stalks the woods and streams of Durstab's Fen. They say a hag, whose massive talons are always red, stalks hunters and fishermen in the area. Some claim she was responsible for the tragedy at Bladefell Manor many years ago.

## APPENDIX 3: CHARACTERS OF TERRALLIEN

### ANDOR FULDSIV

*Medium humanoid, chaotic good*

*Male dwarf warrior gunslinger 1*

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 13

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10(+0)	15(+2)	15(+2)	12(+1)	15(+2)	8(-1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Con +4

**Skills** Athletics +2, History +3, Intimidation +1, Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish

**Proficiencies** deck of playing cards, vehicles (land)

**Gear** chain shirt, battered blunderbuss, bayonet, backpack, crowbar, hammer, 10 pitons, 10 torches, tinderbox, 10 days rations, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope, *potion of healing*, *Zekerian amulet*

**Abilities** Dwarven Combat Training, Dwarven Resilience, Rapid Reload, Shotgun Style, Stonecunning, Way of the Gun

### ACTIONS

**Blunderbuss.** *Ranged Weapon Attack.* range 15/30 ft., scattering shot. *Hit:* 1d10+2 piercing damage.

**Bayonet.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6+2 piercing damage.

### TRAITS

**Unshakeable** – I don't flinch in the face of danger.

**Inspiring** – I approach all problems in an exciting, motivational way—although some may call it “being flashy.”

**Ideal** - Justice – We must oppose all who do evil and either force them to change their ways or put an end to the threat they pose.

**Bond** - My Weapon – My blunderbuss has great sentimental value; I have used it in battles to preserve my homeland, and I would be very upset if I lost it.

**Flaw** - Judgmental – I have no patience for those who stand by and do nothing while others perpetrate evil deeds.

### BACKGROUND: WARRIOR

**Brothers in Arms** – The members of your former unit have scattered across the land, joining other units, deserting and becoming mercenaries, or being promoted out. You now have a contact in many armies, mercenary outfits, and city watches. These men and women you served with give you their respect and friendship, while expecting nothing from you but the same. They can help you enter a military camp without being detained, assist in hiring soldiers, or “lose” some equipment to help you out in a time of need.



## BIRKETT SPOTSWOOD

*Small humanoid, neutral good*

*Male halfling outlaw rogue 1*

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather)

**Hit Points** 8

**Speed** 25 ft.

**STR** DEX **CON** INT **WIS** **CHA**

10(+0) 16(+3) 11(+0) 14(+2) 10(+0) 14(+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +5, Int +4

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Athletics +2, Deception +4, Perception +2, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling, thieves' cant

**Proficiencies** thieves' tools

**Gear** shortsword, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, leather armor, 2 daggers, thieves' tools, backpack, bag of 1,000 ball bearings, 10 feet of string, a bell, 5 candles, crowbar, hammer, 10 pitons, hooded lantern, 2 flasks of oil, 5 days rations, tinderbox, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope, *potion of healing*, *Zekerian amulet*

**Abilities** Brave, Expertise (thieves' tools, Stealth), Halfling Nimbleness, Lucky, Shady Connections, Sneak Attack +1d6

### ACTIONS

**Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6+3 piercing damage.

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack.* range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 1d6+3 piercing damage.

### TRAITS

**Witty** – I always have a snappy comment or a quick retort to share, whether in the company of friends or in the midst of combat.

**Friendly** – I make friends easily and tend to put people around me at ease.

**Ideal** - Loyalty – I am unfailingly dedicated to my friends, even if I enjoy making jokes at their expense.

**Bond** - Lost Treasure – I once stole a magical shortbow, but another thief took it away from me; I am obsessed with getting it back.

**Flaw** - Jokester – I have a very hard time taking anything seriously and often make jokes at inappropriate times.

### BACKGROUND: OUTLAW

**Shady Connections** – You're familiar with the process and etiquette of procuring things that are somewhat less than legal, and navigating the channels of typical thieves' guilds. If you are in a settlement of any size, you can locate the people who engage in illicit dealings and have them hear you out.



## ELEK SZALONNA

Medium humanoid, neutral

Male dwarf outcast witch 1

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 8

**Speed** 25 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

10(+0) 13(+1) 14(+2) 15(+2) 14(+2) 10(+0)

**Saving Throws** Int +4, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +5, Athletics +2, Medicine +4, Survival +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish, Gnomish

**Proficiencies** flute

**Gear** light crossbow and case of 20 bolts, arcane focus, quarterstaff, two daggers, *potion of healing*, *Zekerian amulet*, backpack, crowbar, hammer, 10 pitons, 10 torches, tinderbox, 10 days of rations, waterskin, 50 feet of hempen rope

**Abilities** Dwarven Armor Training, Familiar, Wanderings

**Spellcasting.** Elek is a 1st-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following witch spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance*, *light*, *mending*

**1st level (2 slots):** *hideous laughter*, *mage armor*, *sleep*

**Familiar.** Elek's familiar knows *burning hands*, *comprehend languages*, *hideous laughter*, *mage armor*, *sleep*

### ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack.* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one target. *Hit:* 1d4+1 piercing damage.

**Traits**

**Intuitive** – I am very attuned to the feelings of others and can often get a sense of their moods, even if I don't always know how to respond.

**Mystical** – My connection to the strange patron spirit or spirits grants me understanding of many esoteric topics.

**Ideal** - **Belonging** – I am searching for a place where I can be comfortable and feel like people understand and care about me.

**Bond** - **Glaedwine** – My raven familiar is really my only friend, even though I only see him a few times every day.

**Flaw** - **Withdrawn** – I am very uncomfortable around new people and often have difficulty speaking with those I don't know.

### BACKGROUND: OUTCAST

**Wanderings** – You have an excellent sense of the lay of the land, know major landmarks nearby, and can ensure you are always headed in the right general direction, though you may not always take the most straightforward or efficient route.



## KEIAN ETZENE

Medium humanoid, neutral good

Male human acolyte cleric 1

**Armor Class** 16 (chainmail)

**Hit Points** 9

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

10(+0) 11(+0) 12(+1) 14(+2) 16(+3) 15(+2)

**Saving Throws** Wis +5, Cha +4

**Skills** Insight +5, Medicine +5, Persuasion +4, Religion +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Halfling

**Gear** mace, spear, chainmail, shield, 2 blocks of incense, 5 sticks of incense, alms box, backpack, blanket, 10 candles, censer, holy symbol of Losinia, *potion of healing*, *Zekerian amulet*, 2 days of rations, tinderbox, 10 torches, vestments of Losinia, set of common cloths, pouch with 15 gp, waterskin

**Abilities** Disciple of Life, Life Domain, Shelter of the Faithful

**Spellcasting.** Keian is a 1st-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, light, sacred flame*

**1st level (2 slots):** *bles, command, cure wounds, healing words, identify, shield of faith*

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Spear.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 piercing damage.

### TRAITS

**Optimistic** – Nothing can shake my positive attitude. While I'm not foolish, I try to see the best in everyone.

**Tolerant** – I am tolerant of other faiths and respect the worship of other gods.

**Ideal** - **Dedication** – My goal is to further the worship of Losinia and carry the light of her protection into the dark places of the world.

**Bond** - **Service to All** – Everything I do is to serve and protect the people of Threll.

**Flaw** - **Curious Theologist** - I am fascinated by the study of all faiths and lose focus when presented with new information about or have a chance to discuss different religions of the world—even evil ones.

### BACKGROUND: ACOLYTE

**Shelter of the Faithful** – As an acolyte, you command the respect of those who share your faith, and you can perform the religious ceremonies of your deity. You and your adventuring companions can expect to receive free healing and care at a temple, shrine, or other established presence of your faith, though you must provide any material components needed for spells. Those who share your religion will support you (but only you) at a modest lifestyle.

You might also have ties to a specific temple dedicated to your chosen deity or pantheon, and you have a residence there. This could be the temple where you used to serve, if you remain on good terms with it, or a temple where you have found a new home. While near your temple, you can call upon the priests for assistance, provided the assistance you ask for is not hazardous and you remain in good standing with your temple.



## **MOLLY STARKWEATHER**

*Medium humanoid, lawful good*

*Female human hometown hero fighter 1*

**Armor Class** 16 (chainmail)

**Hit Points** 10

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

12(+1) 16(+3) 10(+0) 14(+2) 11(+0) 15(+2)

**Saving Throws** Str +3, Con +2

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Animal Handling +4, Perception +2, Survival +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish

**Proficiencies** smith's tools, vehicles (land)

**Gear** light crossbow, greatsword, chain mail, shield, backpack, bedroll, crossbow bolt case, 20 crossbow bolts, mess kit, *potion of healing*, *Zekerian amulet*, 10 days of rations, 50' hemp rope, tinderbox, 10 torches, waterskin

**Abilities** Always Welcome, Great Weapon Fighting, Second Wind

### **ACTIONS**

**Greatsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d6 slashing damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +5 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 1d8+3 piercing damage.

**Traits** - Active – I'm always on the move and ready to move on to the next part of the plan.

Helpful – I jump right in and offer to give my help, whenever I see someone who needs it.

**Ideal** - Personal Freedom – Everyone should be free to find their own path and be who they are.

**Bond** - Companionship – I don't have many friends, but I'm fiercely loyal to the ones I do have.

**Flaw** - Respect - I hold no respect for those that have not proven themselves in battle.

### **BACKGROUND: HOMETOWN HERO**

Always Welcome – In your hometown, the people love you and you can easily obtain small favors, and are easily recognizable, unless someone dangerous is asking. In that case, you were never there.



