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King Waldrann Azennar, Prince Krasnar Azennar, Queen Elyssa

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INTRODUCTION

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

King Waldrann Azennar, the ruler of the Kingdom of Aglarion had a beautiful wife and firstborn son. Queen Elyssa adored her son Krasnar, and her son also felt a mad, somewhat unhealthy love towards his mother. The two were inseparable. On the other hand, the king was a lecherous philanderer and was soon bored of his family. He had always prided himself as the most competent and skilled individual, prime of the Azennar bloodline, focused on perfecting himself physically and enjoying life to the fullest. King Azennar is a true narcissist whose actions and behavior left deadly wounds on those around him, especially his family.

A powerful coven of midnight hag sisters, the Matrons of Malice, named Blister, Splint, and Tyke, had claimed sovereignty of the coexisting Feyrealm that they dubbed the "Bleak Mire" after corrupting and exterminating the entire court of the ruler of this domain, King Dasmag, the satyr lord. The Matrons saw the royal family's emotional separation on the Material Plane, and they set their vile plans in motion. They widened the divide even further by seducing the king in the form of the beautiful maiden Lyrencia, whose visage they wore in turns. At the same time, they tormented Queen Elyssa to death in her nightmares to harvest her soul. The hags made a pact with an archfiend of Hell and bargained the queen's soul in exchange for her future services in the form of an erinyes devil. The young Prince Krasnar's rage boiled, and he blamed his father for abandoning his mother on her deathbed. His hatred only grew when the king took the young "maiden" as his new queen.

Each of the three hags, who switched places regularly at court using their innate shapechanging abilities, gave birth to a hideous and evil daughter from the king, all named Aphinah. The hags raised all three Aphinahs in both the Feyrealm and the royal palace, substituting them for each other regularly. However, the king only knew of one daughter, deceived by the hags and the hagspawn princesses. He raised her (them) as his own, and under the effects of the hags' regular doses of *philters of love*, the king never saw his daughters as the hateful, ugly beings they actually were. Day by day, further distancing himself from his firstborn son, King Waldrann gave every last drop of his love to his new family. But Krasnar's suffering and deceit of the king was not nearly enough for the hags. They wanted to see the entire kingdom in torment, joyful lives and love turned into misery and agony. So they contacted Krasnar in their true forms, flattering him with promises of power, but most importantly, they offered him the chance to secure his crown and heritage with the death of his traitorous father. If only he would take them as his patrons. Krasnar, an anointed knight of the realm, broke his sacred oath to crown and king, and took the offer, acquiring new magical warlock powers in the process.

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Once the Matrons of Malice secured Krasnar as their ally, they faked the kidnapping of Queen Lyrencia in King Dasmag's form and pretended that he carried her off to the Bleak Mire. King Waldrann hastily organized a rescue party, which consisted of his knight Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder, his court wizard Master Eydan, high-priest Father Lestor, and his son Krasnar, who went along only to find an opportunity to get rid of his father as promised by the hags, in this otherworldly place, far from home. The company followed the clues left by the hags and entered the Feyrealm through the Hagtree portal. Once in the Bleak Mire, they found the disguised hags in the Court of King Dasmag and negotiated a pact under whose terms the queen would be released, as part of a magical bargain:

The kingdom of Aglarion would be blessed and blossom in riches as long as the crown sits atop the head of the rightful heir. But should anyone else claim the crown of the Aglarion, it would bring misery and suffering upon the whole realm.

Unknown to the king, he agreed to the Midnight Curse, a vile hag pact that would open the way for the midnight hags to bring misery and suffering to his kingdom.

Thinking his line was safe and secure, King Waldrann agreed to the bargain and got his "queen" back. But on their way back to the Hagtree portal, his son confronted him and demanded that he be proclaimed the rightful heir forthwith, instead of the young princess whom the king loved so much. In the form of the queen, Blister obstructed and used her charm abilities to turn the two sides against each other. When the first-born prince became furious and attacked, his father drew his Falcon Blade. The king was a much more experienced warrior, a champion among his knights, but the bitter son drove on relentlessly. His furious attacks would not abate, infused with his madness, and the king was forced into a defensive position. The "queen" intervened once again with mind-bending magic and demanded that the king slay his son for daring to lift a blade against the royal person. Krasnar soon lay dead at the hands of his father the King, his corpse slowly engulfed by the swamp's waters.

The distraught King Waldrann had his company swear an oath of secrecy about the dreadful events that took place, but his high priest and advisor, Father Lestor – a cleric of the knowledge domain - refused. King Waldrann declared him an exile and forbade him to return to the kingdom of Aglarion. Thus, the high priest fled into the depths of the Bleak Mire while the king returned to his kingdom with his remaining vassals, to rule with his queen and daughter by his side. For long years, the fate of the firstborn and the bargain over the crown has remained shrouded in secrecy.

Meanwhile, in the Bleak Mire, the Matrons of Malice took Krasnar's corpse to their lair, where they resurrected him, but only to steal half of his soul and to keep his enervated, half-dead body in torment. Like every curse, their own also required a way to be broken, so they set an impossible clause. Firstly, only the three members of their coven could lift the curse, working in unison. But during this ritual, the satyr King must sing his lament, and the dead body of the rightful heir to the crown must be burned on a pyre built from the Hagtree. And only then, placing the crown on the heir's head, would the Midnight Curse be lifted from the crown. To secure their plan even further and as the last twist, they bound the portion of Krasnar's soul that they siphoned off into the iron statue that King Waldrann had created for his son's memory in the palace mausoleum. They fashioned it into a phylactery that would be ready to receive the other half of Krasnar's soul

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when they raised him as a lich-knight, should anyone force them to conduct the ritual of breaking the curse.

King Waldrann knew nothing of the continued fate of his firstborn son, and the years passed in blissful ignorance as the realm flourished and provided plenty for all. Meanwhile, the Matrons of Malice planned the demise of the king and the coronation of one of their daughters, who would soon come of age. They patiently awaited the day when the effects of their curse would take hold over the kingdom of Aglarion and lost interest in tormenting the miserable firstborn. As their attention was focused on their plans for the kingdom and building a cult of followers in the city of Onadbyr, the hags' lair in the Bleak Mire was assaulted by a clan of aberration-worshipping feyrealm-born drow from the depths, House Ausstyl and its druid circle named the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. The forces of the drow stormed the hags and forced them to retreat, then discovered the broken Krasnar and rescued him from his prison. They infused the soul-drained prince with the essence of a powerful entity from beyond the known dimensions, turning him into an aberrant being and an ally in their war against the hags. The now half-aberration Krasnar and his drow allies soon attacked the hags again, this time with overwhelming force and with the aid of a shapechanging dragon, Malzdreziret the Scaled Impostor, a doppeldrake. They managed to capture two of the three hags, Splint and Tyke, binding them in their dungeons in the deep caverns. The remaining hag, Blister fled into hiding to wait out the coming of the Midnight Curse, since the coven's plans still remained in motion.

With the hags eliminated in the Bleak Mire, Krasnar, now a powerful aberrant oathbreaker witch-knight, claimed the coven's surface domain as his own and considered his revenge fulfilled. Twisted by the alien bonds that warped his flesh and soul from the inside, and driven by his hatred for the Matrons of Malice, he no longer cared about his father or his heritage, as he had a new domain to rule and prepare for the ultimate sacrifice to his new alien masters.

CHAPTER 1

BLOOD ON THE CROWN

The characters get acquainted with Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder after encountering some doppelganger con artists who are members of the local criminal organization of various shapeshifters named the Golden Masks. The doppelgangers try to trick them into paying for a forged item, for which they pretend to have a buyer, namely, the Crownwarden. After settling this issue and meeting the warden, he hires the characters for a personal favor to investigate missing people. They turn out to be held captive at the Old Grinder mill, about to be sacrificed by a group of the hags' witchservant cultists, the Children of the Coven. The cultists have already sacrificed some members of the family members to summon devils, one of whom is the transformed soul of the King's first wife Elyssa, in her erinyes form. Her compact: to kill King Waldrann at the upcoming King's Games. However, the erinyes has already left the summoning chamber when the characters arrive. The characters defeat the cultists and a bearded devil monk at the Old Grinder, and can prevent them from sacrificing the rest of the family. Unaware of the true nature of the conspiracy that has been set in motion, the characters return to the capital of Onadbyr and can prepare for the King's Games, a

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series of festivities in honor of the King. The festival takes place at several locations throughout the city, allowing the characters to explore their environment while engaging in fun contests and activities and optional sidequests. The final event of the games is the Battle of the Champions, a tournament of knightly combat, in which even King Waldrann takes part as the undefeated champion. Any of the characters can join in to match their skills against the warriors who challenge the King for the title. The king and a mysterious helmed champion match their skills in the final battle, but when King Waldrann surrenders, his opponent reveals herself to be the erinyes that was once his first queen, Elyssa. The devil demands to take the king's life as her reward and slays the king in front of everyone before vanishing back to Hell. Following these dreadful events, the kingdom of Aglarion falls into despair and prepares to lay the King to rest. The characters accompany Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder to the royal funeral, where an emanation of Krasnar's wrath manifests at the ceremony, tormenting the gathering until the characters find a way of repelling it.

