

# *See No Evil*

A One-Round Living City Adventure

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments. The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in *bold italics*. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters. Additionally, text relating to possible player questions or action determined events will be in normal underlined.

## Tier Information

Add the levels of the PCs to determine which tier they are on. Tiered events and foes are marked throughout the text.

- Tier 1: Total levels 4-13
- Tier 2: Total levels 14-25
- Tier 3: Total levels 26-37
- Tier 4: Total levels 38+

## DM's Background

Narsus (NAR-sus) began his career years ago in Suzail, with an attempt to become a mage. Despite his natural understanding of magical forces and writings Narsus was unable to master the art of spell casting. Bitterly disappointed, he fell back on a career as one of the archivists maintaining the libraries and records of the Council of Mages in Suzail. Instead of applying himself to his work Narsus spent most of his time seeking methods (no matter how bizarre or far fetched) to become a wizard. Eventually, Narsus stole several books of lore and traveled to the ruins of Netheril,

seeking old magic lost in ages past. Surprisingly, he succeeded. He found the tomb of the Black Wizard of Netheril (an ancient necromancer of some note) and looted it of magic, wealth, and the mummified body of the Black Wizard himself.

When Narsus left Netheril he needed a quiet place to study where he was unknown. After some searching he settled on Ravens Bluff as the perfect place. Property was cheap after the war and the town was full of new faces, so his arrival was unremarkable. Narsus bought a damaged farmstead several miles northeast of Ravens Bluff and quietly moved in. He hired a foreign construction crew to fix up the structure and ensorcelled them when the work was done. Then he quietly began experimenting.

Initially Narsus was optimistic. He was able to decipher the Black Wizard's writings, reactivate some magical devices, animate some corpses, and learn to use scrolls. Unfortunately, like an apprentice unwatched in an alchemy lab, the flashy results didn't grant understanding. Now the magic items are nearly discharged, the scrolls are almost blank, the money is running out, and Narsus still isn't a wizard. He has decided his final act will be to summon the spirit of the Black Wizard and beg to be taught the arts of necromancy.

Narsus does not have the power to accomplish his goal alone. He needs a source of magical energy to tap into in order to summon the Black Wizard. After some searching he has discovered that the merchant Markus Kalsius (kal-SIGH-us) has just received a magical fountain from the dwarves, and will shortly ship it overseas. Since the fountain could provide the energy he needs Narsus intends to steal it tomorrow, before it is loaded onto the ship.

His plan has four steps:

**Step 1.** (Already complete.) Narsus has taken a large mason's wagon and several servants, including a giant skeleton, and traveled to the outskirts of Ravens Bluff during the night.

**Step 2.** After daybreak Narsus will enter the city, hiding his crew and wagon with the *Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra* (q.v.). He has programmed an enhanced form of unseen servant to cause a diversion at the same time (releasing a flock of stirges in a nearby square), drawing the attention of the local watch away from the warehouse.

**Step 3.** While the diversion is in progress Narsus will break into the warehouse. The giant skeleton will quickly load the crated fountain onto the wagon, after which they will leave.

**Step 4.** Narsus and his servants will leave the city via the same route, using the *Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra* to hide their progress once again. By necromantically enhancing the horses Narsus will be able to reach his farmstead rapidly, and have everything unloaded well before noon.

Once he has uncrated the fountain, Narsus will immediately hide it, assemble it, and begin the process of redirecting its energies for his own purposes.

Narsus has no reliable spell casting ability whatsoever, but has all the other skills of a wizard, including the use of scrolls and other magic items. When Narsus was an infant he succumbed to the babbling disease, a dangerous illness of the brain which normally preys on adults. He managed to fight off the infection and his relieved young parents assumed it was nothing but a childhood fever. However, the sickness subtly damaged Narsus' mind, rendering him incapable of casting spells.

Narsus is not aware that he was seriously ill as a baby, and that there is a physiological reason he cannot cast spells. To his eyes a cruel and arbitrary limit has been imposed upon him by fate, which no amount of hard work can overcome. The damage was done so long ago, at such a fundamental level, and at such a formative stage that nothing less than a regeneration spell will repair the damage now.

### **The Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra**

The *Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra* is an evil artifact that Narsus recovered from the tomb of the Black Wizard of Netheril. The ankh was originally used in the worship of Thoth-Pthetra, an evil spirit now long forgotten. It has the shape of a large ankh (a cross with a loop in place of the upper branch) with a stone carving of a closed eye held in the loop. The body of the ankh is made of thick wrought iron, and the eye is made of jet. The ankh (especially the loop and eye) is encrusted with a dark sharp-smelling residue. The whole device is approximately two and a half feet long, and weighs about eight pounds.

The ankh has no powers unless activated by dipping the eye in a sharp smelling liquid composed of dark oils, creosote, and other less wholesome ingredients. While the ankh is inactive it has a very feeble magical

aura of indeterminate nature, and no obvious alignment. Once the ankh is dipped in the fluid and held aloft the eye opens, and becomes a direct link to the evil spirit of Thoth-Pthetra. The ankh remains active until it dries or is put down, causing the eye to close again. While active it has a powerful aura of necromantic and summoning magic, and is strongly Chaotic Evil. Lawful Good clerics and paladins can sense this aura of evil without using spells.

The ankh has only one power. While it is active the baleful glare of the stone eye is so terrifying that anyone looking in its general direction immediately looks away, steering clear of the vicinity of the wielder, and their mind actively shies away from recognising or remembering it. In game terms anyone (except the wielder) who has a line of sight to the ankh immediately looks away and forgets the ankh, its wielder, and everything within twenty feet of the ankh (no save) and makes way for its passage. This means the ankh wielder could pass through a hostile army, which would part around him, and not be noticed or remembered. Only evil persons may use the ankh. It has no powers for neutral or good wielders. A good aligned person holding the active ankh is blinded for 1d4 hours (no save). If a paladin or Lawful Good cleric holds the active ankh they are struck unconscious, blinded for 1d4 days, and immediately lose 1,500 xp (no save).

The ankh has several drawbacks. It has no effect on creatures unable to see it. (It is useless in the dark.) It cannot effect undead, mindless creatures, or those relying on senses other than sight. Since the ankh must be kept wet with the fluid to work, the wielder leaves a telltale trail of drops behind. In theory the ankh could be kept active indefinitely, by continuously dipping it in the fluid, but in practice the spirit of Thoth-Pthetra will become angry and eventually drive the wielder mad.

The ankh is simultaneously the major facilitating factor and constraint in Narsus' scheme. It allows him to move a pile of crates, a giant, and a big wagon through the city without being noticed, but imposes problematic restrictions. He has to do it in daylight, when everyone's around, or the Ankh is useless. He leaves a trail of drops behind him, which could be followed. He runs the severe risk of being driven mad if he takes too long, and he is reluctant to use it again in his defence later in the day. These factors have a major affect Narsus' plans and actions during the adventure.

## Adventure Outline

The adventure begins on the morning of the theft of the fountain, as Narsus approaches the city.

### Player's Introduction.

There are two possible introductions, depending on the level of the PCs. Low level parties (Tiers 1 and 2) have been hired to guard the warehouse of Markus Kalsius, which contains the fountain. High level parties (Tier 3, 4) have been hired to inspect the security precautions at the warehouse and to suggest improvements.

### Part 1: The Diversion.

En route to the warehouse the party encounters Narsus' diversion. The party must fight the stirges without harming the onlookers, who are a significant impediment to the party's actions.

### Part 2: The Warehouse.

After defeating the stirges the party arrives at the warehouse, only to find that Narsus has stolen the fountain during the diversion. Markus Kalsius asks the party to help him recover the fountain.

### Part 3: The Investigation.

Through a series of small role-playing encounters the PCs piece together the method of the theft, and discover clues leading to Narsus' farmstead. This section can be run in a variety of sequences.

### Part 4: The Farmstead.

This is the major combat of the adventure. The PCs have to defeat Narsus' guardians in order to find the fountain, which has been assembled and hidden in an empty cistern.

## Player Introduction

Depending on the level of the party there are two possible player introductions. If the party has 25 or fewer levels (Tier 1 & 2) use the Low Level Introduction. If the party has 26 or more levels (Tier 3 & 4) use the High Level Introduction. Despite the different introductions the events that follow are essentially the same.

### Low Level Introduction (Tier 1 & 2)

While the players are getting ready tell them they have a tip that they may be able to get some guard work tomorrow. The PCs may use this information to make

preparations, shop for useful items, and memorize appropriate spells. Normal pre-casting rules apply. Spellcasters have an opportunity to cast spells the morning of the adventure before they are briefed, if so desired. When they're ready proceed with the following.

*It's a hard life being an adventurer between adventures. At this time of year nothing seems to happen. The days drag by, your resources dwindle, and nobody pays attention to you any more. You were complaining about this to a friend of yours only last night. She didn't seem too sympathetic (she laughed) but she did mention a merchant friend of hers who needed a few extra guards for the rest of the week. So you decided to apply. It may not be glamorous, but guard duty pays the bills between real adventures.*

*Your breath steams in the crisp autumn air, but last night's light rain has ended, and it looks like you have a good clear day ahead of you. As you approach the merchant's business quarters in the early light you can see several other adventurers making their way to the same place. It seems you're not the only one with contacts. A sleepy clerk ushers you into a simple office and asks you to wait for a moment. As more people file in you hope there's enough work for everybody. Suddenly the door bangs open and in strides a short smiling man with dark curly hair and a thick brown beard that reaches his chest.*

**Markus Kalsius, hm, F0:** AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 10.

Markus Kalsius is a non-combatant in his early forties. He is a friendly fellow, perpetually twenty minutes late and ready to rush off.

*"Good morning everyone! I'm late already so I'll make this quick. I'm Markus Kalsius. I need a few more guards for a day or two, so I asked a few friends to pass on the word to some good people. Now that they've sent you I need you to tell me who you are, and what sort of skills and experience you've got."*

Give the PCs a few minutes to introduce themselves to each other. Markus will question a few characters.

*"Ever done any guarding before?"*

*"Have you worked with the watch?"*

*"What sort of magic can you do?"*

Once the introductions are complete he continues.

*"Well, you look like the type of guards I want. Sharp people. No plodding around a beat or nodding off. You'll only be needed for a day or two, until we can get the ship loaded and sent away. Since you're a step above the everyday guards I'll pay you 20 gold (30 gp at Tier 2) for each day's work. If you're interested you can make your mark on this contract here."*

Despite the inflated wages the PCs are probably used to this is actually an extremely high wage for guardsmen. If players raise questions about this Kalsius will tell them that they have a very nervous customer at the moment, and they're taking pains to reassure him. He won't say anything about what the warehouse contains. If some PCs refuse to work for the stated wage he'll ask them to leave. He knows he can easily get others to work for half the price. Complete the scoring sheets and end the adventure if the PCs won't accept his wages.