## SUREN BATTUL

Medium humanoid, chaotic good

Female human researcher alchemist 1

**Armor Class** 14 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 10

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR** DEX **CON** INT **WIS** **CHA**

11(+0) 14(+2) 15(+2) 16(+3) 12(+1) 10(+0)

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Int +5

**Skills** Arcana +5, History +5, Nature +5, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +4

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish, Gnomish

**Gear** *potion of healing, Zekerian amulet, dagger, leather armor, alchemist's supplies, light crossbow, case of 20 bolts, backpack, book of lore, 2 bottles of ink, ink pen, 10 sheets of parchment, little bag of sand, a set of common clothes, small knife, a pouch containing 10 gp*

**Abilities** Bombs, Eclectic Knowledge

**Extracts.** Suren is a 1st-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following alchemist extracts prepared:

1st level (2 slots): *bomber's eye, cure wounds, expeditious retreat, false life*

### ACTIONS

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

**Light Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack.* +4 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 1d8+2 piercing damage.

**Traits** - Well-Studied – I am interested in many different topics and always seek to learn more about the world.

**Clever** – I apply my knowledge to come up with creative solutions to difficult problems.

**Ideal** - Secrets of Life – I believe my alchemical studies and my exploration of the world can reveal the true nature of all things.

**Bond** - Important Text – I keep all of my alchemical formulae and my personal research notes in my formula book, and I will go out of my way to keep from losing it.

**Flaw** - Hyperfocused – I often get so lost in what I'm doing or thinking about that I'm not aware of what is going on around me.

### BACKGROUND: RESEARCHER

**Eclectic Knowledge** – You know a little something about everything, and from time to time, it's even useful knowledge. At a minimum, you can recall where you learned about something, and might return for further study.



## TYREA SISKELIEN

Medium humanoid, chaotic good

Female high elf lorekeeper wizard 1

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 7

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

12(+1) 14(+2) 12(+1) 16(+3) 12(+1) 10(+0)

**Saving Throws** Int+5, Wis +3

**Skills** Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +3, Investigation +5, Perception +3

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish, Gnomish, Sylvan

### Proficiencies

**Gear** *potion of healing, Zekerian amulet, quarterstaff, component pouch, spellbook, backpack, book of lore, historical text, 2 treatises, 15 sheets of parchment, 2 bottles of ink, an ink pen, little bag of sand, small knife, set of common clothes, pouch containing 10 gp*

**Abilities** Arcane Recovery, Cantrip, Darkvision, Elf Weapon Training, Fey Ancestry, Keen Senses, Lorekeeper, Trance

**Spellcasting.** Tyrea is a 1st-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *dancing lights, mage hand, minor illusion, ray of frost*

**1st level (2 slots):** *burning hands, charm person, grease, sleep*

**Spellbook.** Tyrea's spellbook contains *burning hands, charm person, detect magic, grease, shield, and sleep*

### ACTIONS

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack.* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8+1 bludgeoning damage.

**Traits** - Curious – I love trying to figure out complicated puzzles and uncover hidden secrets of magic.

Careful – I never use my magic, or anything else, thoughtlessly. I always consider the situation and try to make the best choice.

**Ideal** - Shared Knowledge – Information isn't meant to be kept hidden in molding libraries. People must be exposed to new ideas and allowed the opportunity to form their own opinions.

**Bond** - Terrallien – I am dedicated to uncovering the mystery of the land—what happened to change it so completely and where the land's strange ruins came from.

**Flaw** - Impatient – I often forget that not everyone shares the knowledge in my own head and get irritated when I have to explain myself.

### BACKGROUND: ARCHIVIST

**Lorekeeper** – You've read everything you could ever find. In addition to your familiarity with a large variety of books, you can identify any written language, even if you cannot translate it. You can also get a general idea of the contents of a book if it's written in a language that shares a script with one you know.



## NEW CLASSES AND RULES

A goal of the *Terrallien* setting is to provide a fun and interesting setting where newer players can feel comfortable learning the rules. The *Legendary Beginnings* products support using either the full 5E rules or simplified rulesets. While the simplified rules contain enough information to create amazing stories on their own, there are some elements that fit so well with *Terrallien*'s unique characteristics that we wanted players and GMs to have the option of exploring them.

The classes and the rules for firearms presented below are optional. They can be fun and interesting to play, but they do introduce some complexity. Firearms can also change the feel of the game. However, if your group is ready to take on a bit more of a challenge, adopting some or all of these options can add great flavor that enhances your experience with the *Terrallien* setting.

If you are using the beginner rules, take a background from one of the unused characters and apply it to your character, otherwise feel free to use any background you like as normal.

### ALCHEMIST

Alchemists are masters of experiments. They use their creativity and knowledge of obscure recipes to brew liquids that transform their bodies as reliably as magic and to create fiery bombs to fight against their enemies.

#### 1ST LEVEL ALCHEMIST CLASS

##### FEATURES

Write these features in the class section of your character sheet:

Mark these saving throws: Constitution, Intelligence

Hit Points: 8 + your CON modifier, and 1 hit die.

Proficiency Bonus: +2

##### CLASS SKILLS

Mark three of the following skills in the skills section of your character sheet:

Arcana

Investigation

Medicine

Nature

Perception

Sleight of Hand

Survival

##### ARMOR AND WEAPONS

You are proficient in simple weapons, bombs, and light armor.

##### STARTING WEALTH

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a club or (b) a quarterstaff
- (a) a light crossbow and case of 20 bolts or (b) a pair of daggers
- (a) a dungeoneer's pack, (b) an explorer's pack or (c) a scholar's pack
- leather armor, and alchemist's supplies

##### BOMBS

You have developed your own recipe for explosives. You carry them around in special containers to keep them from blowing up until you want them to. As an action, you can prepare and throw a bomb at a target within 30 feet. Roll an attack roll against your opponent's AC. If an enemy is next to you, you get disadvantage on your attack roll. If you hit, they take an amount of fire damage equal to 1d6 + your INT modifier. Everyone standing next to your target gets splashed. Splashed creatures take an amount of damage equal to your INT modifier (Dexterity saving throw for no damage instead, DC 8 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency bonus). If you miss, you splash your target instead, and don't harm anyone else. No one else knows how to prepare and throw your bombs correctly—if anyone else throws them, they deal no damage. You can use a number of bombs each day equal to your alchemist level + your INT modifier. Write Bombs and this number in the class features section of your character sheet.

## SPLASH DAMAGE AND ALLIES

One thing to consider for the alchemist is whether your players are able to handle the frustration of having a fellow PC's weapon, in this case bombs, deal damage to them if they get splashed. If you think it will cause hurt feelings at the table, you can automatically give the alchemist the selective bombs feature at 1st level and while they may pick an alchemist tradition at 3rd level, they do not gain the 3rd level feature. The alchemist will still gain features from their tradition at later levels.

## EXTRACTS

You can brew magical liquids called extracts. They work like spells, except only you can use them. Every morning, you spend an hour brewing your extracts for the day. You can choose a different set of extracts each day. If your character sheet has a spells section, cross off "Spells" and write "Extracts".

## FORMULA BOOK

Every extract you know is written in your formula book. You start knowing how to make only a few extracts, but you learn more as you become more powerful. You can copy formulas from scrolls, a wizard's spellbook, or another alchemist's formula book. If you lose your formula book, you can't prepare extracts until you get it back or find a replacement!

## 1ST LEVEL ALCHEMIST EXTRACTS

Pick a five extracts from this page. These are the extracts in your formula book. Write these extract names in the spell section of your character sheet.

You prepare the list of formulas that are available to you. To do so, choose a number of alchemist formulas from your spellbook equal to your Intelligence modifier + your alchemist level (minimum of one formula).

The formulas must be of a level for which you have extract slots.

You can use 2 1st level extracts each day. Write this number of 1st-level extracts per day in the spells section of your character sheet.

## BOMBER'S EYE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 minute

You can throw weapons farther and more accurately. This spell increases the range of any thrown weapon, including your bombs, by 10 feet. You also receive a +1 bonus on attack rolls made with thrown weapons.

## COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

You can understand spoken words and read writing in any language. This spell does not let you break written codes or understand hidden meanings.

## CURE WOUNDS

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** personal **Duration** instantaneous

You heal for hit points equal to 1d8 for each level of the spell slot used to cast it (this can't heal you above your maximum hit points).

## DISGUISE SELF

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

You use illusion to disguise your appearance (including clothing, armor, weapons, and equipment). You can seem 1 foot shorter or taller, and anywhere from slim to bulky. You can look like a different race (dwarf, elf, goblin, human, orc, and so on) but not something really different (like a giant spider or dragon).

## EXPEDITIOUS RETREAT

**Casting Time:** 1 bonus action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

This spell allows you to move at an incredible pace. When you cast this spell, and then as a bonus action on each of your turns until the spell ends, you can take the Dash action.

### FALSE LIFE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

Bolstering yourself with a necromantic facsimile of life, you gain  $1d4 + 4$  temporary hit points for the duration. If you cast it from a higher level spell slot, you gain an additional 5 temporary hit points for each level higher than 1st. If you take damage, you lose these temporary hit points first. If any of these temporary hit points are left when the spell runs out, they go away.

### JUMP

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 minute

Your jump distance is tripled until the spell ends.

### KEEN SENSES

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You gain enhanced awareness of your surroundings. The spell grants you advantage bonus on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

### SHIELD

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** personal **Duration** 1 round

Cast this spell as a reaction which you take when you are hit by an attack or targeted by the magic missile spell. An invisible barrier of magical force appears and protects you. Until the start of your next turn, you have a +5 bonus to AC, including against the triggering attack, and you take no damage from magic missile.

### TOUCH OF THE SEA

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** personal **Duration** 10 minutes

Your feet transform into flippers and webs

grow between your fingers. You gain a swim speed of 30 feet, which lets you swim with no movement penalty.