CHAPTER 2

The Midnight Curse

Soon after King Waldrann's funeral, the coronation ceremony of the young Princess Aphinah is announced. All prominent members of the city are present at the ceremony and the characters can attend as guests of the Crownwarden. As the crown is placed on the head of the hideous hagspawn princess, the Midnight Curse of the hags takes effect! Under a wild magical storm that suddenly erupts over the coronation hall and spreads over the whole kingdom, the newly crowned Queen Aphinah demands allegiance from the knightly order of the realm. However, their leader, Lord Cyne Monder suspects villainy and refuses. The knights who bend the knee are turned into werehell-hounds by the powers of the curse. The characters must flee with the warden and a handful of loyal knights through the chaos that erupts, considered rebels and fugitives by the new ruler. The fugitives take refuge under the Lucky Leap tavern owned by the Crownwarden's old friend, Ricio Tane, once a renowned criminal before he changed his ways and helped the Crownwarden, the king, and the kingdom during a quest. Ricio gladly offers a secret haven to the characters and the knights. The old rogue and the warden devise a plan, asking the

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characters to help them collect the necessary tools to organize a heist, during which they would steal the *crown of Aglarion* and attempt to lift the curse even if it involves killing Queen Aphinah.

To accomplish this daring task, they will need to find Narder Tyk, the royal architect who, according to Lord Monder's knowledge, had built a secret tunnel for the king through which the monarch could sneak away from the palace unnoticed on his various secret liaisons. The problem is that the royal architect had left his family to join the Uncanny Vagabonds, a group of traveling performers who turned into rebels as a result of the change of events and shift in power. The characters can find and follow some clues to their hideout at the Monster Menagerie, where things have gone quite wild since the outbreak of the curse. Here the characters can encounter the Uncanny Vagabonds, and Gren, a man who claims to be the bastard son of King Waldrann. He is a possible ally against the new queen.

Ricio Tane knows of two items that would be of great utility during the heist. One of these is the *master key*, a magical key that opens any door, even if magically sealed. It was in the possession of a long-lost partner of his, Divos the Uninvited, who ventured into the tomb of Master Arlen the Constructor, first archwizard of Aglarion. Unfortunately, Divos never returned from this quest. The characters will have to visit the tomb and retrieve the key. Still, they will find it already partially explored by a diplomatic and highly intelligent intruder, Eshkilrantossiazz, a young green dragon.

The other item is the *chest of magic nullification*, which is actually in Ricio's possession. This chest can hide any magic item enclosed within and nullify its abilities. He has never used it because it already holds the statue of a powerful abomination, one which continuously summons forth blighting energies from other dimensions when exposed. His late wife stole it a decade ago from the antimagic vault of a famous local archwizard named Master Bertio Ranberd, a collector and purveyor of valuable magic items in the city. The only way to empty the chest for the crown to be placed in it, making it undetectable and powerless, hopefully even breaking the curse, is to steal it back to the wizard's anti-magic vault where the statue can be safely removed.

During these missions, which take place in the twisted, magically disfigured city and kingdom, they find their hideout exposed and Lord Cyne Monder and Ricio Tane dead at the hands of the authorities. The characters enter the burning and dangerously damaged Lucky Leap and its dungeons, defeat the werehellhound knights who are spreading the flames and killing the inhabitants, and finally find the Crownwarden's dead body.

Following the clues left by the old knight, the characters find out that Lord Monder has hidden his memoir in his family's secret vault, a place currently being looted by the Golden Masks and their lamia lieutenant Yhlsaby. After dealing with the criminal gang and finding the information, the characters learn the story of King Waldrann's quest to the Bleak Mire and that Master Eydan, the court wizard or Father Lestor, the high priest, who were both by the king's side in the Bleak Mire, might know more about the origin of the curse and the magical requirements of removing it from the *crown of Aglarion*.

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CHAPTER 3

TRAPPED UNDER SHADOWS

To acquire the crown, the characters enter the royal quarters of the palace, and face off against all three of the hagspawn queens, their loyalist knights and cultists, as well as Blister. The hag immediately retreats from the fray via dimensional travel to activate a dome of shadow over the city from the Shadowrealm. Once the crown is secured and the characters exit the palace, they see that the city of Onadbyr is enclosed by a shadowy barrier that blocks everything in and out. Soon afterward, another hagspawn princess under the name Queen Aphinah takes the palace. The authorities start hunting the characters and the *crown of Aglarion*. The characters cannot escape the city to find Master Eydan, the former court wizard in the Arcane Tower outside of the city. Their every attempt fails as the city is sealed airtight.

The patriarch of the Uncanny Vagabonds, Taris, offers a seemingly reasonable solution, suggesting using the only type of transport entering and leaving the city – the armored wagons of the queen's army. He orchestrates a way for the characters to pretend to be part of the army. The characters soon find themselves boarded on a massive wagon full of soldiers. As the wagon arrives at the gates, it is inspected and then, strangely, locked from the outside. A vile gas pours in, choking the characters and killing all soldiers who immediately rise as hungry undead to feed upon their breaths. As the characters break out of the wagon and the apparent trap, Blister and her forces confront them, and they and are hard-pressed to make their escape into the depths of the city. Soon they can face the traitorous Taris and decide how to punish him.

Soon after the betrayal attempt, Samsadur, the rakshasa crime lord of the Golden Masks learns about the characters, their role in the story, and their intentions. The crime lord offers to take them to the Shadowrealm to destroy the dome that exists in both worlds and blocks travel from and to the city. Samasdur informs the characters that the dome is fueled by a magical melody that plays all over the shadow version of the city and siphons the sadness and hopelessness of the locals, who have been captured and brought to the Shadowrealm. After exploring the shadow version of the city and confronting the hags' despair giants who extort the demoralized victims, the characters find out that the only way to sever the shadow dome from its source of power is to end the effects of the melody. First, they must brave the Shadow Ziggurat and deal with Sabrael, the dirge singer deva of the Dark Star, fueling the melancholic effect with its Song of Lament. Once the characters have negated the song, they still need to remove the hopelessness from the many victims collected at the Dungeon of Tears and guarded by a hag called the Gloom Widow at the local version of the famed prison of Onadbyr. The most expedient way to break the lament from the rescued survivors is to gather them at the run-down theater house, the Eyrie of the Fabled, which is the only place where the melody cannot be heard due to the building's soundproofed walls. However, the building is haunted by past crimes and their perpetrators. When the theater has been cleared, the survivors can be finally saved from the bonds of melancholy. Before re-

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turning the characters home, Samsadur demands a final favor to assist him in tying up a conflict with a business partner, namely Baendretarixus, the Eternal Hive, an undead black dragon who guards a portal to the Material Plane. After successfully negotiating with the dragon, the characters can return to Onadbyr, where the dome of shadow no longer encloses the city. They can finally leave to seek out Master Eydan at the Arcane Tower located in the countryside.

CHAPTER 4

The Vanished Tower

After traveling through a ravaged and wild realm, in which the effects of the Midnight Curse make life a living nightmare, the characters arrive at the Arcane Tower only to find that it has vanished. The wizards activated the protective mechanisms of the tower when the curse took hold and have transferred the entire tower to the Astral Plane to weather the storm there. When the characters descend to the vaults of the Arcane tower that still remain behind, the characters learn of the six *torcs of the tower* that can be used in conjuncture to conjure the tower back to the Material Plane. However, over the centuries since their creation, the torcs have been scattered in the Kingdom, some remaining in the posession of their forbears, some having been looted long ago, and some lost to time. They also learn of Abulior Whitegate, an expelled wizard who might be able to help them in this task. During their quest to secure the necessary components for the conjuring, the characters will need to secure all six of the *torcs of the tower* and travel far and wide in the Kingdom of Aglarion. They will also need to find the last *torc of the tower*, which is located in the Ziggurat of the New Moon that has been exiled to the Astral Plane by the fallen angels of the Dark Star thousands of years ago. They will need to figure out the location of the ziggurat, the time when it can materialize on the Material Plane, and the command phrase needed to recall it. Along the way, the characters will face a multitude of encounters within the realm, taken in any order. Some include:

- The location whence the Arcane Tower disappeared and its underground vaults, recently looted by a group of rival adventurers called the Heroes of Virtue. This adventuring party preys on the frightened inhabitants of the land and bears one of the *torcs of the tower*. However, they roam the land and must first be found.

- The village of Gorso, oppressed by the nobles of the Gorso family, who are entropist fanatics tormenting a shackled paint-covered unicorn, and possessing one of the *torcs of the tower*.

- The village of Nangrath with a frightened populace, hunted and fed upon by savage gargoyles from the nearby Fort Blackbell and the duergar vampire spawns of Bakator the Onyx, who have captured some prisoners and one of the *torcs of the tower*.

- The camp of Selvaro, a blind young bronze dragon with premature powers in human form, seeking his father's hoard that lies in a haunted temple of an evil ooze entity, the Shrine of the Blind God, where the young dragon was blinded.

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- A half-dragon hydra, offspring of Malzdreziret, the famous shapeshifting dragon that ravaged the country centuries ago, at the only bridge crossing over the river Halueth.

- Gonshar, a ramshackle village of goblinoids that is protected by Kabok, an illusionist goblin who maintains the illusion of a gold dragon named Xykot to keep the village safe from visitors.

- The Lodge of Wanderlust, home and lair of Cygnus, the couatl paladin of the Shining Light, whose lodge is being invaded by druids that command swarms of vermin. Once aided, Cygnus can be invaluable to locating all the *torcs of the tower.*

- The trail of a Red Cloak Lawgiver named Ha'aren Black-bone, bearer of one of the *torcs of the tower,* who saught the lost Ziggurat of the New Moon and its prisoner Samkiel, the treacherous deva imprisoned there millennia ago. The Ziggurat only appears from its exile to the Astral Plane

When the conjuring of the Arcane Tower can finally be performed, the tower reappears but regrettably, it is under an invasion by a group of marauding incubus pirates. During the fight, as a result of a *time stop* spell gone wrong, the entire tower is caught in a time loop, resetting everything to its original state within its confines, an infinite number of times. Caught in the time loop, the characters have to figure out the shortest and quickest way to stop Master Zaophas, the headmaster archmage of the college, from casting his *time stop* spell, so that the loop can reset and they can meet with Master Eydan, the former court wizard. They will need to explore the tower during several loops and overcome all obstacles within three minutes in order to achieve their goal.