*"Good! Now that that's done you'd best hurry down to the warehouse compound. The night watchmen are still waiting to be relieved. Take this note and give it to Burt Silverton. He's our head watchman, and he'll show you what to do."*

The note reads:

*"Burt. These are the new guards. M.K."*

Markus then bids the PCs good day, and gets up to leave. The party will probably ask him (or the office clerk) for directions.

*"Don't you know the way to the compound? It's down by the docks of course. The one with the yellow brick walls. If you have trouble finding it just ask for Markus Kalsius' compound, and anyone can point it out."*

PCs who live or work in the area have seen the compound before, and others with local history skills remember where it is if they make a successful check.

### **High Level Introduction (Tier 3 & 4)**

As the players are setting up, pass around Player Handout #1. The PCs may use this information to make preparations, shop for useful items, and memorize appropriate spells. Normal pre-casting rules

apply. Spellcasters have an opportunity to cast spells the morning of the adventure before they are briefed, if so desired.

Once the players have finished their preparations and read the handout begin with the following:

*Yesterday evening a messenger brought you a letter from Markus Kalsius, a local merchant, soliciting your advice. You hadn't intended to accept another job so soon after your last adventure, but a little bit of consulting work seemed harmless enough; walk around, look at a few buildings, and talk to a guard or two. After that a nice dinner while you discuss your findings, and a tempting fee for your time. An easy day's work!*

*So here you are, waiting in Markus Kalsius' office, yawning as the sun breaks the horizon. You can see the last of the night's rain-clouds vanishing in the west, leaving clear skies, and the sharp autumn air tempered by a small fire in the fireplace. A sleepy looking clerk is passing around a tray of pastries. It's already half an hour since you were supposed to meet Markus, and there's still no sign of him. DM's note: plenty of time for precast ESP spells etc. to wear off. Suddenly the door bangs open and in strides a short smiling man with dark curly hair and a thick brown beard that reaches his chest.*

**Markus Kalsius, hm, F0:** AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 10.

Markus Kalsius is a non-combatant in his early forties. He is a friendly fellow, perpetually twenty minutes late and ready to rush off.

*"Good morning! Good morning! Sorry I'm late! You wouldn't believe what that carter was trying to charge. Almost robbery!" He sits on the edge of the desk and takes a bite out of a pastry.*

*"I'm so glad you could all make it. Er, introduce yourselves, if you haven't already, and then I'll tell you why I want your help."*

Let the PCs introduce themselves. If the PCs are reticent about discussing their skills Kalsius does not press them. He has a good idea of what they are capable of, which is why he wants to hire them.

*"Let me tell you why I've asked you here. I'm a merchant and ship owner, and I usually deal with cargo like grain, wine, and pottery: simple goods. Nobody really goes out of their way to steal things like that, so I haven't been too worried about security.*

*A few guards with cudgels were enough for me. But I've been given a contract to ship a very valuable piece of art overseas, to the court in Suzail itself! Now I know I'm just a glorified grain merchant, but I've got a feeling a few guards with cudgels won't do the job. This is a big thing for me, and I don't want to make any mistakes. That's why I need your advice."*

*"I'd like you to look over my premises, especially my warehouse, and see what needs to be done to make things safe. Find out what I'm doing wrong. You can meet my guards, and talk to my workers. Then tell me what needs to be done, and we can start making arrangements. I'll pay each of you a consulting fee of 70 gp for the day's work. Is that all right?"*

Markus will be quite happy if the PCs accept this low price, and will initially meet haggling with:

*"Low! You could buy a good horse for that!"*

After all, he's getting a party of successful adventurers to hang around his warehouses all day looking mean and asking questions, and that's a powerful deterrent. If anyone bargains he'll go as high as 150 gp each at Tier 3, 200 gp at Tier 4. Make a note of the price that is agreed upon. (If the PCs decline his final offer he won't hire them, and the adventure is over.) After the price is settled and shaken on he continues.

*"Great! I'm glad were working together on this. Um, I guess the best place for you to start would be at my warehouse, right? I'm already late for another meeting, so you go ahead and I'll meet you there. Here, give this note to Burt Silvertan when you get there, and he'll show you around."*

With that he rushes away. The note reads:

*"Burt. These are the experts I've hired. Extend to them your fullest cooperation. M.K."*

The PCs can get directions from the clerk, as described in the Low Level introduction.

## **Part 1: The Diversion**

As the PCs make their way to Markus' warehouse they run into the first effects of Narsus' diversion. People start rushing by, heading in the same direction as the party. PCs can overhear disjointed remarks as people hurry past; intriguing sound bites like:

*"Well hurry, before they cut him down."*

*"It's horrible.."*

*"Can they help him?"*

*"But what are they?"*

*"Has anyone called the watch yet?"*

If the PCs accost someone they will find out that nobody really knows what is happening, other than:

*"They say there's a guy hanging from the old monument in the square up there."*

Nobody wants to hang around and talk to the PCs, and they will try to hurry away to see the spectacle. Since the square is in the direction the PCs were heading anyway it's likely they'll investigate. As the PCs enter the square they will find the horrifying diversion Narsus has created to draw attention away from his actions at the warehouse.

*The road leads into a small cobbled square surrounded by tall wood and plaster houses. As you shoulder your way into the crowd you are startled to see the number of people that have already pushed into the limited space. People are jostling and pointing towards the center of the square where a crumbling monumental column pokes above the crowd, the heroic statue of a forgotten warrior leaning drunkenly from the top. A cloud of ugly black bat-like creatures is fluttering around the top of the column, where a man hangs head down from the statue. They squeak and squeal at each other as they claw their way over his bloodstained clothing. The man struggles feebly, causing some of the creatures to take flight before others settle in their place. Some fly low over the crowd, making people shriek and duck. You can see a flustered corporal trying to keep people away from the column, but his men are spending more time gazing at the spectacle than controlling the crowd.*

The diversion consists of a flock of stirges (which the PCs will easily recognize unless they are very low level), the body of one of Narsus' laborers, and an enhanced form of unseen servant. The unseen servant carried the body to the top of the column and tied it to the statue by one leg. It then released the stirges to feed on the cooling corpse. Every now and then the unseen servant moves the corpse to make it look like it is still alive. This is an important part of the diversion. Point

it out again if the PCs are considering blasting away with area effect spells or missiles. The unseen servant can be detected as a magical aura (conjunction/summoning) around the corpse, and can be destroyed by the use of a *dispel magic* spell or 8 hp of damage from area effect spells. It will not interact in any way with the PCs, and will dissipate in half an hour if left undisturbed.

The column itself is twenty feet tall, with the bronze statue adding another five feet to its height. (See Map #1) It is covered in crumbling marble carvings and is in very fragile condition (-10% to climbing rolls). The statue itself is in better condition, but isn't very firmly attached to the column. A little effort could easily topple it. The body, dressed in labourer's clothes, is tied to one of the statue's legs by a short length of rope around its ankle. Since the face is towards the column nobody can tell who it is.

Give the PCs several minutes to take in the scene, ask questions, and take preemptive action. Emphasise how crowded and noisy the square has become. (There are nearly 300 people present.) Hearing is difficult. Short PCs (halflings, gnomes, and dwarves) are having difficulty moving and seeing in the tall crowd, which is largely human. People keep bumping into each other. If the PCs try shoving their way through the crowd they'll get a lot of nasty glares from the spectators and cries along the lines of:

*"Hey, watch it!"*

Progress through the press will be slow. The PCs should realize that this is not an easy place to fight.

The crowd is gawking at someone else's misfortune, just like curious bystander's do today. The PCs can overhear some people in the crowd shouting advice at the watchmen.

*"Cut him down!"*

*"Somebody get a ladder!"*

Despite the stirges swooping around the ignorant townsfolk don't feel endangered - yet. PCs who warn the townsfolk about the danger will be met with skepticism and indifference.

*"What did she say?"*

*"What's a stirge?"*

*"Those are just carrion bats!"*

Attempts to get people to leave are complicated by the continued arrival of new spectators.

If the PCs somehow disturb the body or any of the stirges the flock will immediately descend into the crowd and attack.

If the PCs do nothing to provoke the stirges in the first few minutes some of the locals will mount a rescue attempt of their own.

*A commotion in the crowd draws your eye to a group of young men shouldering their way through the throng with a ladder and some poles. The corporal at the foot of the column tries to fend them off, but the tallest of the youths shouts him down angrily, gesturing at the top of the column.*

*"We aren't just gonna let him die up there!"*

*Shouts of support ring out from the crowd.*

*"That's right!"*

*"You tell'im Pete!"*

*The corporal eyes the angry crowd, and reluctantly stands aside, while the young men lean the ladder against the column and start to climb. The one on the ladder takes a pole and nervously jabs at the creatures crawling on the stricken man's body.*

This disturbance will cause the stirges to attack. Even if the PCs somehow prevent the young men from trying to rescue the victim the stirges will grow hungry in a few more minutes and descend upon the crowd to feed.

*Suddenly the swirling cloud of black-winged creatures dives into the crowd, and the townsfolk bolt in panic. Men and women run terrified in all directions, pursued by squealing fluttering forms. After a moments attempted resistance even the guardsmen are swept away, and flee with the crowd.*

Try not to run this as a mechanical exercise in hack and slash, with *x* stirges dying in *y* rounds. Role-play the chaos. There are large numbers of frightened and wounded people in the chaotic mob, shouting and screaming and sobbing in terror.

*"Get it off me! Get it off!"*

*"Look out!"*

*"He's dying, he's dying..."*

*"Thomas, where are you Thomas?"*

*"Mommy?"*

The people in the square are not adventurers or soldiers. They are helpless people the PCs must try to save.

### **Resolving the Combat**

There are two types of stirges, hungry stirges and sated stirges. Only a few hungry stirges attack PCs; the majority attack townsfolk. Sated stirges are not hungry, and do not attack. They draw fire and cause confusion as they fly around because they look just as dangerous as the hungry stirges, but if they are wounded they retreat. Hungry stirges leave once they have fed.

There is no need to actually roll a complete combat for the stirges attacking civilians. There are so many die rolls that this would slow combat down considerably. The rate at which civilian casualties occur is listed for each tier. This ensures that all parties face a consistent challenge. Reduce the number of casualties as the PCs kill or drive off each hungry stirge.

#### **Tier 1:**

The stirges will attack 6 civilians. Two per round will drop unconscious in rounds 5, 6, and 7, and 2 per round will die in rounds 10, 11, and 12, unless the PCs intervene.