### TRUE STRIKE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** concentration, up to 1 round

On your next turn, you gain advantage on your first attack roll against the target, provided that this spell hasn't ended.

## 2ND LEVEL ALCHEMIST

Add one new 1st-level extract to your formula book. You can prepare another alchemist extract each day.

You can use another 1st-level extract each day.

You gain 1 more bomb each day.

Hit Points: add  $1d8 +$  your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

## MUTAGEN

Each day, you can brew one bottle of a strange liquid called a mutagen, a special mixture that you discovered during your experiments. The mutagen improves your reflexes. You can drink the mutagen as an action to gain +2 bonus to AC, Dexterity saving throws, ranged attack rolls, and initiative checks, as well as Dexterity (Acrobatics, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth) checks. This bonus lasts for 30 minutes. Only you can get benefits from your mutagen—if anyone else drinks it, they get very sick, spend 1 minute retching, and can take no other actions. Write Mutagen in the class features section of your character sheet.

## 3RD LEVEL ALCHEMIST

You gain an Alchemist Tradition!

Add one new 2nd-level extract to your formula book.

You can prepare another alchemist extract each day.

You can use another 1st-level extract each day.

You can use two 2nd-level extract each day.

You gain 1 more bomb each day, and your bomb's damage to its target increases by +1d6!

Hit Points: add 1d8 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

### ALCHEMICAL TRADITION

When you reach 3rd level, you commit yourself to an alchemical tradition: Bomber, Chemist, or Mutator. Your tradition grants you features at 3rd level and more as you level up further.

#### BOMBER

You focus your studies on sulfur, pitchblende, and anything else that explodes. Your mastery over your bombs is unparalleled.

#### SELECTIVE BOMBS

When you hit a foe with a bomb, you may choose for some of the squares next to him to not get splashed.

#### CHEMIST

You concentrate your energies into wringing the utmost efficiency out of your extracts, formulating substances beyond the reach of other alchemists.

#### INFUSION

Your extracts become infusions, which can be imbibed by others as if they were potions, gaining their benefits. Your infusions remain stable for 24 hours, at which point they become inert and useless.

#### MUTATOR

You delve deeply into the mysteries of your mutagenic brew, tinkering constantly to unlock its fullest potential.

#### GREATER MUTAGEN

The bonuses granted by your mutagen are increased to +3, and additionally your mutagen lasts for one hour.

## 2ND-LEVEL ALCHEMIST EXTRACTS

### DARKVISION

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 8 hours

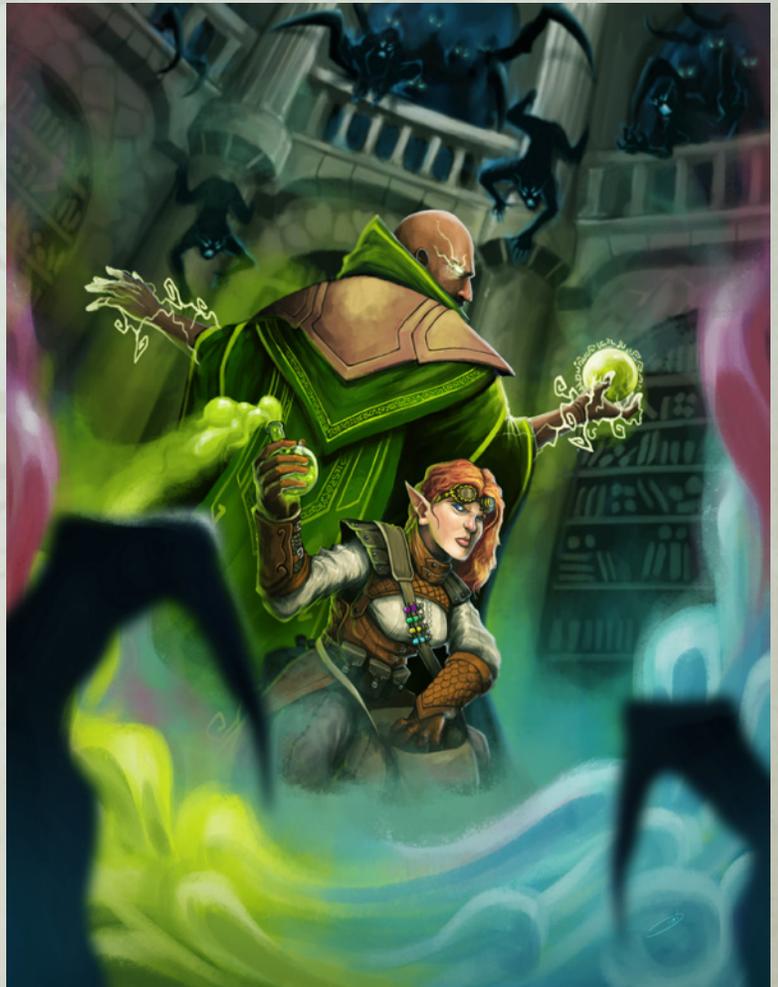
You gain the ability to see in the dark. For the duration, you have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision that is the same or better, this has no effect.

### DELAY POISON

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

If you are poisoned, you neutralize the poison. If more than one poison afflicts you, you neutralize pick which one, or you may neutralize one at random.

For the duration, you have advantage on



saving throws against being poisoned, and only take half damage from poison.

#### INVISIBILITY

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You make yourself and your gear turn invisible. Objects you pick up disappear; objects you drop become visible. Attack rolls against you have disadvantage. If you attack or cast a spell, invisibility ends.

#### LEVITATE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You make yourself float upward or downward. You can move yourself to 20 feet each round as a bonus action. The spell cannot move you sideways, but you can pull yourself along walls or ceilings. You can lift up to 500 pounds, including yourself and any items you carry. When the spell wears off, you float gently to the ground.

#### SEE INVISIBILITY

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

Invisible creatures and objects become visible to you as transparent shapes. The spell doesn't help you see creatures that are just hiding, concealed, or hard to see—it only reveals magical invisibility.

#### SPIDER CLIMB

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 1 hour

Until the spell ends, you gain the ability to move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free. You also gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

### 4TH LEVEL ALCHEMIST

Add a 2nd-level extract to your formula book. You can prepare another alchemist extract each day.

You can use one more 2nd-level extract each day.

You gain 1 more bomb each day.

**Hit Points:** add 1d8 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

You gain an Ability Score Boost! Add 2 to one of your ability scores.

### 5TH LEVEL ALCHEMIST

Add a 3rd-level extract to your formula book. You can prepare another alchemist extract each day.

You gain 1 more bomb each day, and your bomb's damage to its target increases by +1d6! **Hit Points:** add 1d8 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

Your proficiency bonus becomes +3!

#### HASTE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Until the spell ends your speed is doubled, you gain a +2 bonus to AC, you have advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and you gain an additional action on each of your turns. That action can be used only to take the Attack (one weapon attack only), Dash, Disengage, Hide, or Use an Object action.

When the spell ends, you can't move or take actions until after your next turn, as a wave of lethargy sweeps over you.

#### LESSER RESTORATION

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

End either one disease or one condition afflicting you. The condition can be blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned.

#### PROTECTION FROM ENERGY

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You protect yourself from acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder (pick one type when you drink the extract). You gain resistance to that damage type, taking only half damage from it.

## GUNSLINGER

You are a deadly shot with black powder firearms (see the rules for firearms on page ##). You draw on inner reserves of grit to commit daring deeds and take down foes.

### ARMOR AND WEAPONS

You are proficient in simple weapons, bombs, and light armor.

### STARTING WEALTH

You start with 80 gp to buy equipment.

## 1ST LEVEL GUNSLINGER CLASS

### FEATURES

Write these features in the class section of your character sheet:

Saving Throws: Dexterity, Constitution

Hit Points: 10 + your CON modifier and 1 hit die

Proficiency Bonus +2

### CLASS SKILLS

Record two of the following skills in the Skills section of your character sheet:

Acrobatics

Animal Handling

Athletics

History

Insight

Intimidation

Perception

Survival

### ARMOR AND WEAPONS

You are proficient with simple weapons, martial weapons, light armor and medium armor.

### STARTING WEALTH

(a) chain shirt or (b) leather armor

(a) a battered rifled musket (b) a battered blunderbuss

(a) a bayonet or (b) two daggers

(a) a dungeoneer's pack or (b) an explorer's pack

### WAY OF THE GUN

You know someone who sold you an old, battered firearm, and you've learned how to deal with its quirks. At 1st level, you begin play with a battered rifled musket, or a battered blunderbuss. This gun only works normally for you. Anyone else who tries to use it suffers disadvantage on attack rolls. Any other firearms you purchase cost the normal price and work just as well for anyone else.

### RAPID RELOAD

Starting at 1st level, you treat firearms as if they did not have the loading property.

### SHOOTING STYLE

You adopt a particular style of shooting as your specialty. Choose one of the following options. You can't take a Shooting Style option more than once, even if you later get to choose again.

### DUELING GUN STYLE

While wielding a firearm in one hand, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

### LONGARM STYLE

When you roll a 1 or a 2 on a damage die with a firearm that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die, and must use the new result, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The firearm must be two-handed to gain this benefit.

### SHARPSHOOTING STYLE

You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls made with firearms.

### SHOTGUN STYLE

When making an attack with a scattering shot weapon, creatures who you miss still take 1 damage from grazing shot. You may also treat bayonets as finesse weapons.

## 2ND LEVEL GUNSLINGER

You gain the Grit class ability!

You gain the Deeds class ability!