Once they have successfully reversed the flow of time, the characters learn that Master Eydan is in a permanent dream state and that they have to visit him in his dreams with the use of the night rose flowers he had cultivated – magical flowers that allow shared dreams and dream travel. Meeting Master Eydan in his dreamscape, they can learn more of the story of King Waldrann and his company, the way to the Hagtree portal to the Bleak Mire, and that Father Lestor, the exiled high-priest, still hides in the Feyrealm. Before they can leave, the gigantic dream-form of Krasnar, the aberrant witch-knight and Malzdreziret, his shapechanging doppeldrake steed, attack them. The characters must defeat these dream entities by shaping reality to their will, dreaming effects into existence, bound only by their imagination. Finally, they can find their way to the Hagtree, whose secret location is known only to Freall, the cursed bird-creature held prisoner in the nest of a roc named the Cackling Crow. Once rescued, Freall can lead the characters to the Stride of the Elders, an ancient druidic pathway that leads to the Hagtree. They can then cross into the Bleak Mire and find a way to lift the curse from the crown of Aglarion.

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CHAPTER 5

BREAKING THE MIDNIGHT CURSE

Crossing through the Hagtree is an excruciating ordeal that takes a mental toll and involves a personal sacrifice in return for access through the dimensions. Arriving in the Bleak Mire, the characters soon realize that they are in a dark and unforgiving fey land, once magnificent but now a ruined landscape, having been ravaged first by the Matrons of Malice, the coven of midnight hags, then by Krasnar's wrath. They must explore their surroundings to find the solution to lifting the curse from the crown. They will visit the Awakened Library, a library of sentient books, which they have already seen during their encounter in the Dreamlands, and learn the exact nature of the Midnight Curse – most importantly that only the hag coven who created the curse can lift it. Eventually, the characters can find Blister at the hag's secret hideout on the Bleak Mire and learn that the other two members of the coven are imprisoned by Krasnar's aberration-worshiping drow allies and that they will have to rescue the hags from the drow stronghold located in the Dark Below. Once the hags themselves are defeated, their souls return to their phylactery in Hell, ready to be reborn and seemingly out of the reach of the characters. The characters must discover the location of a portal to the hags' lair in Hell and defeat them again to force them in line and to cooperate in lifting the curse from the crown. They will also have to accomplish the impossible tasks set by the hags as requirements to lift the curse from the *crown of Aglarion*. They must enter the slain King Dasmag's court, now inhabited by Malzdreziret, Krasnar's doppeldrake, and summon the spirit of the satyr lord to convince him to work with his murderers and sing his song for the Cleansing Ritual. The characters will have to confront Krasnar and his mutant drow allies in his lair, which is a colossal living mass of eyes and mouths that gibber mad thoughts. The characters must also fell the Hagtree, which is their only way home, and build a pyre on which to burn the body of Krasnar. When all the components are assembled, the Matrons of Malice complete the ritual, but as a result, Krasnar rejuvenates from his phylactery in the undead form of a lich-knight on the Material Plane and the characters have no way to escape the Bleak Mire and return home. The characters' only option is to take sovereignty of the realm and remove the conditions blocking planar travel to and from the domain. For this glorious task, they need to collect materials from every region of the Bleak Mire, and present the remains of the hags to claim rulership of the realm.

Meanwhile, the druidic leaders of House Ausstyl, the Inheritors of the Unbegotten are preparing a domain-wide ritual to gain this sovereignty over the Bleak Mire from the hags and sacrifice the entire domain to their alien masters in the Farrealm. The druids have summoned an Elder Cortex from outer dimensions, which is growing roots that sprout Cortex Pods in the aberrant ground left in the wake of the Krasnar's Gibbering Fort, Bwael Phindar, the Magnificent Beast. With the defeat of the Elder Cortex, the characters can gain sovereignty of the Fey-realm domain and lift the barriers to planar travel.

Throughout their adventures in the Bleak Mire, the characters will encounter wondrous creatures and locations that they can explore in any order. Their travels will take them through a land that has been doubly smitten by malign influences, a land of danger, corruption, and evil.

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CHAPTER 6

REIGN OF THE LICH-KNIGHT

After finding their way home, the characters enter a torn, sunless, and dead land, razed by the now lich-knight abomination that once was the firstborn heir to the crown. They also learn that years have passed since they entered the Feyrealm, and months since they accidentally released the lich-knight onto the land they are seeking to protect. Onadbyr has fallen to the hordes of undead that swarm out of the Royal Palace and spew forth from a hovering ziggurat above the city. Krasnar is barricaded within the royal palace in an impregnable wall of zombies that continuously pour out from every opening of the palace, so he is practically unreachable.

The characters must gather forces allied against the hordes of undead, but first, they must find the camp of the forces gathering at Cloud Peak for a final effort to save the realm. Units of capable soldiers can be recruited from many locations in the torn land, for a final push towards Onadbyr and against the undead-infested capital. The armies will have to cleave their way through rotting flesh until they can reach Krasnar in the palace. This can only be done by a force, which can be formed from the remaining forces gathered under General Sundamar Strombreaker, including local commoners in most towns of the kingdom, Gren's rebellious Uncanny Vagabonds, the Golden Masks criminal organization led by Samsadur the rakshasa, and the wizards' college of the Arcane Tower. These forces have to battle the seemingly unlimited undead army for strategic locations within the city, freeing more supporting forces and weakening Krasnar's grasp over the city.

Once the allied forces gain the upper hand in the city, the characters can brave Morkiel's Ziggurat in the skies to halt the flow of zombies, however, Morkiel Reborn is a planetar general of the Dark Star who has been raised from death as a lich by the grace of Orcus, so it is not a challenge to take lightly. When Morkiel is defeated and the gate to the land of death closed, the characters can coordinate their forces to start a climatic, focused siege against the palace. They can thin the armies of the dead and finally reach Krasnar in the royal quarters. The characters can once again vanquish his reborn Lich-Knight form to finally end his rule and place the crown on his defeated head. With this last act, the curse is lifted from the Crown of the Oathbreaker, once and for all.

WHAT THE CHARACTERS KNOW

The Kingdom of Aglarion is a relatively safe, wealthy, and joyful nation. The citizens pride themselves on being Aglaronians because the land and their king provide them with an easy life. Resources are plenty, especially for the past two decades, taxes are low, safety is ensured by the Royal Palace and its many soldiers and Red Cloak Lawgivers, and the kingdom has not been engaged in a war for decades. As a result, people have had more spare time to indulge in pastime activities or simply enjoy life.

King Waldrann Azennar has the public image of a perfect warrior hero, who is a proud and self-absorbed individual. The king is also seen as a righteous ruler who provides for his people and shares the gifts of life

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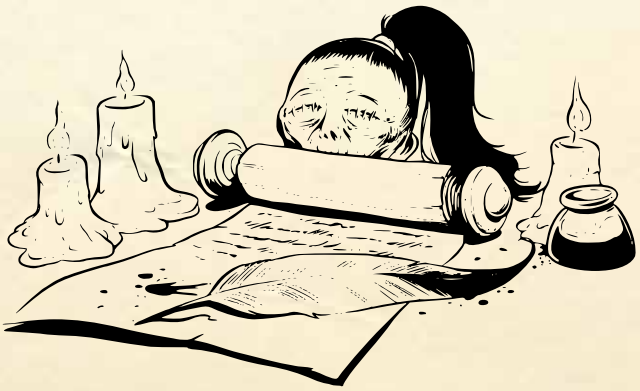
with his subjects. He is known to be a casual, fun-loving person who, in cases of significance, becomes a headstrong, serious man who evaluates every word he utters and rarely listens to his royal advisors. The whole country knows about his love for his wife and daughter and the tragic loss of his previous family.

Queen Lyrencia Azennar is considered a charming lady in high-society and Onadbyr's social scene, but no one really knows her well due to her rare public appearances and reserved behavior. She is known to take on personal requests by her subjects and is deemed to be doing her best to serve the people.

Princess Aphinah Azennar is a spoiled, loud, and very ugly teenager who looks much older than her age. She is definitely a memorable figure to encounter. She is not only seen as melodramatic or headstrong like her father but is also whispered to be manic, cruel, and lacking all empathy. She is known to take advantage of her father, who adores her and always absolves her from any blame.

Most of the organizations of Aglarion are publicly known except for those involved in criminal or secret activities or those that have been long forgotten. Those in the know are informed about the Golden Masks as the only organized crime syndicate in the capital, but no one knows more besides the fact that it exists and is actively operating in the city. Common folk have much more knowledge about and experience with the Uncanny Vagabonds, who are always avoided when recognized, especially when encountered in numbers.



The recorded history of Aglarion dates back a few thousand years, and the most important events are also remembered throughout the year's holidays. The most recent legendary events in history from the decades before the start of the adventure are the attack on the capital by Maldreziret the Scaled Impostor, and the kidnapping of Queen Lyrencia by the satyr-lord King Dasmag from the Feyrealm. There are many different versions of the tale circulating about the rescue mission that took the king to the Feyrealm, where the king defeated the Satyr King, and where his first-born son, Prince Krasnar perished. No one knows what really happened and the sometimes contradictory versions told by the king have spread and given birth to even some absurd interpretations.