**Hungry Stirges (8):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 8/4, MV 3, FL 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 4, THACO 17, #AT 1, Dmg 1-3 (beak), SA Blood drain 1 hp/round; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 8

Saves: PPD 14, RSW 16, Pet 15, Brth 17, Spell 17.

**Sated Stirges (8):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 8/4, MV 3, FL 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 4, THACO 17, #AT 1, Dmg 1-3 (beak), SA Blood drain 1 hp/round; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 8

Saves: PPD 14, RSW 16, Pet 15, Brth 17, Spell 17.

Stirges have very tough flexible leathery wings, and can fly as long as they have at least 2 hit points. Flying stirges are AC 4, due to their erratic flight. Attacks that miss a feeding stirge strike its victim for half damage. Called shots do not run this risk. If the PC grabs the stirge in one hand subsequent attacks can be made safely. PCs can tear a stirge off its victim, requiring a strength check at +2, although this gives the stirge a free attack on the PC. Since stirges have smooth beaks the withdrawal causes no extra damage to the victim. Remember that unconscious victims continue to lose hp until doctored.

#### **Tier 2:**

The stirges will attack 9 civilians. Three per round will drop unconscious in rounds 3, 4, and 5, and 3 per round will die in rounds 7, 8, and 9, unless the PCs intervene.

**Hungry Stirges (13):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 8/4, MV 3, FL 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 6, THACO 17, #AT 1, Dmg 1-3 (beak), SA Blood drain 2 hp/round; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 8

Saves: PPD 14, RSW 16, Pet 15, Brth 17, Spell 17.

**Sated Stirges (8):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 8/4, MV 3, FL 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 6, THACO 17, #AT 1, Dmg 1-3 (beak), SA Blood drain 2 hp/round; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 8

Saves: PPD 14, RSW 16, Pet 15, Brth 17, Spell 17.

Stirges have very tough flexible leathery wings, and can fly as long as they have at least 2 hit points. Flying stirges are AC 4, due to their erratic flight. Attacks that miss a feeding stirge strike its victim for half damage. Called shots do not run this risk. If the PC grabs the stirge in one hand subsequent attacks can be made safely. PCs can tear a stirge off its victim, requiring a strength check at +2, although this gives the stirge a free attack on the PC. Since stirges have smooth beaks the withdrawal causes no extra damage to the victim. Remember that unconscious victims continue to lose hp until doctored.

#### **Tier 3, 4.**

The stirges will attack 12 civilians. Four per round will drop unconscious in rounds 3, 4, and 5, and 4 per round will die in rounds 5, 6, and 7, unless the PCs intervene.

**Hungry Stirges (17):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 8/4, MV 3, FL 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 8, THACO 17, #AT 1, Dmg 1-3 (beak), SA Blood drain 3 hp/round; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 8

Saves: PPD 14, RSW 16, Pet 15, Brth 17, Spell 17.

**Sated Stirges (8):** Int Animal; AL N; AC 8/4, MV 3, FL 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 8, THACO 17, #AT 1, Dmg 1-3 (beak), SA Blood drain 3 hp/round; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML 8

Saves: PPD 14, RSW 16, Pet 15, Brth 17, Spell 17.

Stirges have very tough flexible leathery wings, and can fly as long as they have at least 2 hit points. Flying stirges are AC 4, due to their erratic flight. Attacks that miss a feeding stirge strike its victim for half damage. Called shots do not run this risk. If the PC grabs the

stirge in one hand subsequent attacks can be made safely. PCs can tear a stirge off its victim, requiring a strength check at +2, although this gives the stirge a free attack on the PC. Since stirges have smooth beaks the withdrawal causes no extra damage to the victim. Remember that unconscious victims continue to lose hp until doctored.

### Crowd Combat Rules

The PCs are packed into a small square with a screaming panicking mob of stampeding people (AC 10, HD 1, HP 6, non-combatant). Melee combat is difficult, and if they cast area effect combat spells or use missile weapons indiscriminately they are in great danger of harming the people they are trying to protect. For the first two rounds the following crowd rules are in effect.

**1) Knockdown:** PCs caught in the panicked mob must make STR checks at the beginning of each round in order to avoid being knocked down by the crowd. Those taking refuge in doorways, etc., do not need to check. Because of their size, dwarves check at -2, while gnomes and halflings check at -4. PCs standing still to cast spells have an additional -2. Those who fail take trampling damage by Tier, and lose one stonewall per point of damage.

**Tier 1** = 1 point

**Tier 2** = 1d2 points

**Tiers 3,4** = 1d3 points

PCs that are knocked down spend the rest of the round regaining their feet.

**2) Weapon Size:** PCs using large or two-handed weapons (pole-arms, two-handed swords, longbows, etc.) in the crowd have a -4 to hit penalty.

**3) Missile Weapons:** The square is so crowded that it is essentially impossible to avoid hitting the townsfolk if a PC misses the target. Called shots will not help prevent hits on bystanders in this situation. There are simply too many people in the line of fire. This is obvious to the PCs, and should be explained to them before they decide to shoot. Apply the following restrictions:

- Any thrown weapon missing a stirge will land in the crowd. Medium and large thrown weapons fall back into the crowd *even if they hit.* (Stirges are the size of large crows. Imagine a four-foot long javelin sticking out of a crowd. The result would be a dangerous crash landing.)

- Any device-propelled missile that misses a low flying stirge (or one in the crowd) will strike the crowd. Any device-propelled missile that misses a high flying (i.e. sated) stirge will fly into the city or strike a nearby building.
- Roll 1d6 for each missile landing in the crowd. On a 1, 2, or 3 the missile only nicks or bruises someone, causing no damage. On a 4 or 5 a bystander suffers a minor (3 hp) wound. On a 6 a bystander suffers a life threatening wound, is rendered unconscious, and begins bleeding to death.

After two rounds enough people have escaped the square that crowd penalties no longer apply.

### Combat Spells

Pay close attention to the size of any area effect spells. The square is fairly small, and large combat spells are difficult to wield in such a confined space. For example, a *fireball* centered on the body would touch the ground in the vicinity of the column and wound standing people almost 15 feet away. If a *fireball* were to accidentally detonate on a low flying stirge the result could be catastrophic. *Lightning bolts* are going to bounce off the adjacent houses, unless cast at very high angles. If the column or the surrounding buildings are caught in the area of effect of high damage spells they have to make saves to avoid catching fire or sustaining severe structural damage. The column is in perilous state, and a failed saving throw indicates the statue has toppled off the top causing 1d12 points of damage to an unfortunate victim below.

Structural Saving Throws				
	Cold	Normal Fire	Magic Fire	Lightning Bolt
Column	4	2	4	14
Building	2	5	7	12

Even spells causing no damage can have unfortunate consequences. The innocuous *sleep* spell will affect the townsfolk (1 HD) before it affects the stirges (1+1 HD).

### After the Combat

After eight to ten rounds of combat (DM's discretion) a squad of five disciplined guardsmen and a Sergeant arrive at a run and immediately begin to take charge

**Guard Sergeant, hm, F3:** AL LG; AC 4 (chain, shield); MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 18 (16); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+3 (long sword); SA Strength, Long Sword Specialization; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16

**Guardsmen, hm, F1 (5):** AL LG; AC 4 (chain, shield); MV 12; hp 8; THAC0 20 (18); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+3 (long sword); SA Strength, Long Sword Specialization; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 14

Once the fight is over people will trickle back to help the wounded and carry off any dead. If the PCs have done well they get profuse thanks from the people they saved. If they inadvertently hurt someone they get hostile glares and unfriendly comments.

If the PCs spend some time examining the scene after the combat they can find three wicker birdcages that used to hold the stirges hidden in a back alley. If they examine the body they will note that it has already cooled significantly, since the labourer died a few hours ago. There is a mason's guild crest on its tunic. Appropriate heraldry or local knowledge skills show that the crest uses the heraldic colours of Tantras, not Ravens Bluff. The body has no other items of value.

In some cases, astute PCs may recognize the diversion for what it is, and try to head to the warehouse immediately. The most direct route to the warehouse is through the square, but by the time the PCs struggle through the crowd to the opposite road the stirges will attack. If the PCs try flying, teleporting, or using other roads they will arrive only a few minutes after Narsus has left the warehouse.

## Part 2: The Warehouse

Once the PCs have finished mopping up at the diversion they should proceed to Markus Kalsius' warehouse compound.

*You find the compound easily enough with a bit of help from passing labourers. The tall brick walls hide the warehouses from the street, and it's only when you enter the main gate that you realise something isn't right. There are two warehouses and a small guard shack inside the compound, but nobody is at work. The stout doors to one of the warehouses have been smashed open, and a crumpled body lies in the opening.*

The PCs are the first to witness the effect of Narsus' raid on the compound. When Narsus entered the

compound as it opened for morning business there were only six people present. Because of the *Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra* they were caught unawares, and literally never knew what hit them. The victims were easily overpowered as powerful blows from Narsus' giant skeleton fell among them. The giant skeleton broke down the warehouse door and loaded the disassembled fountain onto the wagon. The whole process took less than fifteen minutes, and Narsus is now making his way out of the city.

The PCs have a few minutes to make a hasty exploration of the compound before Markus Kalsius catches up with them. Remember that from the PC's perspective the intruders may very well still be in the compound. Caution and paranoia should be encouraged! If the PCs enter the warehouse they see the following:

*As you pass through the broken doors you step over the still body of a young man in cheap padded armor. Dim light from the small barred windows illuminates piles of sacks and bales, and stacks of crates. Some of the crates lie in a broken jumble, spilling shards of pottery and tufts of straw onto the flagstone floor. More bodies lie heaped in one corner; three young guards, a middle-aged man, and an elderly dwarf.*

Although the party doesn't know it, the bodies are those of **Burt Silverton** (the middle aged human), **Thorfin Hammerfell** (the elderly dwarf), and four guards (young human males). The guardsmen all wear padded armor over simple tunics and hose. Burt is wearing an old set of scale mail over serviceable garments of good blue cloth. Thorfin is dressed in rich red velvet, and wears gold armbands set with emeralds. The guards have clubs, Burt has a broadsword, and Thorfin has an ornamental dagger. Their weapons still hang at their sides.

After a few minutes Markus Kalsius arrives at his compound in the company of **Master Olin Baldurson** (O-lin BALL-der-sun), a dwarven sculptor.

*Markus Kalsius and a pale young dwarf stand stunned for a moment in the compound gate, before rushing towards the warehouse, shouting as they go.*

*"Burt! Where are you Burt!"*

*"What's going on Thorfin?"*

*As they burst into the warehouse they see the broken crates, and then the bodies. Markus runs to his men, and the dwarf falls to his knees among the smashed crates.*

*"It's gone! My lovely fountain!"*

***"Damn the fountain," snarls Markus. "My men are dead!"***

Markus will start a rapid-fire questioning of the party, becoming progressively angrier and more accusatory as the questioning continues.