Hit Points: add 1d10 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

### GRIT

Grit helps you accomplish amazing deeds. Write Grit Points and the number 2 next to this in the class features section of your character sheet. This is your maximum grit points and after each long rest, you restore your grit points to this maximum.

You can also regain grit in the following ways.

*Critical Hit with a Firearm:* When you score a critical hit on a creature with a firearm attack while in the heat of combat, you regain 1 grit point. Confirming a critical hit on a dying creature or a creature with a Challenge Rating less than half your character's level does not restore grit. Ask your GM for more information on Challenge Ratings. (Check with your GM to find out if the creature qualifies when you score a critical hit).

*Win a Fight against Worthy Opposition:* When you win a combat against a creature or creatures with a total Challenge Rating of your character's level or greater, you regain 1 grit point. The combat counts whether you win by yourself or with the aid of others. Only combats against enemies count, practice fights or sparring with allies do not restore grit. You win a combat when all foes have surrendered, fled, or are defeated. (Check with your GM to find out if a combat qualifies after you win).

### DEEDS

You can use grit points to accomplish deeds, acts of great skill and cunning for which gunslingers are famous. At 2nd level, grit points allow you to use the following abilities.

*Deadeye:* When making an attack with a firearm within that firearm's normal range, you may spend 1 grit point to gain advantage on that attack.

*Gunslinger's Dodge:* After an opponent declares a ranged attack against you but before the attack is rolled, you can immediately spend 1 grit point to give that attack disadvantage.

*Quick Clear:* You may spend 1 grit point to clear a fouled firearm as a bonus action.

## 3RD LEVEL GUNSLINGER

You gain a Shooting Archetype!

Hit Points: add 1d10 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

### SHOOTING ARCHETYPE

When you reach 3rd level, you commit yourself to a shooting archetype: Musket Master, Pistolero, or Trick Shooter. Your archetype grants you features at 3rd level and more as you level up further.

#### LONGARM MASTER

You commit yourself to the use of heavier guns, and become able to inflict grievous damage from afar.

#### UNCANNY AIM

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, your ranged weapon attacks with firearms with the two-handed property score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

#### PISTOLERO

You devote yourself to light, easily concealed firearms, becoming as deadly with them as most are with heavier weapons.

#### DEADLY DODGE

If a creature attacks you with a melee weapon attack and misses, you can use your reaction to move five feet, then make an attack against that creature, with a firearm you wield in one hand.

#### TRICK SHOOTER

You spend your time training to pull off spectacularly impressive and useful feats of unsurpassed shooting skill.

#### TRICK SHOTS

You may attempt to shove or disarm opponents using a ranged weapon attack with a firearm. If shoving, use your attack roll instead of Strength (Athletics).

## 4TH LEVEL GUNSLINGER

Hit Points: add 1d10 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die  
You gain an Ability Score Boost! Add 2 to one of your ability scores.

## 5TH LEVEL GUNSLINGER

You gain Extra Attack!  
Hit Points: add 1d10 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die  
bonus becomes +3!

### EXTRA ATTACK

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the attack action on your turn.

## WITCH

You gained magical powers through a pact with a vague and mysterious force. You communicate with this power through your familiar, a loyal animal that visits you each day to restore your abilities and prepare you to face the challenges ahead.

## 1ST LEVEL WITCH CLASS FEATURES

Write these features in the class section of your character sheet:

Mark these saving throws: Intelligence, Wisdom

Hit Points: 6 + CON modifier and 1 hit die  
Proficiency Bonus: +2

### Class Skills

Mark two of the following skills in the skills section of your character sheet:

Arcana  
Deception  
History  
Insight  
Intimidation  
Medicine  
Nature

### ARMOR AND WEAPONS

You are proficient in all simple weapons. You can't wear armor.

### STARTING WEALTH

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a light crossbow and 20 bolts or (b) any simple weapon
- (a) a component pouch or (b) an arcane focus
- (a) a scholar's pack or (b) a dungeoneer's pack
- any simple weapon, and two daggers

### FAMILIAR

You have a familiar, a loyal animal that helps connect you to the source of your magic. Your familiar visits you each day when you prepare spells. It does not assist you in combat, scout ahead, or perform other tasks for you. You can teach your familiar new spells by allowing it to study a spellbook containing that spell, or asking it to talk to another witch's familiar who knows it. Your familiar can be any kind of animal.

## WITCH SPELLS

### CANTRIPS

Cantrips are a weak type of witch spell that you can use over and over again as much as you want, up to once per round. You don't have to prepare them like other witch spells—you always have access to these three cantrips in addition to your better spells.

### GUIDANCE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** Concentration, up to 1 minute.  
You touch one ally. Once before the spell ends, the target can roll a d4 and add the number rolled to one ability check of its choice. It can roll the die before or after making the ability check. The spell then ends.

## LIGHT

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**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** 1 hour

You touch one object that is no larger than 10 feet in any dimension. Until the spell ends, the object sheds bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional 20 feet. The light can be colored as you like. The spell ends if you cast it again or dismiss it as an action.

If you target an object held or worn by a hostile creature, that creature must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw to avoid the spell (DC 11 + your INT + your Proficiency Bonus).

## MENDING

---

**Casting Time:** 1 minute **Range** touch

**Duration** instantaneous

This spell repairs a single break or tear in an object you touch, such as a broken chain link, two halves of a broken key, a torn cloak, or a leaking wineskin. As long as the break or tear is no larger than 1 foot in any dimension, you mend it, leaving no trace of the former damage.

This spell can physically repair a magic item or construct, but the spell can't restore magic to such an object. This spell takes 1 minute to cast.

## 1ST-LEVEL WITCH SPELLS

Pick a number of spells from this page equal to 3 + your INT modifier. These are the spells that your familiar knows. Write these spell names on your character sheet. You prepare the list of witch spells that are available for you to cast. To do so, choose a number of witch spells your familiar knows equal to your Intelligence modifier + your witch level (minimum of one spell). The spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots. You may cast 2 1st-level witch spells per day! Write this number in the spell section of your character sheet. If a spell says you can cast it on an ally, you can instead cast it on yourself—you don't have to cast it on someone else.

## BURNING HANDS

---

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 15 feet

**Duration** instantaneous

As you hold your hands with thumbs touching and fingers spread, a thin sheet of flames shoots forth from your outstretched fingertips. Each creature in a 15-foot cone must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 8 + your INT + your Proficiency Bonus). A creature takes 3d6 fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The fire ignites any flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

## HIDEOUS LAUGHTER

---

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 30 feet

**Duration** Concentration, up to 1 minute

A creature of your choice that you can see within range perceives everything as hilariously funny and falls into fits of laughter if this spell affects it. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your INT + your Proficiency Bonus) or fall prone, becoming incapacitated and unable to stand up for the duration. A creature with an Intelligence score of 4 or less isn't affected.

At the end of each of its turns, and each time it takes damage, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. The target has advantage on the saving throw if it's triggered by damage. On a success, the spell ends.

## CHARM PERSON

---

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 30 feet

**Duration** 1 hour

You attempt to charm a humanoid you can see within range. It must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your INT + your Proficiency Bonus), and does so with advantage if you or your companions are fighting it. If it fails the saving throw, it is charmed by you until the

spell ends or until you or your companions do anything harmful to it. The charmed creature regards you as a friendly acquaintance. When the spell ends, the creature knows it was charmed by you.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 1st. The creatures must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

### COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

For the duration, you understand the literal meaning of any spoken language that you hear. You also understand any written language that you see, but you must be touching the surface on which the words are written. It takes about 1 minute to read one page of text.

### CURE WOUNDS

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** instantaneous

A creature you touch regains a number of hit points equal to  $1d8 + INT$ .

This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the healing increases by  $1d8$  for each slot level above 1st.

### FEATHER FALL

**Casting Time:** 1 reaction taken when you or a creature is range is falling **Range** 60 feet

**Duration** 1 minute

You can cast this spell as a reaction. Choose up to five falling creatures within range. A falling creature's rate of descent slows to 60 feet per round until the spell ends. If the creature lands before the spell ends, it takes no falling damage and can land on its feet, and the spell ends for that creature.

### INFLECT WOUNDS

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** instantaneous

Make a melee spell attack ( $DC 8 +$  your  $INT +$  your Proficiency Bonus) against a creature you can reach. On a hit, the target takes  $3d10$  necrotic damage.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by  $1d10$  for each slot level above 1st.

### MAGE ARMOR

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** 8 hours

You touch an ally who isn't wearing armor, and a protective magical force surrounds it until the spell ends. The target's base AC becomes  $13 +$  its DEX modifier. The spell ends if the target dons armor or if you dismiss the spell as an action.

### SLEEP

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 90 feet

**Duration** 1 minute

This spell sends creatures into a magical slumber. Roll  $5d8$ ; the total is how many hit points of creatures this spell can affect. Choose a number of creatures in range whose combined hp is less than the number you rolled. Each creature affected by this spell falls unconscious until the spell ends, the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake.

Undead and creatures immune to being charmed aren't affected by this spell.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, roll an additional  $2d8$  for each slot level above 1st.

## 2ND LEVEL WITCH

Your familiar learns two new 1st-level witch spells. You can prepare another 1st-level spell each day. You learn a hex!

Hit Points: add 1d6 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

## HEXES

You learn a number of magic tricks, called hexes, which grant you powers or weaken your foes. You learn one hex at 2nd level, and more as you grow stronger.

**Animal Speech:** You can speak with animals. Wary and cunning animals tend to give evasive answers, while stupid ones make very simple comments. An animal that is friendly toward you may do simple favors, while a hostile animal may threaten you.