Players can refer to the Aglarion Gazetteer and the Player's Options booklets for detailed information about the history, religions, organizations, and significant locations of Aglarion and Onadbyr, where they are sure to find deep backgrounds for their characters and weave them into the plot of the Crown of the Oathbreaker adventure.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Content Depth

Crown of the Oathbreaker is a highly elaborate adventure with layers upon layers of references. We recommend you familiarize yourself with the campaign settings of Aglarion, Onadbyr, and the Bleak Mire, including their histories, organizations, religions, and locations before starting the adventure. There are many fine details, relevant connections to the plot, instances of foreshadowing, faction relations, and NPC motivations woven into story. This is even more important for the sandbox nature of the adventure in Chapters 4 and 5, where the characters can forge their own paths without any constraints to the order of the encounters.

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The Midnight Curse is an integral element of Crown of the Oathbreaker. You should constantly emphasize its effects on the realm and the characters to build continuous pressure on them and make them feel the effects of the curse and their personal involvement in saving the realm (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse for details).

Style

Crown of the Oathbreaker is about the tragic selfishness of a king, about the evil forces that take advantage of his weaknesses to cause suffering everywhere, and about the final consequences and the curse that results. The story should be initially presented as a high-fantasy setting where signs of concern and corruption emerge, and very soon they take over the realm, all cheer fades away when the king is slain, and the curse planned by the Matrons of Malice engulfs the realm. From this point on, the story should be interpreted more as a dark, horrific nightmare, where the characters always need to keep their heads above the water to survive and to execute their plan to lift the curse.

Content Rating

Crown of the Oathbreaker is intended for adult audiences only. The adventure module describes and depicts many forms of physical and psychological abuse, assault, violence, and sexual references that might offend or trigger some of your players. Please consult them on this issue before starting the adventure or adjust the scenes accordingly.

Formatting

The Monster Manual contains stat blocks for most of the creatures found in this adventure. All other necessary stat blocks are included in Appendix D: NPCs and Monsters. When a creature's, poison's, disease's, or effect's name appears in bold type, it is a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the NPCs and Monsters section of our book, the Monster Manual, or the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Special abilities, feats, spells, and magic items mentioned in the adventure are in italic type and are described either in Appendix C: Magic Items of this book, the Player's Handbook, or the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Sample dialogs that emphasize the style of a character appear close to their point of use and are done in a custom design with the image of the speaker added if available.

The adventure is structured into chapters and their subsections. Each subsection is organized into the following categories of descriptions, which always appear in the same order and are also marked with a uniquely colored dot. A description appearing earlier in a subsection is relevant to the whole subsection, while descriptions that appear later contain more specific information.

Every dungeon in the adventure has encounter locations keyed to a map. The adventure text often presents the most important features of a location in the form of a list with boldface headings for ease of reference. These are:

Background

Describes the background of a situation, the history of a location, or the previous activities of the NPCs or monsters that are involved.

Environment

Describes the actual physical parameters of an area or location. This is usually where statistics for objects, traps, and hazards are listed.

Scene

Describes the actions that occur within an area or location and includes any checks that the characters might need to make. This is also where specific motives and tactics of NPCs and monsters are described if present.

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Treasure
Describes the treasure that can be found at a location or on the person of an NPC or monster.

Experience
Describes any bonus experience points awarded to the party.

Books to Use

To run this adventure, you need the Dungeons and Dragons 5th edition core rulebooks: Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and Monster Manual.

Character Levels

The adventure module was optimized for four player characters. Characters gain experience points for creatures defeated or overcome and bonus experience points for some situations they solve during the adventure. We recommend that characters should be of the following levels when starting each chapter:

Chapter 1.	**5th level**
Chapter 2.	**6th level**
Chapter 3.	**7th level**
Chapter 4.	**9th level**
Chapter 5.	**11th level**
Chapter 6.	**13th level**

If you want to start playing with 1st level characters, please see the Introductory Adventures section of the adventure module, which contains some mini-adventures. They might not be enough to bring your player's characters to 5th level, so feel free to add more. The area descriptions of Aglarion and the capital city of Onadbyr are also full of adventure hooks, which were intentionally left open.

EVIL PLAYER CHARACTERS

Most of the adventure's events and the required motivations are applicable for any character regardless of their alignment. For example, evil characters might indulge in situations and take on quests for their own gain, or to further their own agendas or those of their dark masters. However, the motivations for some of the events in the adventure are based purely on the goodwill of the characters. If necessary, you, as a DM might need to find a way around these obstacles and provide the characters with a hook that involves the same or similar outcomes.

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A Land of Ancient Roots

The land known today as the Kingdom of Aglarion has a rich past spanning thousands of years, influenced by cataclysmic events that involved multiple planes of existence. Since the dawn of time and prehistory, all the way up to its current state as a monarchy, the land and its rulership has changed many times. Several key events have shaped its past, namely the descent of the Dark Star and its dark angels during the Mountainfall, the rise of Sarath of the Shining Light and a cruel theocracy, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Aglarion by King Razmyrel Melkar and Master Arlen the Constructor, the first archmage of the land. These events have all left deep marks on the history of the realm and the legacies of these dark times can still be felt in the fabric of society.

The Kingdom of Aglarion is known as a thriving realm. Times of plenty and an open-minded philosophy have resulted in a level of tolerance for beings of all types rarely encountered in other settings. The Kingdom is rich, its armies strong and well-equipped, and the rule of law is paramount under a popular king. But even in these tranquil times, the Kingdom of Aglarion is a realm filled with adventure and dangers that lurk behind the veil of peace, reaching into other planes and deep into its history.

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Kingdom of Aglarion

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History

THE AGE OF THE DARK ANGELS (YEAR –2000)

In the beginning, the gods created the world, the immortals, and the mortals, then agreed to let their creation play out without their direct intervention. For eons, the mortals lived in prehistoric tribal societies, waging deadly battles against monsters and other humanoids and fighting for the survival of their various species. Few legends remain from this time, as most traces of these precursor civilizations had vanished long ago.

The first legends that are corroborated by written records recount the Age of the Dark Angels, whose reign was terrifying, brutal, and long-lasting, and one that brought some level of civilization, magic use, and cultural advancement. All the gods of Aglarion encompass varying interpretations of their dogmas and portfolios, but the god of Light and Darkness embodied the most substantial polarity. Its positive aspect, the Shining Light, wished to see the world's mortals flourish with hope and opportunity, and it fought eternally with its other side, the Darkness Within. This darker aspect wanted power over the other gods, to rule and torment mortals, not believing them worthy of the gift of life given by the other gods. The continuous struggle between them resulted in the rebellion of the Darkness Within. It broke away from its other half and channeled its will into a solar of immense power, the Dark Star, who led an army of angels that descended upon the mortal realms.

Dark Star Symbol

Engravings and runes left from this time recall the "Mountainfall," when the Dark Star and its dark angelic army crashed into the land from their plane of existence, encased in boulders the size of mountains that formed the mountains known by this name. The Dark Star's landing is said to have created the tallest mountain at the very center of Aglarion, now called Cloud Peak. Then, as its first act of defiance of the gods, the Dark Star magically pulled the moon in front of the Sun, shrouding everything in an unending solar eclipse and allowing the Dark Star to draw enormous power from the darkness.

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The angels set out to dominate all mortal beings, enslaving and torturing them for thousands of years. They aimed to cut off all the other gods from their followers, so they banned every religion and murdered everyone who wouldn't comply. They built a society based on fear, pain, and hopelessness. The shape-changing angels almost always found out if someone was plotting against them, could see through all lies, and ruthlessly crushed any seeds of rebellion. Those select mortals who devoted themselves to the evil angels were rewarded with wealth, knowledge, magic, and in some cases even unnaturally long lives and half-celestial heirs. The rest served as slaves and toys for the powerful outsiders. The three planetar generals of the Dark Star were called Tannur (Sorrow), Morkiel (Fear), and Zaphaos (Hopelessness). The dark planetars conquered and ruled the lands by blood, fire, and steel in the name of the Dark Star, continuously expecting their ruthless leader to turn on them. Their names spread across the world and became known in all languages for the dark emotions they personified.

After millennia, Sarath, the first real foe of the Dark Star, was born into a family of mortals who served the Dark Star, working in the Library of Skins. This legendary library housed copies of all the books from around the world, kept in seclusion from everyone not initiated to the library, each book bound in the skin of its writer or their family members. She read for years, devouring the endless knowledge she found in the legendary library. Soon, she started to manifest clerical powers from the Shining Light and used the magical knowledge she learned to keep her faith secret. She also stumbled upon a portentous fact – that the original crystals of the immortals in the hearts of the mountains contained special power over the respective angel who traveled within. Using this knowledge, she sought out Samkiel, a crazed deva loremaster, imprisoned by the Dark Star for prophesying its fall. Sarath used the information about the crystal prison to get Samkiel to talk, and armed with more elaborate details, she hatched a plan to end the rule of the Dark Angels.