***"What happened?"***

***"How long ago?"***

***"Well where were you?"***

***"What took you so long?"***

***"Why didn't you see anything?"***

Markus will eventually calm down, but the sudden murder of his men has clearly disturbed him.

***"Burt's been with me since the beginning. Twenty one years."***

Markus can identify the bodies for the PCs and answer questions. Burt and the guards were trusted friends, and there were no ill feelings amongst them. Thorfin Hammerfell was the merchant who gave him the contract to ship the fountain to Suzail. He can also describe how he hid the fountain under a pile of crates of pottery.

Master Olin Baldurson is a young dwarven male, only 35, with pale blonde hair, a sparse beard, and thin refined features. Despite his youth he is a gifted sculptor, and created the fountain. Olin is stupefied by the loss of his fountain, and keeps wailing about how special and precious it is.

***"Three years to find the right marble alone! Hours of delicate work, shaping, carving, polishing... And now it's gone!"***

Olin will describe the fountain in excruciating detail if asked (sufficient for *locate object* spells to function, if the PCs pay attention for several rounds). It is an oval basin of white marble, approximately five feet wide, three feet high, and eight feet long, with a statue of a nymph at one end, pouring water from a jug into the pool. It is quite magical, generating a stream of cool sweet water that is magically refreshing (a small drink provides an hour's rest.) Because of the dimensional magics involved making the water flow, the fountain cannot be magically transported or transformed (teleport, levitate, reduce, portable holes, etc.) without

destroying its special properties. This explains why it must be moved by wagon and boat. The fountain was disassembled into twelve large crates for transportation, each weighing over 250 pounds.

After allowing the PCs to meet Olin Baldurson and question him and Markus about what's been stolen the conversation turns to the meat of the matter. Will the PCs track down the fountain and recover it?

***Markus squares his shoulders and looks at you all.***

***"Well, I know it's not what I hired you for, but I really need your help now. I'm going to go for the watch, but they'll take forever to do anything. I have an obligation to deliver this fountain tomorrow, and Markus Kalsius doesn't break his word. I'm not sure what I can offer in the way of a reward yet, but I'll make it worth your while. Will you help me get it back?"***

While the PCs make their reply Master Baldurson keeps whining in the background.

***"You must, you simply must! You can't let my fountain fall into the hands of thugs and ruffians!"***

After the party agrees to the investigation and pursuit:

***Markus solemnly shakes your hands.***

***"Thank you. I knew I could count on you. And friends..." he points to the still bodies in the corner, "...bring their murderer back alive. I'm going to see him hanged."***

With that, Markus stomps away with Master Baldurson in his wake, and the process of gathering clues and tracking the thieves begins.

## **Part 3: The Investigation**

There are a number of important observations to be made during the course of the investigation. Most do not require the use of specific skills or proficiencies.

### **Finding Clues and Tracking**

The objective is to challenge the intelligence and ingenuity of the PCs, rather than to conduct an exercise in making repeated proficiency checks. Therefore if a PC makes a specific and sensible suggestion which could reasonably be expected to work you should

consider letting the attempt succeed, regardless of proficiencies and skills.

For example: if a PC asks "Is there anything in the compound?" then make her go through all the rolls. But if she says "I bend down and look for more dark droplets near the compound gate," you should probably let her succeed.

Since this is a city campaign PCs with the tracking skill (typically rangers) are rare. If there is a PC with the tracking skill let him shine in comparison to the others. However, if nobody has the tracking skill, consider allowing anyone to use observation rolls at half intelligence in its place.

## **At the Warehouse.**

### **The Dead Employees.**

PCs can make the following useful observations about the dead guards:

- All the dead were killed very recently.
- They were slain by deep weapon wounds delivered to the head and shoulders from above.
- The wounds were caused by a large edged weapon.
- None of the guards have drawn their weapons (They were caught completely by surprise.)
- None of their personal effects have been taken, not even Thorfin's valuable jewelry.

*Speak with dead* spells won't provide much data, since the Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra prevented the deceased from seeing or remembering anything unusual.

### **The Warehouses.**

The PCs can make the following useful observations about the warehouses.

- Only the warehouse with the fountain in it has been broken into.
- The other warehouse is still locked and undisturbed.
- The door to the raided warehouse was broken down, but there are no marks from tools, axes, battering rams, etc. (The giant skeleton simply pushed till they broke.)
- Nothing in the raided warehouse has been disturbed except the crates that hid the fountain.
- These crates have been tossed aside with enough force to break them open.
- The remaining goods in the warehouse are grain, wine, and household pottery.
- There are no drag marks on the floor from the heavy fountain crates. (The giant skeleton could lift them easily.)

- There is a spattering of dark oily sharp-smelling droplets (still damp) on the clean warehouse floor. (These are from the Ankh.)

### **The Compound.**

The PCs can make the following useful observations about the compound:

- There are fresh horse droppings near the warehouse door (from the wagon team.)
- There are several large bloodstains near the compound gate and guard shack (where the guards were slain)
- Smears of blood show where the bodies were dragged into the warehouse.
- The damp packed earth of the compound is a confused mass of tracks, including those of the PCs, guards, merchants, and past customers. PCs who make successful tracking checks can pick out fresh tracks of a giant humanoid (tracking -2), several sets of man sized boot tracks that don't belong to the guards or the party (tracking - 4) and the tracks of a four horse team and large wagon (tracking +1)
- The wagon ruts are deeper on the way out than on the way in
- A trail of small dark sharp smelling droplets leads between the compound gate and the broken down warehouse door (tracking -2). If the PCs have already spotted the droplets inside the warehouse they are much easier to follow (tracking +4).

Once they have finished at the warehouse there are several avenues of investigation the PCs could follow to determine where the fountain has gone. Perhaps the most obvious is to try and track the trail of strange droplets to its source, questioning people along the way. The PCs might also try divinatory magic, contacts with the criminal underworld, or other avenues of approach.

### **Tracking the Wagon.**

Narsus took the most direct approach possible when travelling in the city. Because he was using a large wagon he stayed on the wide main road running from the north gate to the harbour. This is a heavily trafficked cobblestone road, making tracking the wagon difficult. The wagon itself leaves no trace on the cobbles, but the droplets of fluid from the Ankh do.

The droplets lead out of the compound gate, and turn towards the main road, but they are soon scuffed and difficult to find due to traffic (tracking +0). PCs can track the wagon a block to the main road, and

determine that it turned away from the harbour and headed towards the closest city gate. Shortly after that the droplets are completely obliterated. They can be found again just outside the city gate, where the dark droplets have soaked into the dirt road and remain visible.

When Narsus left the city he continued to lead the team for two hundred yards along the dirt road, leaving his telltale droplet trail. Then he stopped to feed the horses an *accelerant potion*, before carelessly tossing the empty green glass bottle into the roadside ditch, boarding the wagon, and racing off. The PCs can plainly see the startling traces of a draft team breaking into a full earth-ripping gallop. Close inspection of the damp ground will show the slightly erratic wheel ruts of the careening wagon among those left by slow moving carts. The fast moving wagon can be tracked (+2) for two miles east north east along the road to Highbank Forest, before it leaves the road and turns north west, following a small winding farm track through the hills for another mile and a half to Narsus' farm. There are no droplets on the road while Narsus is on the wagon. Narsus stopped the wagon at the turnoff to feed the team more accelerant potion, so there are droplets from the Ankh and the marks of the team breaking into a gallop again. A brief search will turn up another empty green bottle in the hedgerow. PCs with even the feeblest knowledge of horsemanship know there is no way a draft team can sustain a three-and-a-half mile gallop with a heavily laden wagon.

PCs tracking the wagon will have to move slowly and check every side road and fork, so the journey to Narsus' farm will take several hours. If the PCs are travelling on horseback they will have to dismount frequently, or risk losing the trail completely. After you have played out the checking of one or two intersections you can assume the PCs have developed a standard procedure and gloss over the remainder in less detail.

### **People en-route.**

Questioning people along Narsus' escape route can be very rewarding if the correct people are questioned. This allows a wide scope for role-playing. People who are currently walking about shopping or otherwise on business weren't on the road when Narsus passed by, and have no information. People like shopkeepers, beggars, and guards who have been on the street all morning did see the wagon. Due to the Ankh, however, none remember seeing Narsus or his entourage. Therefore, PCs questioning people along the route will

find that no one at all has seen a four horse wagon loaded with crates and accompanied by a giant skeleton!

However, people who saw the Ankh will become nervous and irritable if pressed to remember. They act as though they have a headache, frowning and rubbing their temples or forehead. If the PCs persist the witnesses become uneasy, and even a little frightened. Roleplay this trait: it is an important clue for the PCs. In some cases, people inside the shops who didn't see the Ankh remember hearing the wagon go rumbling by. Contradictions between those who saw the Ankh and those who heard the wagon go past are another useful clue for the PCs.

Along the roads the PCs meet:

**A tavern keeper** (who heard it) sweeping his front step:

An easy way to get this started is to have the tavern keeper express curiosity about the PCs, who are probably peering at the fading droplet trail in front of his tavern.

*"Have you lost something?"*

*"Me? No, I was inside and never saw anything, but one did rumble by early this morning. I'd hoped it might be the beer wagon, but it kept going down towards the harbor. It came back again not too long after too. It didn't bring the beer then either. Won't you come in for a drink now?"*

**A guard** (who was away at the diversion) on duty at an intersection:

*"About when? No I wasn't here then. I'd been called away because of those vicious bats in the old square this morning. I killed a dozen by myself, I did!"*

**A brass merchant** (who saw it) at his stall:

*"Excellent brassworks for sale! Nothing but the finest! Many apologies good nobles, but I saw nothing amiss. I have been here all morning, and it has been a most boring and unremarkable day until you graced my stall with your smiles. Do you need a fine lamp to illuminate your darkened nights?"*

**A fishmonger** (who saw it) with an open-fronted store:

*"Nothing that I've seen, and I've been open since daybreak, when the dawn catch of cuttlefish comes in. Would you like a dozen? Look how fresh they are! Nothing slips down like a good cuttlefish!"*

**An old herb seller** (who saw it) **and his wife** (who heard it):

*"No, we didn't see any wagon, did we Dottie?"*

*"What do you mean Carl? There was a big one rumbling around this morning when you were hangin up the basil."*

*"She's a daft old woman! I was there and I saw naught! Smell the basil though. Isn't that lovely?"*

In a similar vein the PCs might talk to a baker, a Chandler, a butcher, or any number of merchants or craftsmen whose shops line the main road. Many will have seen the wagon and forgotten it, a few will have been inside and heard and remembered it, and some will have missed it entirely. If the PCs catch on quickly you can skip some of the NPC encounters, and move on to the city gate.