**Charm:** You can improve the attitude of a humanoid or animal within 30 feet with soothing words. If your target fails a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency Bonus), their attitude improves by 1 step, from hostile to indifferent, or indifferent to friendly. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

**Disguise:** You can change your appearance for 1 hour as if you were using the spell *disguise self*.

**Evil Eye:** You can make a creature within 30 feet uneasy. Your target gains disadvantage on one of the following (your choice): ability checks, attack rolls, or saving throws. The disadvantage lasts for 3 rounds. If your target succeeds at a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your INT modifier + Proficiency Bonus), the penalty lasts for 1 round. If the target makes its save, it is immune to your evil eye for 24 hours.

**Flight:** You grow lighter as you gain power, eventually gaining the ability to fly. At 2nd level, you can use *feather fall* at will, and gain advantage on Strength checks made to swim. At 4th level, you can cast *levitate* once per day. At 6th level, you can fly for 5 minutes each day, as if you were using the *fly* spell. You can break up those 5 minutes into 1 minute increments.

**Healing:** You can soothe the wounds of a creature you touch. At 1st level, this ability heals 1d8 + your INT modifier. At 5th level, it heals 2d8 + your INT modifier. If you use the healing hex on a creature, you can't use it on that creature again until the next day.

## 3RD LEVEL WITCH

Your familiar learns two new 1st- or 2nd-level witch spells.

You can prepare another witch spell each day. You can cast two 2nd-level witch spells per day. Write this number of 2nd-level spells per day in the spell section of your character sheet. If a spell says you can cast it on an ally, you can instead cast it on yourself—you don't have to cast it on someone else.

Hit Points: add 1d6 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

### FOG CLOUD

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 120 feet  
**Duration** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You create a 20-foot-radius sphere of fog centered on a point within range. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. Attacks against a creature in the fog gain disadvantage, and attacks by creatures in the fog gain advantage (if a creature in the fog attacks another creature in the fog, the advantage and disadvantage cancel out and they roll as normal). It lasts for the duration or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the radius of the fog increases by 20 feet for each slot level above 1st.

### AUGURY

**Casting Time:** 1 minute **Range** personal  
**Duration** instantaneous

You ask an otherworldly entity about an upcoming action (like opening a door) to find out if it's a good idea or not. The Game Master tells you whether or not the action is a good idea, bad idea, or neither. If you cast this more than once between long rests, there's a 25% chance you get a random answer instead.

### BLINDNESS/DEAFNESS

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 30 feet

**Duration** 1 minute

One target in range must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency Bonus) or be blinded or deafened (your choice). A blinded creature gains disadvantage on attack rolls, and attack rolls against it gain advantage. A deafened creature fails any checks requiring hearing. The creature can make a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the spell.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 2nd.

### DELAY POISON

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

If you are poisoned, you neutralize the poison. If more than one poison afflicts you, you neutralize pick which one, or you may neutralize one at random.

For the duration, you have advantage on saving throws against being poisoned, and only take half damage from poison.

### FALSE LIFE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

Bolstering yourself with a necromantic facsimile of life, you gain  $1d4 + 4$  temporary hit points for the duration. If you cast it from a higher level spell slot, you gain an additional 5 temporary hit points for each level higher than 1st. If you take damage, you lose these temporary hit points first. If any of these temporary hit points are left when the spell runs out, they go away.

### HOLD PERSON

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 60 feet

**Duration** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose a humanoid that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC 11 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency Bonus) or be paralyzed, unable to move or speak, for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional humanoid for each slot level above 2nd. The humanoids must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

### LEVITATE

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 60 feet

**Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You make a creature or object float upward or downward. You can move them up to 20 feet each round as a bonus action. The spell cannot move them sideways, but they can pull themselves along walls or ceilings. You can lift up to 500 pounds, including yourself and any items you carry. When the spell wears off, the creature or object floats gently to the ground.

### SEE INVISIBILITY

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** self **Duration** 1 hour

Invisible creatures and objects become visible to you as transparent shapes. The spell doesn't help you see creatures that are just hiding, concealed, or hard to see—it only reveals magical invisibility.

### WEB

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 60 feet

**Duration** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You create a 20-foot burst of sticky webs. Creatures must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 11 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency

Bonus) if they're caught in the webs or start their turn in them. If they fail, they cannot move and their attacks gain disadvantage until they break free. A stuck creature can spend their action make a Strength saving throw against the spell. Moving through webs costs 2 squares of movement per square.

## 4TH LEVEL WITCH

Your familiar learns two new 1st- or 2nd-level witch spells.

You can prepare another witch spell each day. You can cast another 2nd level witch spell each day.

You learn a new hex! Choose one from the list of hexes.

Hit Points: add 1d6 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

You gain an Ability Score Boost! Add 2 to one of your ability scores.

## 5TH LEVEL WITCH

Your familiar learns two new 1st-, 2nd-, or 3rd-level witch spells.

You can prepare another witch spell each day. You can cast two 3rd level witch spells each day! Write this number of 3rd-level spells per day in the spell section of your character sheet. If a spell says you can cast it on an ally, you can instead cast it on yourself—you don't have to cast it on someone else.

Your Proficiency Bonus becomes +3!

Hit Points: add 1d6 + your CON modifier and gain 1 additional Hit Die

## CLAIRVOYANCE

**Casting Time:** 10 minutes **Range** 1 mile

**Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create an invisible floating eye at a location of your choice within range of the spell. You can see through this eye as if you were there. The eye sees in all directions but cannot move.

## DISPEL MAGIC

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 100 feet

**Duration** instantaneous

You can cancel a spell on a creature or object. Roll 1d20 + your INT modifier against a DC of 10 + the spell's level cast the spell. If you succeed, that spell ends. If you are canceling a spell that's 3rd level or lower, you automatically succeed. You can't use this spell on a spell with an "instantaneous" duration.

## FLY

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** Concentration, up to 10 minutes.

You touch an ally and give it the power to fly. The creature flies at a speed of 60 feet (or 40 feet if it is wearing medium or heavy armor). When the spell ends, the ally floats to the ground safely.

## LESSER RESTORATION

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** instantaneous

End either one disease or one condition afflicting an ally. The condition can be blinded, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned.

## LIGHTNING BOLT

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 120 feet

**Duration** instantaneous

You create a bolt of electricity from you to an enemy within range. Every creature (except you) in a straight line from you to that enemy (including that enemy) takes 8d6 points of electricity damage per witch level. Each creature can make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage (DC 8 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency Bonus)

## SPEAK WITH DEAD

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** 10 minutes

You can ask one dead body up to five questions. It only knows what it knew when it was alive. You have to use a language it knew when it was alive. It can lie or refuse to answer if it chooses to.

### STINKING CLOUD

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 100 feet

**Duration** 1 round/witch level

You create a 20-foot-radius cloud of poisonous stinking vapor. Living creatures in the cloud must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency Bonus) or spend 1d4+1 rounds retching and taking no actions. Creatures must make this save every time they enter or end a turn in the cloud.

### SUGGESTION

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** 30 feet

**Duration** Concentration up to 8 hours

You give an enemy one reasonable order or task that it must obey. It can resist with a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your INT + your Proficiency Bonus). The order cannot be dangerous or deadly. The enemy follows the order as best it can. If it completes the order or task, the spell ends.

### VAMPIRIC TOUCH

**Casting Time:** 1 action **Range** touch

**Duration** instantaneous

You touch an enemy and steal some of its life energy. Make a melee spell attack (1d20 + your INT modifier + your Proficiency Bonus). If you hit, the enemy takes 3d6 necrotic damage. You regain hit points equal to half this damage.

### FIREARMS IN THE TERRALLIEN SETTING

Guns are more common in *Terrallien* than they are in many other fantasy settings, but not all types of guns are available.

### FIREARMS

Firearms in *Terrallien* are flintlock, black powder weapons. They work differently from other ranged projectile weapons, such as bows and thrown weapons.

**Simple Weapons:** The people of Threll

brought some of the early secrets of crafting firearms with them when they first settled the continent. Over the past few hundred years, they made advances in producing firearms so that, even though not everyone can afford one, most folks have at least seen them in use. Anyone with proficiency in simple weapons has a basic understanding of how to load, aim, and fire a gun.

**Firearms, Black Powder, and Water:** Black powder becomes useless when exposed to water. Powder must be stored in powder horns or other sealed containers. You cannot load or fire a firearm while underwater.

**Loading a Firearm:** Because of the amount of time that it takes to reload a firearm, when you take the Attack action, or any other time you attack, you may only make one attack even if you could normally make more (for instance, a fighter with the Extra Attack feature). This does not apply to Gunslingers because of their Rapid Reload feature.

### BLUNDERBUSS RANGE 15 FEET/30 FEET

You can fire scattering shots! The blunderbuss can be loaded with a single shot or with pellets to fire a scattering shot. The damage listed here is for firing a single shot.

**Price** 200 gp **Properties:** ammunition, heavy, loading, two-handed **Damage** 1d10 piercing

### RIFLED MUSKET RANGE 80/240 FEET

The rifled musket fires a single has spiraling grooves carved inside the barrel, increasing the weapon's accuracy.

**Price** 250 gp **Properties:** ammunition, heavy, loading, two-handed **Damage** 1d8 piercing

SWIVEL MUSKET RANGE 15/30 FEET OR

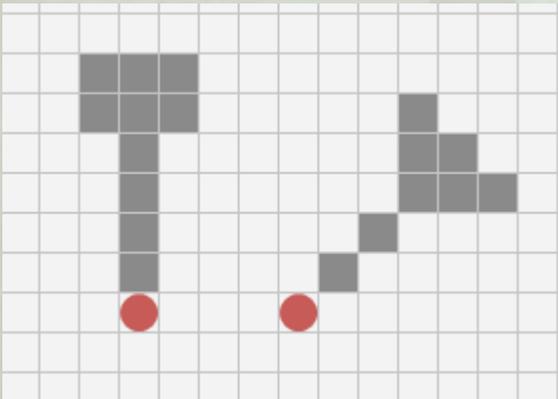
80/240 FEET (SEE BELOW)

You can fire scattering shots! This high quality gun has two barrels. One barrel fires pellets like a blunderbuss while the other fires a solid round like a rifled musket. Rotating the barrels to fire a different round requires an action.