Over decades, she built a network of followers called the Order of the Eternal Light. She searched out and found the Seven Flowers, one of the only remaining religious organizations that survived. These druids were forced underground by the Dark Star, fleeing to the Feyrealm from where they could maintain their position in the Material Plane. Sarath organized a grand campaign with the aid of an agent of the Shining Light, the couatl Cygnus, as well as the druids. They secretly conducted magical rituals that could turn stone into a light-reflecting crystal while Sarath crafted the Radiant Globe of Annihilation to shatter the moon covering the sun. When the time was right, the suffering slaves of the dark angels rebelled against their cruel masters and fought them with only hope in their hearts and trust in the clerics of the Shining Light. In the final battle, the fallen angels covered the seat of their power, now Onadbyr, in a dome of shadow force that trapped the mass of the rebellion inside and allowed the angels to focus their vengeance on the clerics. When the plan was set in motion, the Seven Flowers enacted their rituals and used the crystals to channel every last bit of light into the Radiant Globe of Annihilation. Sarath and her closest devotees could now use it to shatter the moon and restore sunlight. They thus broke the power of the Dark Star, whose armies of angels were immediately banished back to the planes they came from by the power of the Shining Light itself. Balance was restored, and the remains of the torn moon still rise every night as a constant reminder of the cataclysmic events.

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THE AGE OF BRIGHTNESS (YEAR –300)

After the Dark Star's demise and the banishment of its army of angels, Sarath and her followers quickly stepped into the power vacuum, but they first had to oppose the remaining devotees of the Darkness Within. In this campaign, they had the help of the Seven Flowers and the members of the rebellion, all who suffered from the dark angels. Sarath's first initiate was Rodnar, a cunning priest whose role was to isolate and eradicate the remaining dark angel devotees, a task he performed for decades. Rodnar was ruthless, so much so that he allowed the sacrifice of his whole family in the war to take down the Dark Star. After the demise of the angels, Rodnar led the Fists of the Sun, a militant group whose job was to find and eradicate every living being who supported the fallen angels. The priest allied himself and converted Arzatraxos, the red dragon, to the faith of the Shining Light, who assisted in the inquisition that turned many of the followers of the fallen angels into ashes. Rodnar was highly ambitious, and as Sarath got older and more fragile, he slowly acquired more and more power. After Sarath's death, he renamed the church to the Order of the Eternal Light and took the title of Archpriest. As his power grew, Rodnar slowly agitated the populace to religious fervor and turned the Order into a force of inquisition that supported the removal of all of his real and potential enemies, or whoever spoke out against the theocracy. These people were deemed collaborators or believers of the Dark Star and executed. His most infamous betrayal was finding and murdering almost every known member of the Seven Flowers in a single night of carnage, with just a few gnomes who escaped, never to be seen again in these realms.

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In less than a decade, Rodnar "the All-Seeing" crowned himself Priest-King. The Order of the Eternal Light became the only organization that governed his theocracy, with priests of the Order serving as judges, governors, historians, and military leaders. The Order viciously suppressed all free thought and other religions. They built magical lights that continuously bore down on every population center in shining sunlight, even at night. The Order also strictly regulated magic use and cataloged all magic users, who could only work as part of the Order. As time went on, the Order became more and more entrenched in society and increasingly bureaucratic, with a long line of Priest-Kings who were always chosen from within the ranks of the clergy by fierce and deadly competition. For over three hundred years, the Order of the Eternal Light ruled supreme. Many times did parts of the realms revolt, trying to shake off the grip of the Order, and many times did the Order crush these rebellions, quickly eradicating the voices of opposition from history by erasing all traces of their existence.

ORDER OF THE ETERNAL LIGHT HOLY TORCH

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THE AGE OF THE KINGS (YEAR 0–631)

Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar the True and Arlen the Constructor led the single successful revolution against the Order of the Eternal Light. Razmyrel was a noble with a distinguished lineage, an inheritor of vast landholdings and large wealth. As a small child, he had to watch as his family was executed for heresy by a local cleric who coveted their lands. Razmyrel escaped through the assistance of the benevolent house priest of the family, who hid him and lied to the Order that everyone had died in a fire in the house. Razmyrel was then sent to an orphanage under an assumed name, Valsyr. Arlen was also an orphan, but one who didn't know his parents and was raised and taught by the Order of the Eternal Light. He knew from an early age that he couldn't prescribe to the tenets of the theocracy. Both Razmyrel and Arlen grew up in the Orphanage of the Light, becoming lifelong friends.

Arlen's quick wits and magical aptitude were apparent early on, and he was sent to one of the school's training wizards to support the Order. As an initiate of the Order, he was able to access obscure and prohibited tomes and spent a long time secretly researching the origins of the Order. Razmyrel became a warrior of no equal, secretly vowing to take down those who murdered his family and create balance in the realm. The two spent long years traveling and trying to find a way to overthrow the Order. During their treks across the land, Arlen and Razmyrel befriended Cygnus, the couatl emissary of the Shining Light, who was initially sent by the divine entity to monitor the reign of the Dark Star and its fallen angels and aid Sarath in her rebellion to banish them. The pair regularly visited Cygnus in its fort-like lodge, and the couatl eventually revealed itself and its quest to them. The celestial being trained the wizard and the warrior for years, preparing them for their destinies.

After a few years, Arlen discovered Sarath's own handwritten diary and cracked its code, which led to information about the existence and location of Samkiel's crystal prison – the Ziggurat of the New Moon. Razmyrel convinced Arlen to seek out and to somehow utilize the ancient knowledge of the dark deva imprisoned inside, as Sarath had done centuries before. They found the ancient ziggurat, formed around Morkiel's vessel by the slaves of old under the dark angels, and then banished to the Astral Plane. The ziggurat could be summoned with the command words found in Sarath's diary that made the ziggurat appear briefly on the Material Plane before quickly shifting back to the void. Once they summoned the ziggurat, they found the imprisoned dark deva inside, maddened by millennia

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of imprisonment and continuously babbling about obscure knowledge. After attuning to the crystal of the immortals, Arlen and Razmyrel managed to glean essential bits of information about secrets long thought lost from the crazed ramblings of the deva. These, in turn, made Arlen the mightiest wizard across the realm and Razmyrel a legendary warrior. However, the pair realized Cygnus would disapprove of the source of their knowledge, so they kept it a secret between the two of them. Arlen then started to secretly build an army of golems to be ready to fight the might of the Order.

MASTER ARLEN

Razmyrel first set out to build support from the populace and the nobles of the realm. Together with Arlen, he worked tirelessly to create divisions between the multiple sub-sects of the Order, either by mind-controlling high-level priests or via well-planned murders framing prominent Order members. He joined forces with the Drayl City-States, who were in rare agreement within their fragmented politics, compelled by their enmity of the Order. He also received a large sum of gold from the Wyltammers to support payoffs to Order officials and build clandestine forces. This ancient elven family was under the scrutiny of the Order due to reportedly using suspicious magic and loathed the oversight.

At the right time, when the in-fighting was at its peak, Arlen and Razmyrel led a rebellion, aided by their allies and the golem army, and confronted the Priest-King in triumph. Arzatraxos, the red dragon inquisitor who became a priest of the Shining Light over the centuries, fled to the south to escape the ire of the heroes. After a short and bloody war to root out all remnants of the previous establishment, Razmyrel was crowned Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar I, King of Aglarion.

The new king outlawed the Order of the Eternal Light and expedited the dissolution of the church into multiple sects. He reinstated all other religions, with the one rule that no sect and viewpoint of any religion can overshadow the others. Arlen returned to Samkiel, and studied the fallen angel's knowledge of lost places to find ancient lore and magical secrets, which helped him build wonders across Aglarion. His works include the Arcane Tower, modeled after the magical runes of the Ziggurat of the New Moon, the Azure Bridge, and parts of Onadbyr. He disassembled the majority of his golem army, lest it fall into the hands of an enemy, and from the harvested material began building a legendary Colossus to create the ultimate protector of the realm. The people of Aglarion quickly started to call him Arlen the Constructor. King Razmyrel Melkar established a group of Lawgivers to carry out his laws in the Kingdom, even in far-away places. These agents of the crown took up the name "Red Cloaks" out of respect for King Razmyrel and his fight for justice and pledged always to remember the pain and suffering caused by unjust laws.

KING RAZMYREL VALSYR MELKAR

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The Melkar Dynasty (year 0–142)

King Razmyrel Melkar (year 0–42). It took a decade for the Founder of Aglarion to stabilize his realm, enact the new laws, and build an army to control the young kingdom. In this endeavor, he had a lot of assistance from the Wyltammers, who sought the elimination of the Order for their own reasons - they had been slowly working on a ritual that would give them immortality. To have the potential to accomplish this task, they supported Razmyrel's claim to the throne both with human resources and gold, and in exchange, received high noble rank, lands, and a long period of freedom to pursue their secret goal. In the meantime, Razmyrel and Arlen focused on rebuilding and forming a lasting and legendary kingdom.

Queen Myrel (year 42–75). Razmyrel's firstborn daughter, was said to have been tutored by Arlen the Constructor himself and was an accomplished wizard in her own right and a kind and fair queen. However, her main focus was to keep her father's legacy and laws in place. She is known to have been instrumental in finding the cure for the Laughing Plague which hit Onadbyr in the early years of her reign, and repelling an invasion of giant fire beetles unleashed on the city by a small group of Order of the Eternal Light cultists.

King Grankar the Brash (year 91–112). The seventh monarch of the Melkar line was the great-grandson of King Razmyrel, widely known to be bored with the burden of the crown. Many stories and legends relate to his life, recounting his wild adventures when he snuck out of the Palace. He was also well known for lavish spending, commissioning an array of building projects for Onadbyr to expand outside the old city. Not having the gold to pay for all of this, he offered land and title to the wealthy dwarven trading family, the Monders, who delivered most of the stone and workforce needed for the projects.