### At the City Gate.

The guards on duty at the city gate take tolls from all wagons, carts, packhorses, etc. that enter or leave the city. The fact that they remember no large wagon is a significant clue.

**Gate guards** (who saw it):

*"Can't really recall one sir. Plenty of wagons and carts, but nothing really big like you say sir."*

**A blind beggar** (who heard it): Old Jim was a guard long ago, but was blinded by a sword cut to the face. (Play him with your eyes closed.) Since he's a veteran the guards let him have a prime place by the gate. They also take a dim view of anyone harassing him. For some coins in his bowl he'll tell the PCs what he remembers.

*"Spare a coin for Old Jim. Always on duty! Spare a coin for Old Jim."*

*"Nobody pays attention to me! But I know better than they do. I hear everything. Big wagon, four horses. Someone leading them there was. Once in,*

*once out. Loaded on the way out. It creaks more y'know. And I know something else too."*

It takes more money to get him to continue, and he seems a little puzzled, or perhaps frightened.

*"Odd thing, they didn't take his gate toll. They didn't ask him anything like as nobody noticed him. But everyone got out of the way..."*

### At the Mason's Guild Hall.

The PCs may take time to follow up one of the clues from the diversion. The body on the monument was wearing the badge of the Tantras mason's guild. Those who go to the mason's guild hall find it is busy, but famous PCs, or those who grease the wheels of bureaucracy (a small bribe in the 3-5 gp range) get the clerk (**Brattanna**, female half elf, 73) to pay attention. If they describe or show the mason's badge she can help.

*"No, he wasn't one of our guys. It's a mason's badge all right, but those are Tantras colours. We've got a lot of out of town workers around now because there's so much rebuilding going on."*

*She flips through a large ledger, looking at long torturous columns written in a tiny hand. "No... no... they've gone home.... Hmm. Okay. I remember these guys now. A mixed crew, masons and carpenters, come to work after the war. I'm not quite sure, but I think they were hired to fix up one of the farms a few miles north-east of town."*

PCs with local history proficiencies or merchant backgrounds might remember that wagons are one of Tantras' major exports. If the PCs raise the subject with Brattanna she doesn't even have to think about it.

*"Well of course they had a wagon. They had to bring their tools all the way from Tantras, didn't they? It was a big one too. They may be stuffy bores but they make a good wagon up Tantras way."*

### In the Criminal Underworld.

The PCs may try to contact criminal elements to see if there are any rumors about the theft. Only those PCs with a "shady" background or appropriate contacts will be able to find someone. Characters like LN thieves and bards would have a fair chance, but paladins would not. PCs might inadvertently stumble on the underworld contact if they start asking questions in the

warehouse area. However, this is very much up to the DM's discretion.

If you do elect to allow this approach the contact is a foreman in the warehouse and docks area. **Harad Artrimson** is a surly looking human male in his late twenties. The theft is a surprise to organised criminals in the area. He doesn't know anything himself, and he'll want to know why the PCs are asking questions before passing on a warning.

*"Nobody's heard nothin'. And when we find out who dunnit they're gonna give us a cut or we're gonna give them a cut, know what I mean?"*

### **Using Divinatory Magic.**

PCs may seek out oracles or sages to cast divinatory magics, cast them themselves, or use objects like crystal balls.

*Augury, divination, and commune* spells can be very useful. NPC clerics of Denier and Mystra are willing to cast the first two spells for donations of 200 gp and 500 gp respectively (standard DMG prices). *Commune* spells are unavailable from NPCs. Have fun with the rhymes but don't be too specific unless the PCs are really stuck. You might consider answers like:

*"The thief's already left the city. You're still here. Now that's a pity!" or "The fleeing fountain's come to rest, in its rustic cistern nest."*

The *locate object* spell has a very limited range, so it is essentially useless until the PCs reach the farmhouse, at which point it can pinpoint the fountain.

## **Part 4: The Farmstead**

By the time the party arrives at the farmstead (Map #2) it is most likely mid afternoon, plus or minus a few hours. Depending on the time of day, and the PC's method of travel and scouting, you will need to modify parts of the farmstead encounter.

*As you trudge along (ride along, etc...) the earthen road you crest a small hill and a modest farmstead comes into view on the far side of a shallow valley. The path runs down through neglected vineyards and curls around a large battered farmhouse with an overgrown well. The building, a simple two-story structure with stables and storehouses built onto one end, is in poor condition, with peeling stucco walls*

*and moss growing on the red tiled roof. The farmhouse was evidently damaged during the war, and you can still see smoke stains above some of the windows. One wall bears the evidence of a hasty repair, with bare brick not yet stuccoed over. A few laborers are toiling in the vineyards, trying to make some headway on a year's neglect.*

If the PCs take a few minutes to observe the scene they will notice that the four laborers are working on the same rows again and again, and seem clumsy and uncoordinated. They continue their aimless work until dinner-time, when they trudge indoors. The laborers do not speak to each other or seek refreshment during the day.

**Laborer Mason, hm, F0:** AL N; AC 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 10.

**Laborer Carpenter, hm, F0:** AL N; AC 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 10.

The laborers (3 masons and 1 carpenter, their guild badges are visible on their tunics) are what is left of the construction crew that Narsus hired. They are currently under the effects of a badly botched mass charm spell that has left them in a daydream-like daze, devoid of personality and initiative. They will do what Narsus tells them, but can't do complex tasks unless supervised. If accosted by the PCs they mumble vaguely about the work they have to do.

*"Weed the vines, that's what he said...weed them."*

They have no memory of who they are, where they are, or what has been done to them. If attacked (an evil act) they flee for a few minutes, and then return to their task. Their condition is permanent, and nothing short of a *heal* spell will help.

The PCs now have a choice: they can either approach the farmhouse by day, or wait for nightfall. In either case the labourers provide no resistance, and raise no alarm. Narsus is working in the cistern night and day, and is unlikely to notice anything but a rather noisy intrusion. A nighttime approach means the PCs will need light of some kind, and are less likely to notice tracks and other clues.

## Outdoors.

**The Farm Path.** The hard packed dirt path to the farmhouse contains tracks of the wagon (tracking +2), horses, and giant skeleton. The footprints of the giant skeleton can be tracked to the back door. There are no droplets in the region of the farmhouse since Narsus stopped using the Ankh once he was hidden in his valley.

**The Well.** This is a battered stone well that once drew water from the cistern. (Narsus now gets his water from a small stream in the valley bottom.) Vines and weeds grow on and around it. Those who look inside can see that it is nearly full of dirt, stones, old leaves, twigs, and other rubbish. However, this is camouflage. A wooden plug has been placed partway down the well, two feet below ground level, and dirt and rubbish thrown on top to make it seem abandoned. Casual prodding won't reveal the deception, but if someone climbs in and digs around they will notice. This will alert Narsus, however, who is working directly below.

**The Wagon.** The mason's wagon that Narsus used to transport the fountain is parked behind the farmhouse. It is a heavily built flat-bedded wagon, with large iron-rimmed wheels. There is a pile of broken wood (crates) and straw (packing) beside the wagon.

## The Farmhouse.

There is little of interest in the farmhouse itself. After perfunctorily cleaning and repairing it Narsus has largely ignored it. Its furnishings are few and spartan, with no luxuries. Many rooms have been left unused. Try to keep the players from wasting time rifling through drawers for lost change and breaking up the furniture in search of nonexistent secret compartments.

### **First Floor.**

**1. Wine Making Room:** fermentation vats, wine presses, and other paraphernalia of the wine-making process. The room has tiny windows and is quite dim. **Narsus' lesser undead (see below)** are kept here during the day, and the dusty floor is covered with their footprints.

### **Lesser Undead Encounters.**

Narsus' initial experiments produced several low-grade undead. These are not a combat challenge, even at the lowest levels, and their feeble nature will probably puzzle experienced players. During the day the undead are confined to the wine making room. At night they patrol in ones and twos on the first floor and

in the immediate vicinity of the farmhouse. The undead attack in a poorly coordinated fashion, straight at the party.

The zombies were part of the construction crew that Narsus hired, and have not yet undergone significant decay. They still wear their laborers clothes and can be confused with the charmed laborers working in the fields, especially in poor light.

If time is running short omit these entirely, in order to hurry things along.

**Zombies (4):** Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; HP 11, 13, 14, 16; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA nil; SD immune sleep, charm, death magic, hold, cold; MR nil; SZ M; ML Special

Zombies strike last in any round

**Skeletons (2):** Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; HP 6, 7; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA nil; SD 1/2 damage from edged/piercing weapons, immune sleep, charm, hold, cold; MR nil; SZ M; ML special

**2. Agricultural Tools:** shovels, hoes, rakes, pails, rope, etc. Some of the construction crew's tools are stored here (saws, picks, sledges, chisels, planes...)

**3. Stairs Up:** wooden stairs to the second floor.

**4. Pantry:** contains a modest quantity of simple food.

**5. Kitchen:** large counters, stove and fireplace, crockery and utensils.

**6. Dining Room:** a simple table, benches, one good chair. The laborers eat here in the early evening.

**7. Household stores:** brooms, brushes, pails, washbasins, bedding, candles, lamps, etc.

**8. Servants quarters:** four simple bunks used by the remaining labourers. In the evening, after eating, the labourers will be sleeping here.

**9. Stable:** The small stable contains agricultural gear (pitchforks, buckets, curry combs, hoof picks, tack, etc.) and bins of feed. Some straw and hay is stored in a small loft. An anemic cow occupies the far stall, along with a stack of six large wicker cages. Two

of these contain stirges (four per cage) that squeak and squeal as they flap about in an attempt to reach the cow, which is staying as far away from the cages as possible.

The other stalls hold a riding horse, and a team of four large draft horses to pull the mason's wagon. These once powerful animals are now exhausted, trembling weaklings. Their ribs are showing, their legs shake, and they can't hold up their heads. This is a result of the necromantic *accelerant potion* which Narsus used to boost their performance to unnatural levels for a speedy escape. A green glass potion bottle of **accelerant potion** sits on a shelf by the stalls. The team's tack is in the stable, and the bridles have been modified with unusually large blinders. In this harness, the horses see only the ground immediately around their feet, thus they were not affected by *the Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra*.

**10. Stairs Down:** heavy wooden stairs leading to the wine cellar. These are **trapped**, and described in detail below.

### Second Floor.

**11. Master Suite:** A bedroom and living room, currently used by Narsus. The rooms are mostly empty, with a few modest pieces of furniture.