**Price** 400 gp **Properties:** ammunition, heavy, loading, two-handed **Damage** 1d8 piercing

### SCATTERING SHOT

When loaded with pellets rather than a normal bullet, some weapons fire a scattering shot, attacking all creatures within an area. This area is a 15-foot straight line from the firer, extending into a 15-foot-cone in the same direction. Make separate attack rolls against every creature within the area, applying modifiers for range and any cover to each. The weapon's damage is 3d4 to creatures in the line area or 2d4 to creatures in the cone area. Effects that hinder visibility, such as fog or dim light, or the *displacement* or *invisibility* spells, do not foil a scattering shot attack.



### FIREARM AMMUNITION AND ACCESSORIES

Firearms usually shoot bullets or pellets and use black powder to propel their rounds. Those skilled in alchemy may know how to produce special rounds with different effects. Accessories like bayonets allow firearm wielders to continue fighting with their guns, even if they can't reload them.

### BAYONET

RANGE MELEE

A bayonet is a simple weapon. It is a blade designed to attach to the outside of a musket or blunderbuss barrel. With a bayonet attached to your firearm, you can make melee attacks with it as if it were a spear. While attached, you take a -1 penalty on ranged attacks with the firearm. Attaching or removing a bayonet is a bonus action.

**Price** 2 gp **Properties** light **Damage** 1d6 piercing

### BLACK POWDER

5 SP

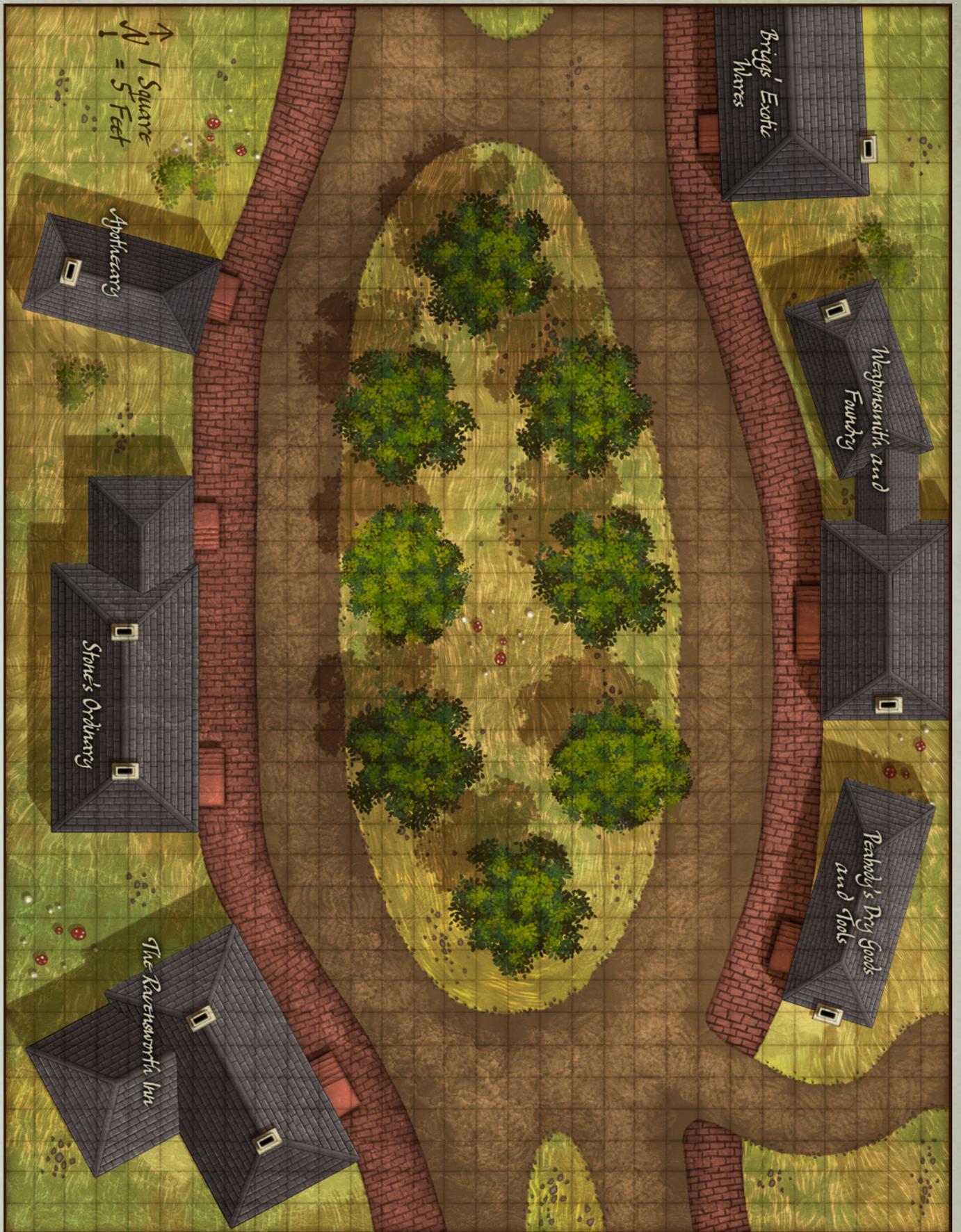
The explosive component that propels firearm ammunition. One dose is required to fire a single firearm shot. Black powder is carried in a powder horn.

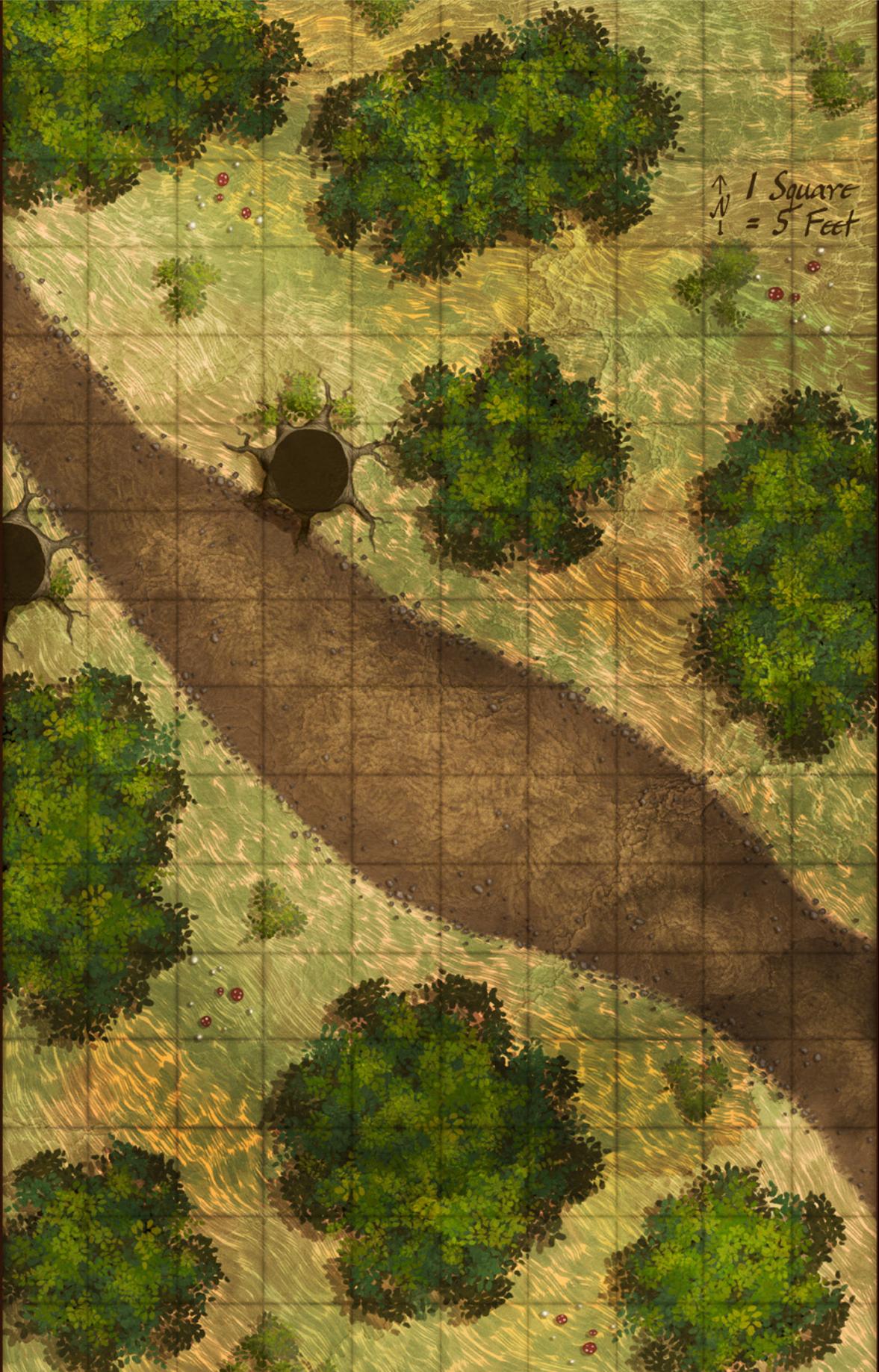
### PELLETS

5 SP

Metal pellets used to fire scattering shots from a blunderbuss.