King Bidlar I (year 119–142). The last Melkar king was more of a bureaucrat than anything else, and his strongest trait was his indecisiveness. He was unable to sire an heir. His wife left him for Drayl, a scandal that facilitated the end of the Melkar line and their right to rule. Unknown to all, his unfortunate fate was plotted step-by-step by his closest advisors, the Wyltammers, who were ready to enact their ritual, and decided to set their plan in motion. When King Bidlar died of a suspicious heart attack, they reluctantly became the Stewards of Aglarion in the absence of a Melkar heir, according to King Bidlar's last will and testament.

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The Wyltammer Period (year 142–215)

It took the Wyltammers a century and a half to finally understand and complete the ritual that gave them eternal life. It necessitated the siphoning of life force from a massive number of mortals, so they decided their best bet was to take the throne and use it to slowly and secretly complete their task. The Wyltammers first promised to find the proper heir and hand the throne to that person, but they stalled the process. In the meantime, they started to slowly siphon off enough life force from the city's citizens during mass events. After they collected enough life essence and no longer needed the power of rulership, they installed King Orlon Ebrin as their puppet, claiming to have found a tertiary lineage connection to the Melkar dynasty. The act of handing power back was unheard of, and soon the name of the Wyltammers became legendary, synonymous with loyalty, wisdom, generosity, and valorous servitude to the Kingdom. From this year on, they started to organize an annual ball commemorating this act – used to siphon a small amount of life force from the attendees to maintain their ritual throughout the years.

The Ebrin Dynasty (year 215–354)

King Orlon Ebrin (year 215–261). The first puppet monarch was the son of a minor noble and a drunkard. He could never live up to his elevated position as king, but he also didn't really try too hard either, pampered by the wealth that surrounded him. Stories abound about his drunken fits in the Royal Court, as well as his slow wit.

Queen Wedmor I (year 261–277). The young queen was the only daughter of Orlon Ebrin and an intelligent scholar who despised her father. When the old King Orlon died, she ascended the throne and made sure to cut all ties that might have bound it to the will of others. During her reign, the Wyltammers lost most of their influence on the crown. The wise queen focused on building schools and was committed to remedying her father's inconsistent laws.

King Talanar I (year 289–314). King Talanar, the first of his name, was the grandson of Queen Wedmor. As a youth, he met a Vordani slave and became convinced throughout his reign that the Vordani tribes were the greatest threat to the realm, so he spent heavily in fortifying the northern border with fortresses and watchtower chains that still bear his name. However, due to his singular focus on building those fortifications, his time as a king was somewhat stained. The projects accumulated debt and initiated a high level of corruption, allowing noble houses and wealthy merchants to take advantage of the crown and make the lower classes live in miserable conditions while working on these projects. Early on, King Talanar stripped the Red Cloak Lawgivers of most of their authority, to get his way in every deal, making the organization more of a title than anything else. The most well-known family that got rich on the backs of these construction projects were the Karramosa, whose lands were along the northern border and who charged extraordinary fees for their local support.

King Zaxamlyn (year 326–354). King Zaxamlyn was the last of the Ebrin line and reigned when corruption was most rampant, and the power of the wealthy went completely unchecked. He was challenged in power-politics by Vacrilos Azennar, the head of an old but minor noble house. Vacrilos was a Red Cloak Lawgiver who always acted in accordance with the original vows of the organization. As such, Vacrilos was considered

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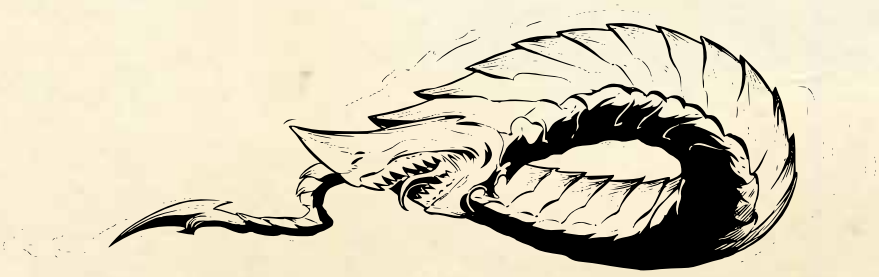
a hero of the people, taking up cases where the corruption of the nobility was involved and forcing court hearings. He was famous for reminding everyone why the Red Cloak Lawgivers were originally founded and of the responsibility of the courts. He wore his red cloak as a symbol, the same way as King Razmyrel Melkar, to signify the blood of the innocents. He helped countless families, and eventually, the series of protests he led against King Zaxamlyn resulted in the marriage of the Ebrin king's only daughter, Imliya, to him. As soon as their first son was born, King Zaxamlyn abdicated the throne to his son-in-law, effectively ending the Ebrin dynasty.

The Azennar Dynasty (year 354–631)

King Vacrilos I, The Regent (year 354–396). Famous for being the champion of the common folk and a true Red Cloak Lawgiver, King Vacrilos created the majority of the laws that carried on and made Aglarion a stable kingdom in these realms. He was the one to install the Court of Voices, so everyone's voice could be heard, regardless of class. He also rooted out corruption from most organizations tied to the Palace and reinstated the Red Cloak Lawgivers to their original sphere of influence and power.

King Vacrilos II (year 396–453). The son of King Vacrilos I and grandson of King Zaxamlyn, also called the "Grandfather of the Realm" King Vacrilos II lived a long and full life to the ripe age of 99 and was well known to be a rake – so much that his epithet was really meant to imply that he could be anyone's grandfather in the Kingdom.

Queen Linolu, the Peaceful (year 453–482). A real granddaughter of King Vacrilos II, whose reign was characterized by significant clashes with the kobold tribes fleeing from clan wars in the west, from the Mountainfall. Out of fear of the unknown, nobles began amassing soldiers and demanding the king make war on the "monsters." After several large-scale battles, Queen Linolu arrived to lead the effort, but instead of attacking the kobolds, she offered to hear their story during a parlay. She saw cultural differences as the driving force behind the enmity towards the newcomers and offered a truce and a place in her kingdom to the refugees. Legends speak of the kobold bard, Skerg Nethercrest, whose song about his tribe's journey warmed the hearts of even the most heartless nobles. Queen Linolu also realized the opportunities provided by her new subjects and started to work on offering a haven for other non-humanoids, who were free to settle as long as they kept to the laws of the land. The first to take up his offer after the kobolds was the Goldtooth goblin clan, who established its village in the far western reaches of the realm and were soon granted noble titles.



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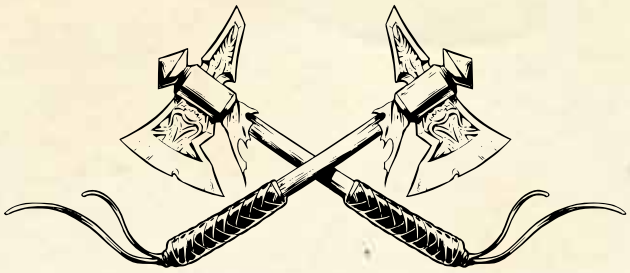

King Boldizzar (year 498–521). King Boldizzar was known as the Defeater of Vordan. Finally, after over 200 years, the fears of King Talanar I of the Ebrin dynasty became a reality. Due to internal strife and a growing and hungry populace, the Vordani confederacy of tribes led by the White Mammoth Clan's Chief Jonarr, descended upon northern Aglarion in a fury of blood, testing the strength of the old and poorly maintained northern fortifications. In the bloody conflict, King Boldizzar Azennar proved to be a military mastermind, triumphing over the Vordani hordes and their war machines drawn by giant beasts, decimating the White Mammoth clan, and killing Grand Chief Jonarr in single combat. The Doomhammer clan stepped up to fill the ensuing power vacuum and agreed to a truce that is still enforced between the two nations.

Queen Eirammar (year 529–564). Known for craving fame like her uncle King Boldizzar, Queen Eirammar's main accomplishment was defending the realm from the sea against incursions by the slave fleets of the Isles of Xantharos. The returning Almeiro Ronul, keeping it secret that the reason for the attacks was due to his own pirating acts, offered his help against the threat and received land and title upon claiming victory.

King Daerios (year 581–603). King Daerios was a legendary warrior, the epitome of the knight in shining armor. However, he was also a restless soul, utterly bored with the court and the responsibilities of rulership. His rebellious tendencies got him involved in all manner of dangerous situations, which eventually led to the legendary hunt he organized for Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, who was tricked into coming to the Material Plane from the Feyrealm by the Matrons of Malice to test the strength of the kingdom. The hunt culminated in the doppeldrake's attack on Onadbyr, laying waste to a large part of the city. In in the end, King Daerios defeated and drove away the legendary monster, bringing peace to the realm again. Malzdreziret, defeated, returned to the Bleak Mire and plotted revenge on the hags.

King Waldrann Azennar

King Waldrann (year 603-present). King Waldrann is a famed adventurer who some say bears a close resemblance to the Grandfather of the Realm, King Vacrilos II. The king has ruled a land of prosperity from a young age, even more so after the unfortunate death of his first wife Queen Elyssa, and later his son, Prince Krasnar. The king and his second wife, a former maid named and soon crowned Queen Lyrencia, rule over a land that is blessed with wealth.

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Ecology

Climate, Flora, Fauna

The kingdom of Aglarion has a temperate coastal climate with mild to warm summers and cool to cold winters. Cloudy conditions and moderate rainfalls are common, and the country also usually experiences snowfall at least once a year. The broken moon cycles the night sky and is full once per week.