Bedroom: bed, side table, clothes chest, rug.

Living Room: desk with a few pens and sheets of parchment, armchair, lamp. Narsus keeps the majority of his gear in the cistern.

**12. Family Bedchambers:** Only two of these three rooms are furnished. They have simple bunks (three each) used by late members of the construction crew. Some of their possessions (clothes and small tools) are still here.

### The Stairs Down.

The stairs leading into the wine cellar are trapped. Therefore, it is important that you describe the setting in the same sort of detail and tone as the rest of the farmhouse, to avoid alerting the PCs. Don't make the description sound like "boxed text".

A long set of strong wooden stairs descends into the deep unlit wine cellar. To the immediate right of the stairs casks, kegs, and barrels are stacked to the ceiling against the wall. To the left there is an open drop (the stairs have no banister) to the stone floor of the cellar fifteen feet below ground. If the PCs stop to listen they

can just hear the faint sound of running water (the fountain) coming from the darkness.

Narsus has had his workmen build a trap on the stairs. The trigger is the third stair from the bottom. Any character stepping on it or prodding it hard with a pole will set it off. Light objects and small creatures (such as familiars) of under 20 pounds weight are insufficient to set off the trigger. When a character trips the trigger a set of casks, kegs, or barrels is dumped onto the stairs, knocking the characters down and creating a racket which will alert Narsus, who is working on the fountain in the old cistern. Unless the PCs specify otherwise assume that there are four PCs on the steps when the trap is triggered, two on the top half and two on the bottom.

Since the Tier 1 through 4 traps are deadfalls the 1st level Detect Snares and Pits spell will function effectively.

**Tier 1.** A stack of empty casks (10 lbs each) have been rigged to tumble down when the trigger is depressed. Characters on the lower half of the stair take 1d4+1 points of damage, and must make Dex checks at +2 to avoid being knocked to the ground. Those who fail take no extra damage, but spend the rest of the round regaining their feet. The noise of the falling casks will alert Narsus.

**Tier 2.** A stack of full casks (50 lbs each) has been rigged to tumble down when the trigger is depressed. Characters on the lower half of the stairs take 2d4+2 points of damage, and must make a Dex check to avoid being knocked down. Those who fail take no extra damage, but spend the round regaining their feet. All damaged victims lose 1d3 *stoneskins* due to the tumbling casks. The noise of the falling casks will alert Narsus.

**Tier 3.** A set of full kegs (200 lbs each) has been rigged to collapse when the trigger is depressed. Characters on the lower half of the stair take 4d4+4 points of damage, and must make a Dex check at -2 to avoid being knocked down. Those who are knocked down must save vs. crushing blow to see if any fragile items are broken, and spend the round regaining their feet. All damaged victims lose 1d4 *stoneskins*. The noise of the falling barrels will alert Narsus.

Item Saving Throws vs. Crushing Blow			
Bone/Ivory	16	Glass	20

Pottery	18	Thin Wood	13
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**Tier 4.** The entire stair collapses when the trigger is depressed, and full wine barrels (500 lbs. each) come crashing down in a huge cloud of dust. All PCs on the stairs take 4d6+6 points of damage, and must make Dex checks at -4 to avoid being knocked down and trapped in the wreckage. Those who are trapped must make a bend bars roll to escape in the next round, or wait 5 rounds for the barrels to lighten due to leakage. (Unhampered characters may broach the casks, freeing their trapped companions sooner.) In addition, trapped PCs must check for breakage of fragile items. All victims lose 1d4+1 *stoneskins*. Narsus will be alerted either immediately by the noise of the collapse, or eventually (1d3 rounds) by the cloud of dust if the party was moving under *silence*.

Item Saving Throws vs. Crushing Blow			
Bone/Ivory	16	Glass	20
Pottery	18	Thin Wood	13

## The Cellar

*The wine cellar (see Map #2) is a high ceilinged chamber (almost 15') with a flagstone floor and stone walls. The room is filled with tall wooden racks of bottles and amphorae that nearly reach the ceiling. Stacks of barrels, kegs, and casks line the walls. The chamber is unlit, and rather cold. It is silent, except for the sound of running water coming from the far corner.*

The corner contains a new tunnel, dug by Narsus' workmen, connecting the wine cellar with the old cistern. The earthen tunnel is approximately five feet wide by nine feet tall, and descends slightly as it curves toward the cistern. The cistern contains all of Narsus' magical paraphernalia, and this is where he conducts his research. When he is not present the tunnel entrance is concealed behind a stack of wine barrels. This way Narsus can hide his work from prying eyes.

Narsus has several dangerous defenders in the cellar. The defenders consist of the giant skeleton, which Narsus used to move the fountain, and some lesser creatures that Narsus managed to create or summon in the course of his researches. The giant skeleton is now wrapped in a fragile magic item called the *veil of decay* (q.v.), and many of the undead are protected by the *revenge* spell (Wiz 3, Forgotten Realms Adventures) which counters the effect of one successful turning. Narsus' initial strategy is the same at all tiers.

The giant skeleton guards the tunnel entrance, and two weaker undead remain hidden just inside the cistern, acting as blockers. If the giant skeleton is destroyed or driven back the weaker undead move to block the tunnel and prevent the PCs from entering the cistern.

If the PCs manage to enter the cellar without alerting Narsus they will find the giant skeleton crouched at the tunnel mouth. When it senses the PCs it stands, blocking the tunnel, and lets out a bellow to warn its master. **Important note:** The narrow aisle between the cellars racks only permits two people at a time to attack the skeleton frontally, and prevents PCs from making flanking or rear attacks. It also makes casting area effect spells problematic. The giant skeleton will not advance to initiate combat, and will remain in its advantageous position with its back to the tunnel mouth. While the skeleton is acting this way the PCs have a chance to stand back and bombard it if they resist the temptation to charge.

Once Narsus is aware of the PCs he will try and direct his defenses more efficiently. If he detects the party while they are upstairs he may try to ambush them when they trigger the stair trap. It is more likely that he will only be warned when the trap is triggered, in which case he will be unable to capitalize on the trap except where the effects last several rounds. He will direct the actions of the servant and his undead, helping them make intelligent decisions. He will even summon any surviving lesser undead from upstairs, who would attack from behind. Although he is reluctant to move the servant away from the tunnel mouth he will command it to take the fight to the enemy if the PCs refuse to engage in melee. However, he will never enter combat himself and will only peek around corners, and through gaps in the wine racks. It is unlikely that the PCs will spot him at all. He will keep a reserve of at least one undead blocker behind which he can flee down the tunnel, and will only commit it to combat to secure victory or stave off defeat. When it is evident the battle is going against him Narsus retreats into the cistern and prepares for his bluff.

The objective of this combat is to weaken the PCs enough that Narsus' bluff after the combat is truly frightening. As DM you will have to tune the combat accordingly, increasing or decreasing the suggested strength and numbers of the monsters to achieve the desired result. Allowing the *veil of decay* to be destroyed before the fight is over, or manipulating the number of blockers are recommended modifications.

## The Giant Skeleton

Narsus has managed to reactivate a large magical automaton created by the Black Wizard. Although it appears to be a giant undead skeleton (13' tall) the automaton is not undead, and cannot be turned. If the PCs try to turn it pretend to look up the result, shake your head sadly, and tell them it didn't work this time. The automaton may be dispelled as 16th level magic, in which case it collapses in a heap of bones.

The automaton is strongly resistant to edged weapons, but remains vulnerable to blunt weapons. The automaton has been programmed to attack opponents with blunt weapons in preference to those with sharp weapons, and those with poor ACs in preference to those with good ACs. It will try to disable opponents before engaging new targets.

## Improvised Blunt Weapons

PCs fighting the automaton may try to use edged weapons as blunt weapons, striking with the flat of a sword or the shaft of a spear. If the PC is normally specialized with the weapon consider him proficient instead. If he is only proficient, consider him non-proficient, using normal penalties (-2 for fighters, -3 for rogues and priests, -5 for wizards.) Weapons used this way do damage as clubs (1d3 vs. Large) or quarterstaves (1d6 vs. Large) with appropriate bonuses for strength and magic. Use common sense to adjudicate this as appropriate.

## Mistaken Identity

Because the PCs are likely to assume the skeleton is undead, even though it is not, they may make inadvertent errors in calculating their THACO and damage. For example, a PC with a Mace +1, +3 vs. undead, will automatically use the +3 bonus without checking with the DM, because the skeleton is "obviously" undead. As DM you will have to watch for this, and make appropriate corrections. Similarly, some spells and magical effects (such as *wall of fire*, or the *sunburst* from a *wand of illumination*) are particularly effective vs. undead, and their effects are less effective than the PC's expect.

## The Veil of Decay

Narsus has wrapped the giant skeleton (at all tiers) in the *veil of decay*. This is an ancient tattered shroud of diaphanous grey fabric. Once donned the veil vanishes, and the wearer appears to be in an advanced state of putrefaction, covered in corrupt slime. The veil emits a dreadful smell, equivalent to a ghast, causing retching

and nausea (-2 to hit) in a 10' radius unless a save versus poison is made. After any successful weapon attack against the wearer the attacker must save versus poison (+4 at Tier 1, +2 at Tier 2, -1 at Tier 3, -2 at Tier 4), or discard the weapon in involuntary horror and disgust at the wave of crawling noxious filth that surges along the weapon. (Devices such as *periparts of proof vs. poison* do not help, nor do racial con bonuses, since there is no toxin physically present.) The wielder may recover the weapon in following rounds, but it takes an entire round to do so. Since the veil is so fragile it will be destroyed by the combat. It can be destroyed immediately by a *neutralize poison* or *cure disease* spell, or by any curative potion splashed on the wearer.

## Tier 1

**Skeletal Automaton:** Int Non; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 4; HP 30; THACO 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+6 (2H sword in one hand, strength); SA 18/00 Strength; SD *veil of decay*, resistant to edged weapons, immune to enchantment/charm, illusion/phantasm, gases, cold, poison; MR nil; SZ L; ML special

The automaton takes only half damage from edged and piercing weapons.

**Zombies (2):** Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; HP 10, 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA nil; SD immune to sleep, charm, hold, death magic, poisons, cold; MR nil; SZ M; ML special

Zombies always strike last in combat

## Tier 2

**Skeletal Automaton:** Int Non; AL N; AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; HP 50; THACO 10; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+7 (2H sword in one hand, strength); SA 19 strength; SD *veil of decay*, resistant to edged weapons, immune to enchantment/charm, illusion/phantasm, gases, cold, poison; MR nil; SZ L; ML special

The automaton is immune to non-magical piercing weapons, and takes half damage from all edged weapons and magical piercing weapons.