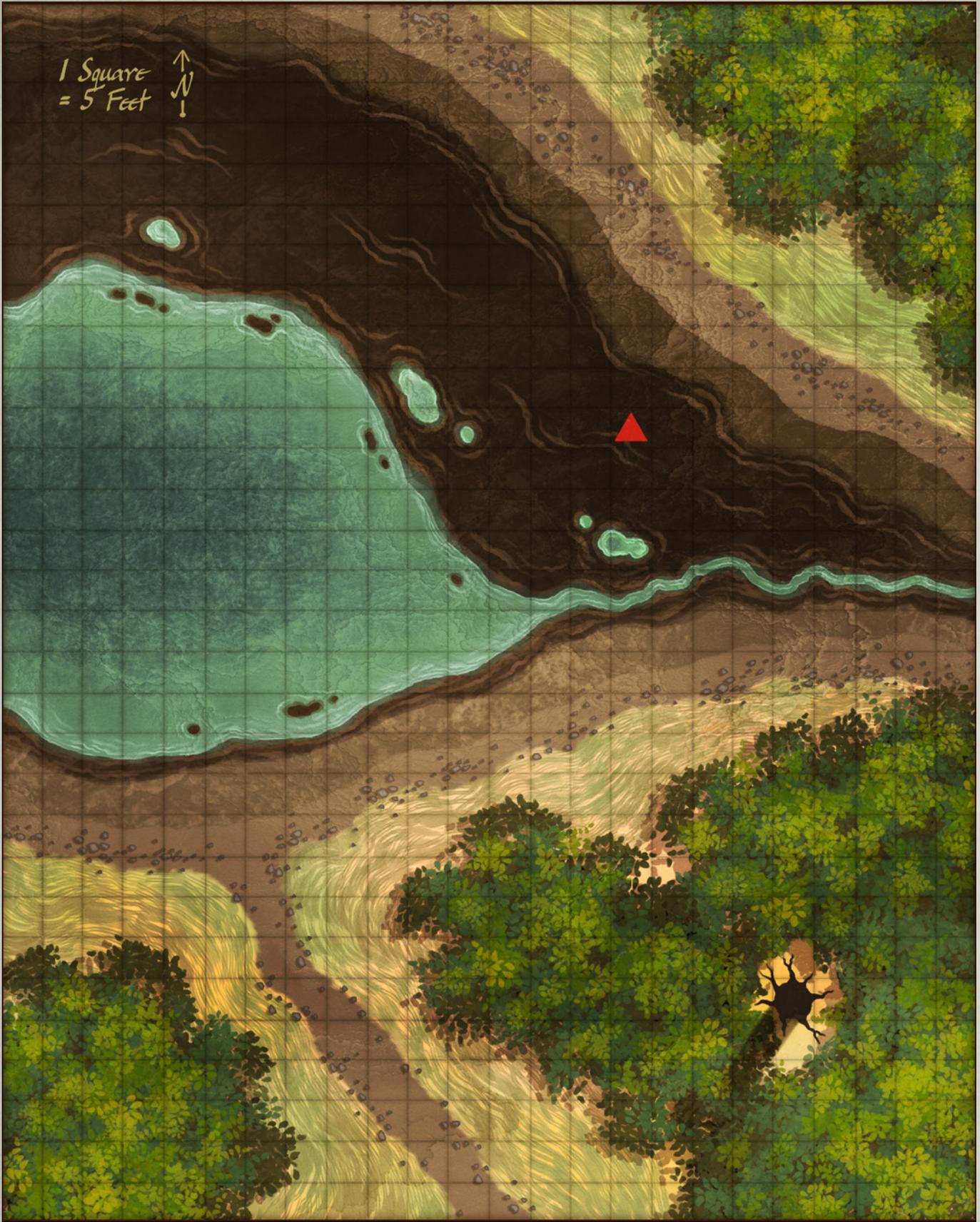




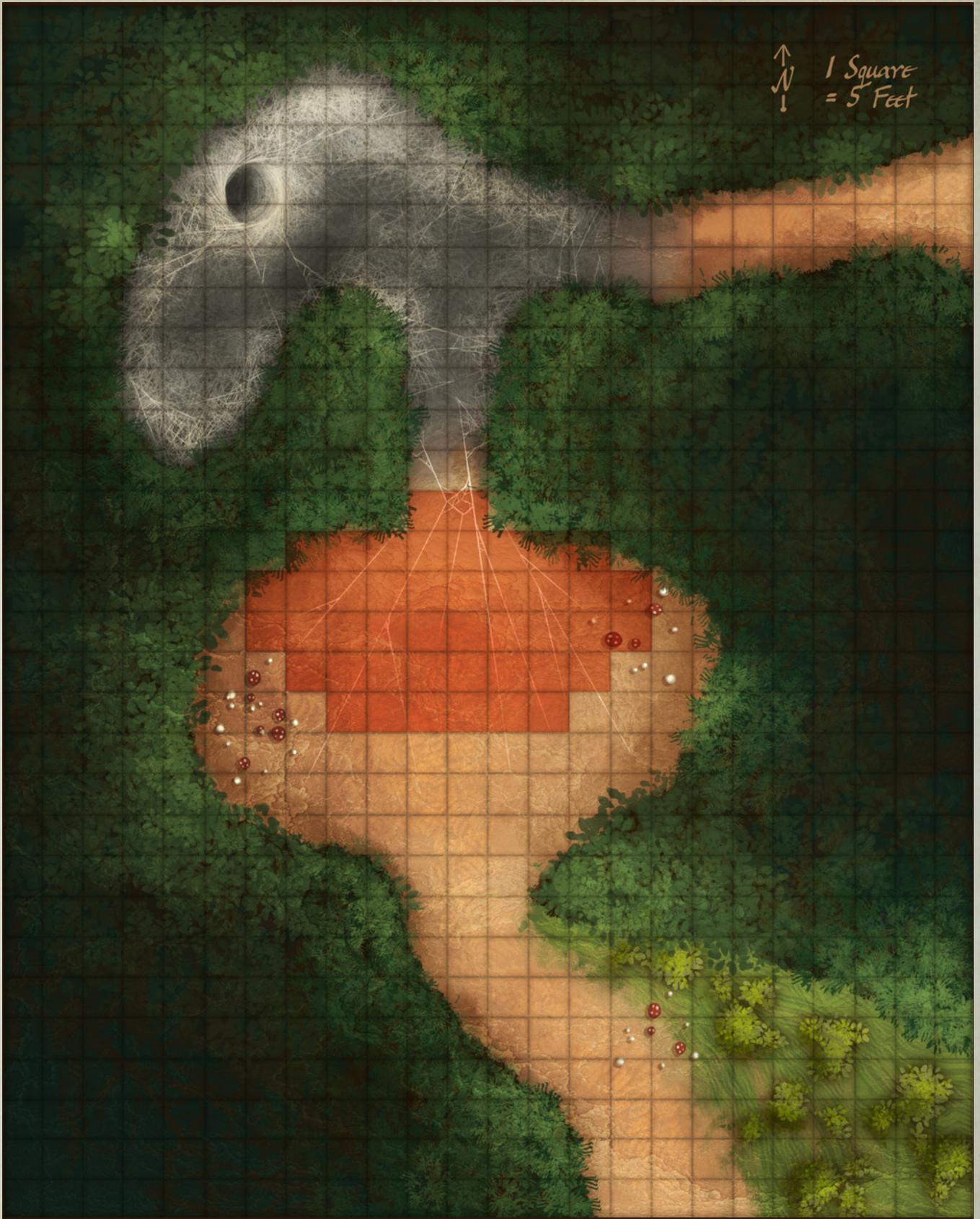
APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS

1 Square  $\uparrow$   
= 5 Feet  $\downarrow$





APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS



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1 Square  
= 5 Feet

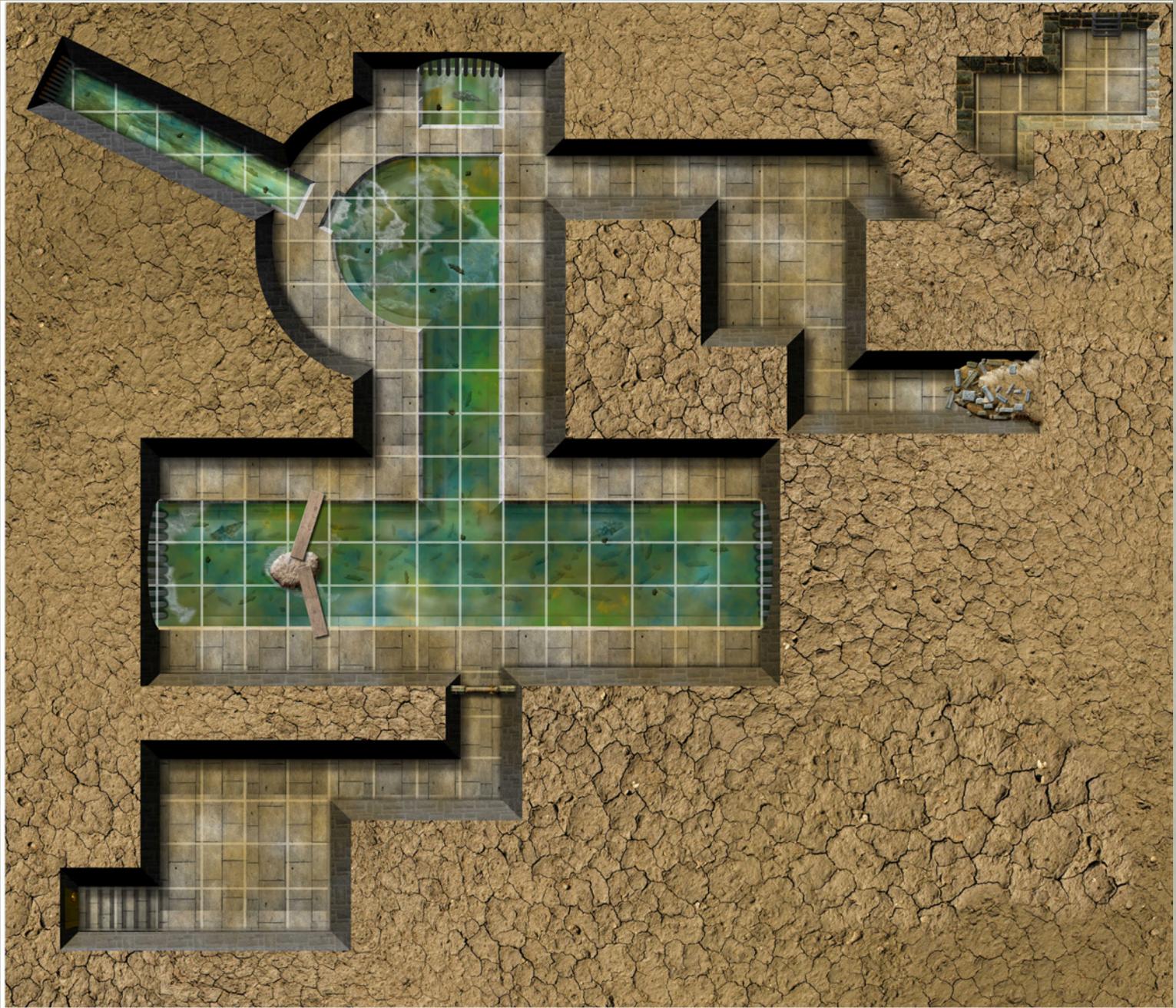


APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS





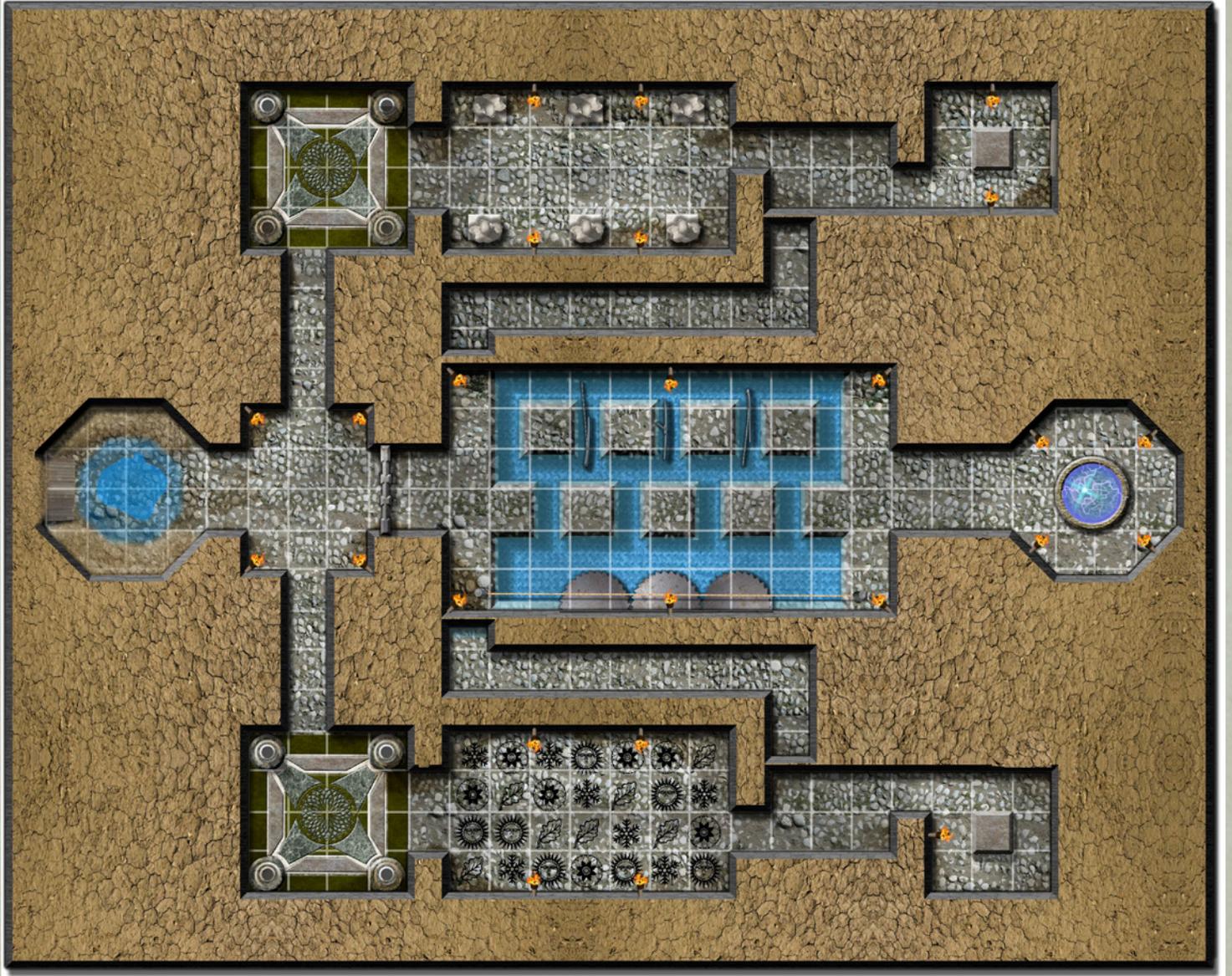
APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS





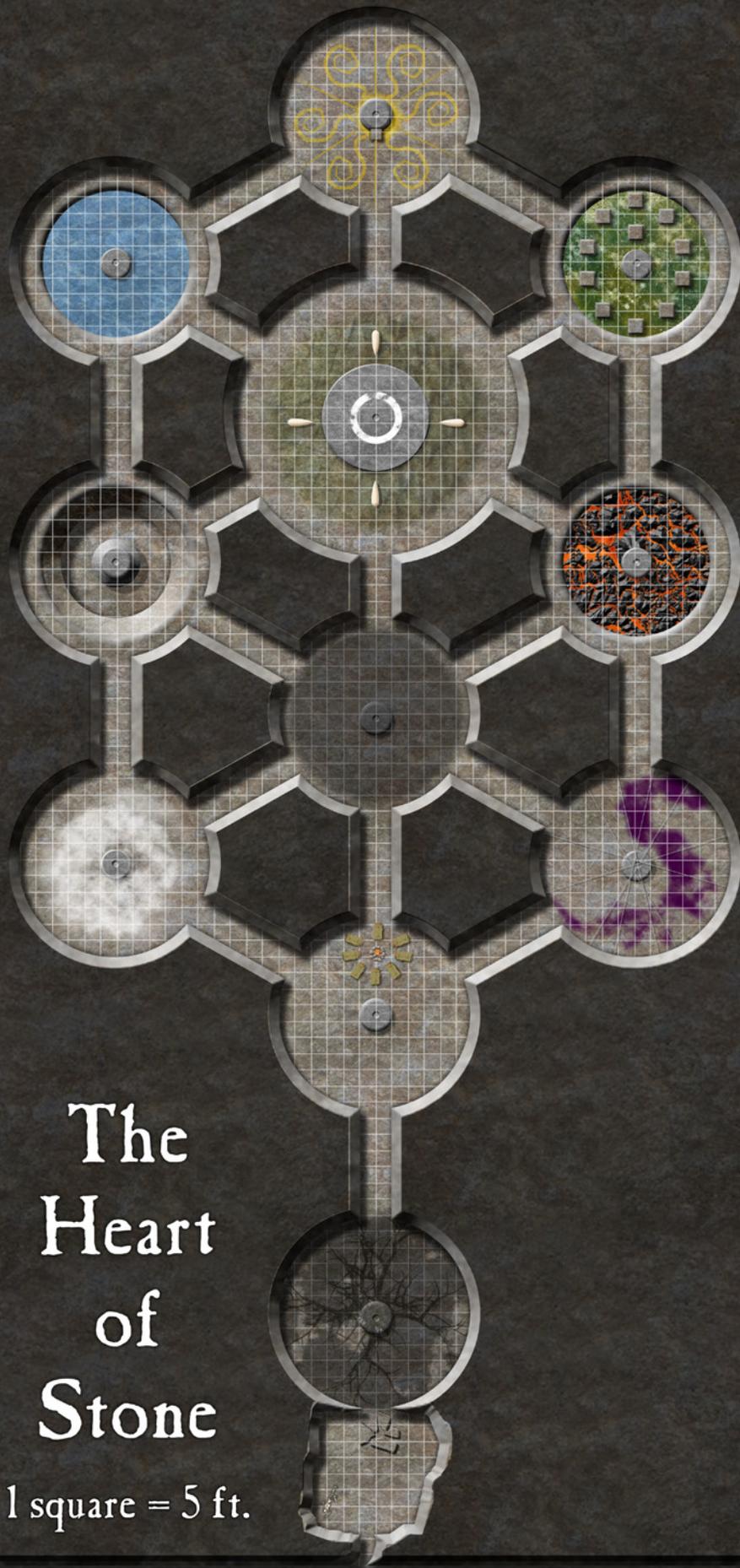
Wolfe Museum:  
 The King's Curse







APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS



# The Heart of Stone

1 square = 5 ft.

# The Winding Way



## APPENDIX 4: PLAYER MAPS

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