The kingdom has extensive forests that contain three layers of vegetation with a great variety of plant species. Lichen, mosses, ferns, wildflowers, and other small plants cover the forest floor. Shrubs fill the middle layer, and hardwood trees like maple, oak, birch, magnolia, sweet gum, and beech compose the topmost layer. The mountains surrounding Aglarion are dominated by grasses, low shrubs, and indeciduous plants and trees.

Insects, spiders, slugs, frogs, turtles, and salamanders are common, as are birds like broad-winged hawks, chaffinches, blackbirds, sparrows, starlings, cardinals, owls, and pileated woodpeckers that can be found in this biome. The most common mammals include white-tailed deer, boar, raccoons, opossums, porcupines, and red foxes. Onadbyr and the rest of the towns are the habitats of vermin like rodents, foxes, and pigeons that are drawn by the byproducts of the settlements. The mountain areas are home to numerous rodents, birds, mountain goats, brown, black, grizzly bears, and mountain lions. One can also rarely encounter huge dire animals from many species.

Races

All humanoid races are treated as equals in the kingdom of Aglarion. It has become home to all who wish to live together in peace. Every race includes members who find this hard, but these individuals are mostly rejected because of their deeds and not their heritages. Each race fits into society slightly differently due to their natural capabilities and traits, and most of them can be found in all levels of society.

Some are fewer in number like elves, some appear only in tales or mysteries like the grimlocks, some simply live deep underground like the duergar, or are water-bound like the sahuagin, but none of them are predestined by their alignment at birth.

There are dominantly evil or good races or some communities organized around a single ancestry, but most beings live mixed in the kingdom, especially in the capital city of Onadbyr. This level of tolerance has always been so, but it has been even more pronounced since Queen Linolu and for the past decade, as the kingdom has started to flourish under King Waldrann and his new wife Queen Lyrencia.

Languages

Most inhabitants of Aglarion and the surrounding regions speak the Common tongue. In Aglarion people speak Aglarionian, and some of the neighboring countries also have their own languages, namely Vordani, or Draylish, which is spoken in many dialects. In Xantharos the half-dragons speak Draconic. The dark angels and their descendants that inhabit the remote and unexplored ziggurat-city of Xapto'wa'ttykal speak a twisted and dark version of Celestial. The subjects of the kraken-mage's domain in A'rvanshy speak the Aquatic tongue. Racial languages are also commonly spoken throughout the land, many of them used only within a family or in a closed community.

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Religions

Those who follow a specific faith in Aglarion and the neighboring regions pray to a deity that represents a sum of its corresponding ideologies. These religions are not race- or region-specific, but instead represent generic powers and values present in life. Their followers consider them as the representations of the most valued aspect of their lives, which they believe to be the source of their success and the driving force of their destinies. Gods might be venerated under different names and through variant rituals by each race and in each region throughout the lands.

The followers of these deities might differ in their viewpoints on the same divine power, one feeling more closely related to a particular aspect of that deity than the other. This might result in differences in the alignments among religious groups of the same faith. As a result, many religions are segmented into smaller sects that don't mix well, and the more radically different one's view, the more they become separated from the other arms of the faith. All deities have their good, neutral, or evil followers whose views might ultimately oppose one another's.

Many consider themselves devotees to just one of the gods, praising their chosen dogma and ideology over everything else. Those who are not so dedicated to a single faith still believe in and know of the power of the divine, but they pray to these powers or invoke their names only in certain situations when they hope for assistance. Many only pay lip service to these religions and churches, making minor sacrifices or short prayers exclusively at their home shrines decorated with multiple holy symbols, or only when needed.

There are no specific, universally recognized holy symbols for the gods. Instead, believers and clerics fashion their own focuses on which they concentrate when trying to communicate with their patrons. Some sects and groups of faithful might have a commonly agreed-upon symbolism shared by their members. Still, it is not uncommon to see certain variations of holy symbols within one organization. The symbols below are just some of the most frequent representations of the divine.

LIFE

The church of the God of Life, the Redeemer, as it is widely called in Aglarion, is mainly devoted to helping others and protecting life. Clerics consider everything living as the bearer of their deity's essence. They live simple lives, sharing everything they have with those in need. Their main temple in Onadbyr is open to anyone, providing food and a place to sleep for as long as needed. The fare and the cots are simple but seemingly abundant. The Redeemer's sprawling temple can house and care for hundreds of people in times of need. The clergy uses its resources and magic to heal and remove illnesses for free but under one small condition, that the recipient helps out around the temple with any task assigned to them.

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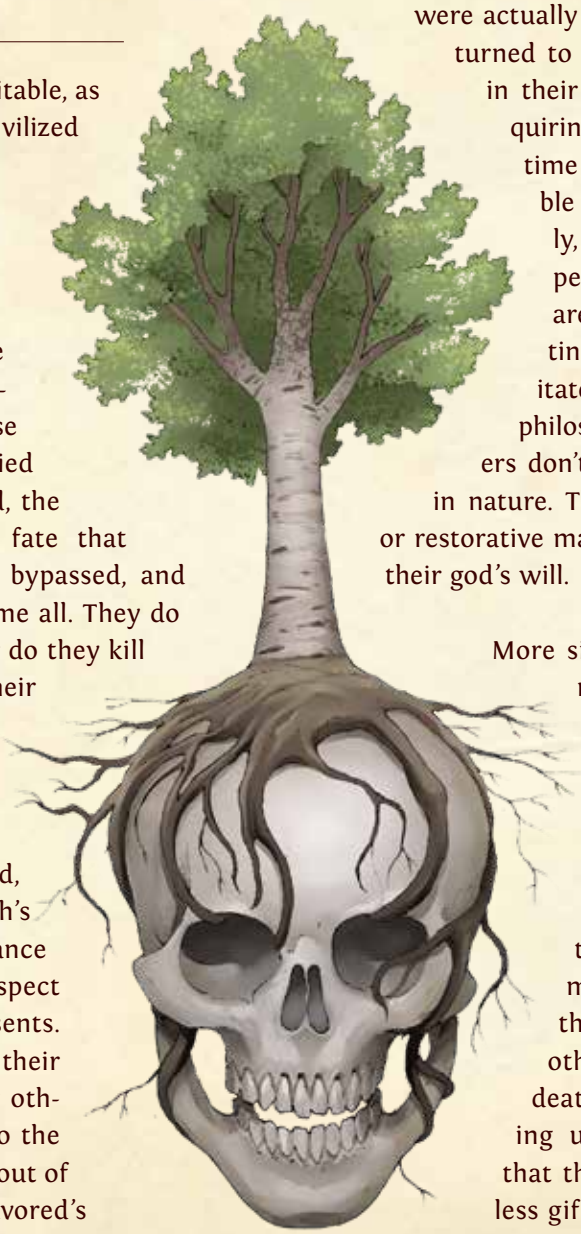
There are those few wicked followers of the faith who see the creation of life as a form of a divine act made available to them by their deity. These clerics breed new lifeforms in the most twisted ways, experimenting with creating creatures to achieve perfection without moral boundaries. Yet other fanatics of the faith consider the importance of their own life essence as the most valuable above all others. They practice their faith by stealing the life force of others to achieve eternal life without needing to continue their existence in undeath.

DEATH

The God of Death, or the Inevitable, as it is widely called in the civilized parts of Aglarion, is venerated by only a handful of ardent worshippers throughout the kingdom. It is an emotionless, pitiless, stern religion, and devotees of the faith carry the same demeanor. They are usually morose people whose thoughts are tied up around the inevitable end, the passing of everything, the fate that can't be argued with or be bypassed, and which will eventually consume all. They do not promote death itself, nor do they kill to collect more souls for their master, for they believe in the natural process of death and would not dare to interfere with the workings of their deity. Instead, they spread the idea of death's inevitability and the irrelevance of its timing, demanding respect towards the force it represents. They are patiently awaiting their own demise while preparing others for its arrival and tend to the dead after their passing, not out of sorrow, but to honor their favored's power with each tree they plant over the graves of the departed.



Clerics of the Inevitable in Aglarion dress in simple black robes and paint their faces white. They pray for spells at sundown, which they consider the death of each passing day. They rarely accept new acolytes, and only on the condition that the applicant understands the true meaning and concept of death and sees the inevitable passing in everything that surrounds them, giving up their worldly belongings to the families of the deceased. Those in the clergy who have had a near-death experience or were actually dead at one time and then returned to life with magic see this event in their life as cheating their god, requiring them to repent until their time comes. Clerics of the Inevitable live a simple life without family, friends, or attachments to any personal belongings. When they aren't engaged in their daily routines and tasks, they tend to meditate or discuss the more profound philosophy of death and how others don't understand its true meaning in nature. They refuse to use any healing or restorative magic as they consider it against their god's will.

More sinister clerics who follow the religion of the god of Death sacrifice sentient beings regularly to promote the power with which they are allied. They consider these acts of murder as a way to make peace with their own mortality and also as a divine moment where they can glimpse their god's true nature. Some other vile believers of the faith of death seek eternal life by achieving undeath, a form of existence that they consider the perfect timeless gift from their god.

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KNOWLEDGE

Followers of the Wise One, as the God of Knowledge is known in Aglarion, live to learn and experience as many things as possible during their lifetimes and strive to share them with anyone they can. Clerics of the faith are versed in a wide spectrum of knowledge on general studies, like nature, history, geography, and algebra, but they each try to specialize in a unique field of study, usually one that none of their brethren have yet taken up. The clergy organizes regular free classes that are open for anyone to attend, and many of the priests teach at the College of Minstrels and the Walhem Boarding School for Young Masters in Onadbyr. They encourage their pupils to pass on the knowledge they have accumulated, so it is usual even for acolytes to hold lectures to the senior members of the clergy. Clerics of the faith see keeping information to themselves as a sin, and as a result, they usually refrain from lying, withholding, or obscuring information and knowledge. Many seek out the Wise One's temples to find wisdom and knowledge, which the clerics transfer with great patience and sometimes in more detail than necessary. They are respected and are considered as one of the main pillars of Aglarion's society.