**Ghouls (2):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; HP 12,14; THACO 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA Paralysis (not elves) 1d6+2 rnds; SD immune to sleep, charm; MR nil; SZ M; ML special

## Tier 3

**Skeletal Automaton:** Int Non; AL N; AC 1; MV 12; HD 9; HP 60; THACO 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+7 (2H sword in one hand, strength); SA 19 strength; SD *veil*

*of decay*, resistant to edged weapons, immune to enchantment/charm, illusion/phantasm, gases, cold, poison; MR nil; SZ L; ML special

The automaton is immune to non-magical edged and piercing weapons, and takes only 1 hp of damage per plus from magical edged and piercing weapons. (A +1 sword would cause 1 hp per hit, and a +2 sword would cause only 2 hp per hit, regardless of the strength or skill of the wielder.)

**Juju zombies (2):** Int Low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 3+12; HP 27, 29; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4; SA nil; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, 1/2 damage from blunt or piercing weapons, immune to mind affecting spells, magic missiles, death magic, poison, cold, electricity, 1/2 damage from fire; MR nil; SZ M; ML special

#### **Tier 4**

**Skeletal Automaton:** Int Non; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 9; HP 70; THACO 8; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+8/1d10+8 (2H sword in each hand, strength); SA 20 strength; SD *veil of decay*, resistant to edged weapons, immune to enchantment/charm, illusion/phantasm, gases, cold, poison; MR nil; SZ L; ML special

The automaton is immune to non-magical edged and piercing weapons, and takes only 1 hp of damage per plus from magical edged and piercing weapons. (A +1 sword would cause 1 hp per hit, and a +2 sword would cause only 2 hp per hit, regardless of the strength or skill of the wielder.)

**Shadows (6):** Int Low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; HP 16,19,20,23,25,27; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1; SA strength drain, 1 pt per hit; SD 90% undetectable except in very bright light, *revenge* spell, +1 or better to hit; MR nil; SZ M; ML special

Two of the shadows stay in the cistern to act as blockers. The other four are hidden amongst the barrels across the cellar from the tunnel entrance and attack by surprise from behind, concentrating on spell casters. None of these shadows are summoned, and thus they are not blocked by *protection from evil*.

#### **The Cistern**

Narsus knows he has to escape soon, before the PCs recover from the combat. If the PCs spend more than five rounds outside the cistern after defeating the defenders Narsus will have time to gather some treasure (including the *Ankh* and the other magic items), knock the plug out of the well overhead, and escape. The PCs will hear some movement as he packs

hastily, and a thump and clatter as he unblocks the well. He then runs for the stables, hurriedly saddles his horse, and gallops off through the vineyards and into the countryside. Since he has the *Ankh* he will be very hard to catch.

When the PCs finally enter the cistern they see the following:

*The tunnel enters a tall chamber made entirely of mortared brick, with water stains on the walls. Oil lamps on iron stands light the poorly ventilated chamber, leaving a haze of smoke near the ceiling. The chamber is crowded with equipment and furniture. A deep sarcophagus of rough black stone is squatting in the middle of the chamber with its lid lying on the floor alongside. Two wooden workbenches line one wall, with an unconscious body in workman's clothes resting on each. The other walls are covered with benches and shelves that are cluttered with books, papers, jars, glassware, boxes, and strange instruments of all sorts. In the far corner a wooden ladder leads to a hole in the ceiling.*

*The fountain, already assembled and working, nearly blocks the tunnel entrance. Water pours from the jug of a graceful nymph, falling into the basin below with a gentle splashing. A fantastical glass and copper apparatus extends into the running water, siphoning part of the stream into a steaming retort. Shining golden droplets run out of the retort and down a crystal pipe into a slender flask, where they glow softly.*

If the PCs moved quickly enough Narsus will still be in the cistern, crouching behind the sarcophagus (75% cover, -7 to hit). The moment the PCs enter he yells at them to stop.

*Suddenly a shout rings out.*

*"Stop! Stop right there! Don't come any closer or I swear I'll do it..." A pale red haired man is crouching behind the sarcophagus, holding an open flask of glowing golden liquid over the lidless stone coffin. "If you come one step further we'll all regret it."*

**Narsus, hm, W7:** Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 10; MV 12; HD 7; HP 21+special; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA nil; SD damage transfer; MR nil; SZ M; ML 12

Narsus is a human male, age 42, 5'6", 150 lbs., with fading red hair, pale bulging eyes, trembling hands, and a thin strident voice.

Narsus has currently linked the life-force of the two unconscious laborers with his own. Any damage taken by him is inflicted on the laborers instead, who groan in pain. (The reverse is not true.) Each body has 6 hp, and can go as low as -10 before dying, so Narsus could theoretically withstand as much as 55 points of damage before becoming unconscious.

Narsus needs to make the PCs back off or flee so he can gather some treasure and escape. He doesn't have the power to defeat the PCs by himself, nor does he have offensive magical weaponry. Since he can't fight, and has no wish to surrender, his only option is to bluff his way out by threatening to summon the Black Wizard of Netheril. He has already gathered some of the fountain's magical energy in a clear flask in preparation for raising the Black Wizard, but he only has enough to animate the corpse for a brief terrifying moment. It will have to suffice.

It is almost impossible to say for certain when and how the bluff will be made. This depends very much on the condition of the party after the battle, the characters involved, and how the roleplaying proceeds. Narsus is scared and desperate but acting tough; play him accordingly. Here are some suggestions.

Once he has the PCs attention:

*"You ignorant fools. Do you know whose body this is? Do you? This is the Black Wizard of Netheril!"*

*"I'm ready to summon him. If you think what came before was bad then you're not ready for this. I'm not ready for this. I can't control him yet. But I'll do it. And it'll be on your head." You can see the golden fluid trembling in the open flask as his hands shake.*

*"I don't want to do this. It'll be worse for all of us. Stay back! Don't make me!"*

If the PCs raise doubts about his ability to raise the wizard:

*"You're too late! I have everything I need!" He brandishes the flask above the sarcophagus, his face lit by the golden glow. "Now get out of here. Don't make me wake him without the wards up!"*

If the PC spell casters try to draw him into a technical discussion:

*"What do you know! How dare you try and talk down to me! You're all the same. Mighty wizards sneering at the rest of us. I've studied this for years. This time I'm right! This time you're the ones who don't understand!"*

If the PCs threaten him with violence:

*"Fools! You can't hurt me! You'll just kill them." He gestures angrily at the two men along the wall. "They're tied to me now, and they die before I do. How would you feel with that on your soul?"*

If the PCs try to make a deal with him:

*"Just get out of here and let me think. Give me some time. Back off!"*

He will, of course, promptly grab the *Ankh* and the treasure and flee if they do so.

If Narsus is provoked by any sudden action or spell casting, or he judges the PCs are sufficiently scared and weak, he acts:

*He suddenly smashes the flask against the side of the sarcophagus. There's a crack of shattering glass and the golden liquid falls into the coffin. "Gods help us all now!"*

## **The Black Wizard**

When Narsus breaks the flask there is an ear-shattering crack and the Black Wizard rises from his sarcophagus. The actual form of the Black Wizard is a judgement call on the part of the DM, and depends on both the Tier and condition of the party. It should be threatening enough that if it were real it would be a grave danger to the PCs, probably able to kill some of them in combat, without being implausibly powerful. There is no need to specifically name the form of the Black Wizard. A vivid description, combined with the players' imaginations, should adequately convey the threat. The difference between the fear effects of the Black Wizard and those of a "real" mummy, ghost, or lich will warn alert players that something is not quite right.

## **Tier 1**

### **Tier 2 (weak)**

**Black Wizard (Mummy):** Int non; AL CE; AC 3; MV 1; HD nil; HP nil; THACO nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA fear; SD immune to normal weapons; MR 100%; SZ M; ML special

When the Black Wizard is raised all PCs must save vs. spell or flee in terror for 1d2 rounds.

*The crack of the breaking flask is followed by a double slap as two bandaged hands burst out of the depths of the sarcophagus and grasp its stone walls. With the crackling of brittle cloth, the fabric wrapped head and torso of a powerful figure lurch into view. It staggers upright with hideous jerking motions, tearing at its face. As desiccated strips of bandage drop to the floor two yellow eyes glare around the cistern. You desperately want to cringe and hide, so they never look at you again.*

## **Tier 2**

### **Tier 3 (weak)**

**Black Wizard (Ghost):** Int non; AL CE; AC 3; MV 1; HD nil; HP nil; THACO nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA aging, *fear*; SD ethereal, can only be struck by ethereal opponents; MR 100%; SZ M; ML special

When the ghostly form rises from the coffin all PCs must save vs. spell at -1. Those who fail flee in panic for 2d3 rounds and age 1 year.

*The echoes of the shattering glass die away. For a moment nothing happens. Then there is a sudden blast of wind, and a column of vapor erupts from the sarcophagus. It wavers and thins until you can see right through it. Abruptly you realise it has the form of a tall man with cruel features and an arrogant twist to his lip. Your heart lurches in your chest as you stare up into the pale eyes of the ghostly spirit, back from the dead...*

### **Tiers 3, 4**

**Black Wizard (Lich):** Int non; AL CE; AC 0; MV 1; HD nil; HP nil; THACO nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA *fear*; SD immune to normal weapons; MR 100%; SZ M; ML special

As the rotting body animates the PCs must save vs. spells at -3 or flee in terror for 3d4 rounds.

*The last pieces of glass tinkle to the bottom of the stone coffin. An abrupt numbing wave of cold rolls out from the sarcophagus. As you watch in horror a tall figure in rich funeral robes rises smoothly into view. Pale yellow bones leer through gaps in its withered flesh. For a moment it glares in your direction; its eyes are blazing points in blackness. You realise you can't see past it because it's surrounded by darkness. Now its stepping onto the floor and suddenly you're terribly terribly afraid that it might be coming for you...*

When the Black Wizard reanimates have the PCs make appropriate rolls for fear. Those that fail flee immediately. (You might say something like "Hey, at least *you'll* survive.") PCs who flee for two or more rounds will run up the stairs and off into the countryside. If the stair trap has not yet been found or fully disabled it will almost certainly be triggered at this point. Then begin the initiative procedure, taking intentions and rolling dice as normal. Pretend that your initiative roll was awful, and announce that the PCs have the initiative. During the round the Black Wizard makes all its saving throws, is unaffected by turning, seems to have a good MR, and survives any amount of damage. After the PCs have completed all their actions the form of the Black Wizard moves to attack, but collapses or dissipates dramatically without entering combat.

If the bluff succeeds and the PCs back off, or break and flee, Narsus will grab what he can and make his escape. Fast thinking PCs can pursue, or try to cut him off from above. If the PCs don't flee Narsus might try to hold one of his laborer thralls as hostage, but this is unlikely to be effective, and the PCs should be able to overpower him fairly quickly.

## **Aftermath**

Once the party has recovered from their final encounter with Narsus the process of wrapping up begins. If Narsus has been captured he becomes sullen and withdrawn. He knows he has run out of options, and the penalties for his actions will be severe. He answers questions in uncooperative monosyllables.

One topic, however, will generate a response. Any comments or criticism about his lack of spellcasting during combat will draw an unexpectedly angry response.

*The little man shakes his head.*

*"I hate people like you. 'Why didn't you cast the spell, Narsus? What did you do wrong Narsus?'"*

*"Well I AM doing it right!" His eyes bulge as he shouts. "I always HAVE done it right! It just doesn't work!" He lapses into a bitter whisper, "But you don't understand either."*

If the PCs pursue the point they can learn why Narsus was working on the fountain, and what he hoped to gain. Remember that Narsus doesn't know why he

can't cast spells, to him it's just a cruel joke played by fate.

The two laborers from the cistern can awake if the painted runes are washed off of their foreheads. Unfortunately, when they wake up it becomes apparent they too are mind-damaged, like their comrades outside. The cistern is full of bizarre paraphernalia, some of it typical mage gear, some of it completely baffling. Empty scrolls, damaged spell books, and exhausted devices are mixed in with strange artwork, old food, and dried inkwells. The PCs will find the *Ankh of Thoth-Pthetra* resting beside a bucket of activating fluid if Narsus was unable to retrieve it during the combat. If someone asks Narsus how the *Ankh* works he'll tell them how to activate it, in the hope that they'll be blinded if they try, but he won't tell them exactly what it is. (Remember that the *Ankh* won't function fully, because none of the PCs are evil.) He'll also try to make people set off the stair trap if they haven't already.

When they arrive in town Markus Kalsius will greet news of complete success with elation, and send men to disassemble the fountain and move it back into town. If Narsus escaped he'll thank the PCs, but his heart isn't in it. (Well, I suppose we couldn't expect everything.") Olin Baldurson is so excited by the rescue of the fountain that he hops around incoherently, giggling and laughing. However, when they learn about the fate of the construction crew they become saddened, and their thoughts go to their own dead friends who are to be buried tomorrow.

The city watch will take control of Narsus, if he is still alive, and the authorities will send people to the farmstead, including several wizards and priests. The upshot of this is that many of the magic items and devices Narsus brought back from Netheril are evil, especially the *Ankh*, and have to be destroyed. Some of the valuables were stolen in Suzail, and have to be returned. Most of the other apparatus and the farm itself are being sold and the proceeds are going to the families of those that Narsus killed or wounded.

Four days later officers of the city watch, Markus Kalsius, and Olin Baldurson call the PCs together and deliver their reward. In addition to their wages there are 400 gp of good golden coin for each of them (from Markus and the clan of Thorfin Hammerfell) for the safe return of the fountain, and an additional 400 gp each if they have caught Narsus (dead or alive). Olin Baldurson shyly gives them the *speaking stone*. The officers of the watch pompously present some of the

magical items that have been judged untainted, unless Narsus escaped with them. These are the *accelerant potion*, *amulet of necromantic divination*, and *ash of envisioning*. Not all of these are wonderful boons...

*Here Ends:  
"See No Evil"*

## Experience Point Summary:

Calculate experience points the following way:

- 1) Sum the experience for listed objectives.
- 2) Add an individual discretionary roleplaying award of 0-500 xp.
- 3) Multiply the total by the Tier #.

Tier 1	Levels 6-13
Tier 2	Levels 14-25
Tier 3	Levels 26-37
Tier 4	Levels 38+

### The Diversion:

Took effective preemptive action:	100 xp
Defeated the stirges:	50 xp
No citizens left dead:	50 xp
Recognized this was a diversion:	25 xp

### The Warehouse:

Got a detailed fountain description:	25 xp
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### The Investigation:

Figured out a wagon was used:	25 xp
Figured out a giant was used:	25 xp
Figured out unusual invisibility:	25 xp
Found wagon's route in city:	25 xp
Found wagon's route to farm:	25 xp

### The Farmstead:

Spotting the stair trap:	25 xp
Defeated giant & major undead:	200 xp
Recovered the fountain:	100 xp
Prevented Narsus from escaping:	100 xp
Returned Narsus to justice alive:	50 xp

Maximum experience for above:	850 xp
Discretionary role playing XP:	0-500 xp

<b>Max possible experience:</b>	<b>1,350 xp</b>
Tier 2:	2,700 xp
Tier 3:	4,050 xp
Tier 4:	5,400 xp

## Treasure Summary:

If it is not on this list the PC's cannot have it.

### Stables

- *Accelerant potion*: this potion boosts the metabolism to dangerously high levels for 1d4+4 turns. It grants the imbiber (of any class) a strength of 20, as per the *potion of stone giant strength*. It also raises movement rates by a factor of 1.5, and temporarily grants 2d4+2 additional hit points. When the potion expires, the imbiber collapses and is too feeble to perform any significant action for a further 1d4+4 turns. The hit points are lost, which may prove fatal, and the imbiber must make a system shock roll. Failure means the user has permanently lost 1d4 Con points.

### Cistern

- *Ash of envisioning*: This fine gray ash allows the user to experience the last 1d4 rounds of a deceased person's conscious memories. The user draws an eye on the victim's forehead using the ash. The victim must have died within the last 24 hours, have an intelligence of at least Animal, and the brain must be intact. The small glass vial contains enough ash for three applications.
- *Amulet of necromantic divination*: This bone amulet can detect undead, evil, necromantic magic, and creatures associated with the Shadow and Negative Material planes within a radius of twenty feet. The amulet must be clasped firmly between both hands to function, and drains 1 hp from the wielder per round of use.

### Wages & Rewards.

- Wages. Tier 1: 20 gp each, Tier 2: 30 gp each, Tier 3+: 70 gp each or as agreed up to 150, or 200 gp.
- Reward for finding fountain: 400 gp each.
- Reward for stopping Narsus: 400 gp each
- Reward from Master Olin Baldurson: *speaking stone*: This is a flattened circular stone of pale blue shale, about two inches in diameter. When it is placed on a rock surface (worked or natural) the owner may use a *stone tell* spell (P6). The speaking stone works a maximum of five times, and the DM must roll percentiles each time it is used. If the roll is less than the percentage listed by the charge used (and use them in order), the stone shatters and becomes useless. Charge: 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%

## **Player Handout**

(Tier 3,4 only)

### ***Noble Adventurer***

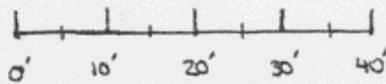
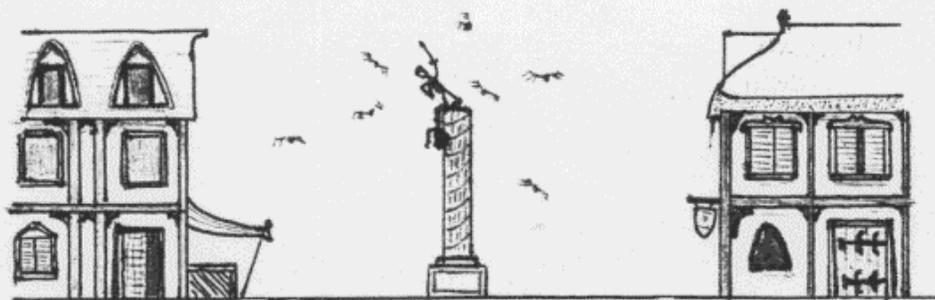
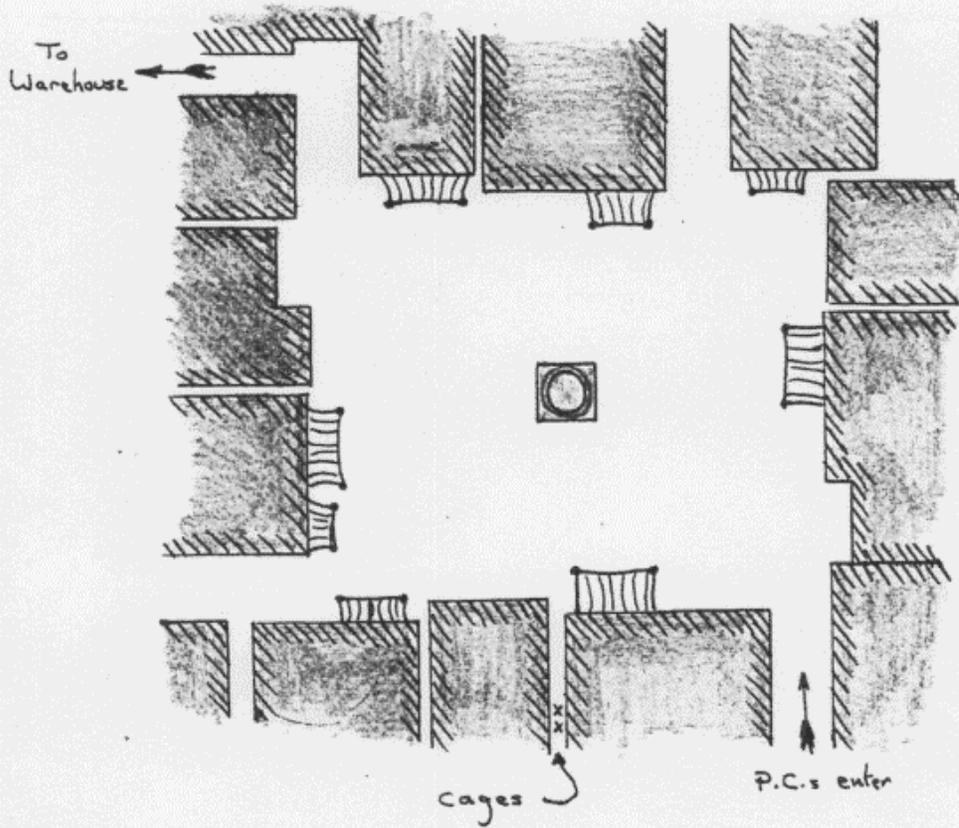
*I find myself in need of advice. I wish to ensure the security of my ships and warehouses, and protect them from those with ill intentions. Friends of mine recommend you highly, and say that you have great experience in these matters. I hope you will agree to consult with me tomorrow morning at my offices.*

*With Greatest Respect,*

***Markus Kalsius, merchant.***

*P. S. Could we meet early? Long days are productive days! M.K.*

# Map #1. The Diversion.



# Map #2. Narsus' Farmstead.