Clerics of the Wise One don't dress in special garments during their everyday activities. However, there are occasions, like the graduation of the acolytes, or the master's degree ceremony, where they put on a special colorful robe that represents the varied knowledge they have acquired. Clerics of the faith tend to have charismatic, outgoing, and talkative personalities. Some might be more reserved or introverted, but they also force themselves to excel at teaching, even if their subject delivery is a bit dull. They are people who respect skill and knowledge or a good story with a moral lesson. Members of the clergy are adept at using divination spells, but they also act as healers and devote their time as physiotherapists to teach the wounded and sick how to recover quicker from their injuries or illnesses.

Some clerics of the Wise One, usually forming small sects or acting alone, would like to keep their god's gifts to themselves. They seek obscure, hidden, forgotten, and powerful knowledge, which gives them advantages over others in life. They never teach or share their secrets with anyone but rather take them to the grave, believing in a race of souls, in which those who know the most are elevated to their god's side where they can learn the rarest and most powerful secrets.

NATURE

The God of Nature, or the Eternal Mother, as it known by most in Aglarion, is dedicated to the forces of nature, the elements it encompasses, and the flora and fauna it creates. They believe that their god's essence is the building block of everything in existence and sustains everyone and everything. They venerate the elemental forces as the purest form of the particles of nature. At the same time, they look at all complex natural formations in nature as the artful creation of the Eternal Mother. Therefore, they nurture and preserve nature, never interfering with its ways, or acting against its will.

Most clerics, many of them druids of the faith, are patient and humble, acting more as observant caretakers rather than active promoters of the expansion of Creation. They teach people to live in harmony with

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nature, to protect it, and though they are usually not supported in this idea by civilized folk, they teach that none should interfere with Nature's workings. Clerics of the deity of nature are most welcomed by those who make a living from agriculture as divine blessings can assist in their everyday tasks. The same clerics see hunting as a part of nature when the hunter feeds on its prey.

Some worship the more destructive forces of nature. These fanatics of the faith focus their thoughts on the powerful forces of nature and the elements they can evoke. They see them as powers to be used and served, while achieving their goals. Some other radical sects of the faith fight anything that comes into conflict with nature, including those who call themselves civilized. They try to protect everything in Creation, even if it means the death of those who think they are above it.

COMPETENCE

The following of the God of Competence is made up of those who believe in themselves to the highest degree. The faithful worship the Efficient Master, as it is known throughout the land, for the gift of self-preservation and skillfulness that it has given them. Clerics of the faith encourage others to train and use their skills to accomplish great works, to create, and excel in something. They strongly oppose using magic to advance in life, seeing it as something that makes people and civilizations lazy and careless. They thus seldomly use their own magic, resorting to it only in the direst situations if nothing else can be done through one's learned skills. They consider the vast number of achievable competencies as an infinite number of paths one can and should take to advance oneself to achieve perfection and to further the will of the Efficient Master.

Clerics of the Efficient Master encourage practicing new skills, specializing in one's chosen path, but they do not judge the use of such skills depending on its outcome, should it be used for good or evil. They are highly skilled in a chosen field, while some of them are experts in more than one competence. Their outfits don't speak of their religion, except for the little pendant they wear with their chosen symbol of the Efficient Master, a sign of their primary profession. They can be solitary experts who don't exhibit their priestly natures or famous masters of a particular discipline known by many to be followers of the faith.

Some clerics of the faith believe in mastering specific skills to advance their agendas. These clerics of trickery and deceit are masters of manipulation, lies, stealth, and all forms of tricks through which they can gain power, wealth, and influence. Another known cult of the faith believes in altogether abandoning magic and relying only on personal endeavor. These fanatics don't cast spells and see all magic-users as their most hated enemies in the world.

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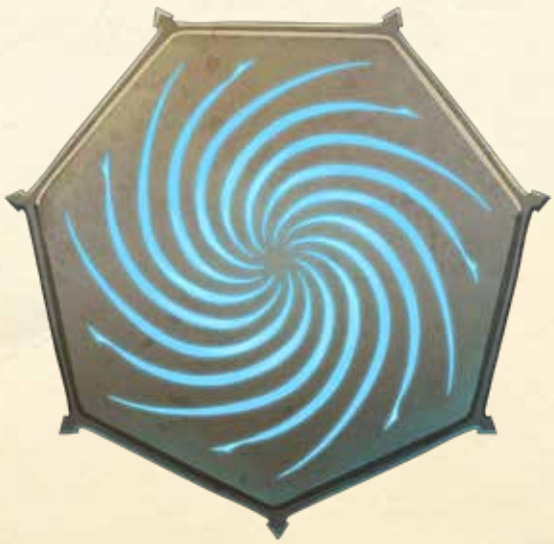
MAGIC

Priests of the God of Magic, known as the Wondermaker by most in Aglarion, are scholarly people. They venerate the true force of magic and consider it a gift from their god. They believe that magic was gifted to the world to help with its problems and advance its well-being. Clerics of the faith don't distinguish between the sources of magic. Divine, arcane, innate, or even psionic are all seen as sacred powers originating from the one true source that is the Wondermaker. Priests of the faith try to use as many forms of magic as possible on all occasions and for every aspect of life. They encourage people to practice and learn spellcasting and look upon those who hold innate magical abilities as carriers of a holy blessing.

Clerics of the Wondermaker are usually brilliant individuals with a broad knowledge of the universe and its structure. They support those adept at the art of magic and encourage them to display their powers openly to awe people and demonstrate their god's magnificence. Most priests of the Wondermaker are adept at some form of arcane arts themselves. Some of them who lack empathy look down on those that are not gifted by such powers and consider them weak.



STRENGTH

The god of strength, the Relentless, as it is known by most in Aglarion, is venerated by those who believe that suffering and hardships are an indispensable component of success. Clerics of the Relentless train themselves to withstand and overcome both physical and emotional hardships. Those blessed with compassion encourage others to train and harden themselves, while some use their gifted strength to oppress them.

Clerics of the faith are usually brave and direct individuals who face challenges with great confidence. Most of them engage in some form of self-inflicted sacrifice or penance to prove their dedication and endurance. They train and live hard and celebrate their successes loudly, declaring their achievements as the glory of their god. Priests of the Relentless display their strength whenever they can by showing off their muscular physiques as well as their scars. They usually wear heavy armor and carry large weapons, adding to their imposing figures.

There are some clerics of the faith who are restricted less by their morals and are devoted more to the forces of destruction their god represents. They venerate destructive powers and stoke the dread that they evoke in others. They seek to harness forces that are hard to dominate and use

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them to instill fear and achieve standing in the world around them. Some others see strength as a way to dominate others. These clerics demand subjugation and teach about the dominance of their god, who, according to their belief, is more powerful than any other force in the multiverse as it is power itself, raw and unforgiving.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

The God of Light and Darkness encompasses both the light and the darkness of the world in one of the strongest dualities in existence - that of the Shining Light and the Darkness Within.

Some of the clerics of the Shining Light preach about the warmth and the happiness brought on by light and wear bright colors with reflecting patterns woven into them. They maintain the night lights in all cities and towns and all lighthouses along the coastline. They believe that the sun's power can help expel any malign influence from one's soul and are called upon when people fear external effects of gloom that plague their loved ones. Some believe that light is to be shone to uncover misgivings and punish those who act against the law. The infamous sect of the faith, the Order of the Eternal Light, took this doctrine to the extreme with its inquisition against all other religions and free thinkers, but the theocracy was toppled over 300 years ago and outlawed as a result.

Some others of the faith believe in the ultimate balance between the two poles, taking it as a dogma that one does not exist without the other. They comfort others with the fact that light will always come back after the darkness, while some believe in just observing the world and accepting this duality. Some take this belief to the extreme and are compelled to preach about the balance of existence.

Finally, some clerics of this primordial duality are only focused on the Darkness Within. They believe in the importance of darkness in people's lives – a restful sleep, an evening talk, a starry night, and the other benefits that darkness can grant. Others of this interpretation of the faith believe that darkness is necessary to keep important secrets and things that need to be hidden. Even more extreme adherents to the Darkness Within sometimes willfully blind themselves never to see light again and to be able to contemplate the power of darkness. There are a few who secretly worship the legend of the Dark Star and the eternal night that it once brought to the Material Plane. They hope to claim power from this ancient avatar of the Darkness Within to further their dark goals and once again bring forth the all-encompassing darkness.

Aglarion has had a long and complicated relationship with the god of Light and Darkness. Although Sarath the Bright is revered for ending the Dark Star's oppression, the Order of the Eternal Light ruled Aglarion with an iron hand, and the memories of the evil deeds of the Priest-Kings are still bitter even after 600 years.

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SOCIAL STRUCTURE

ROYALTY

The royal family represents the stability and consistency of the Kingdom. Royal families change from time to time, but the institution of royalty has a longstanding tradition in Aglarion. The king or queen rules over the realm and his or her family has absolute power over the law and the resources in their kingdom. The king or queen gives land and title only on rare occasions and in turn demands eternal loyalty from these subjects. No armed forces over twenty strong can exist in Aglarion without the approval of the king or queen. Even then, these armed units and their commanding nobles must accept the royal family as their supreme commander.

NOBLES

Titles of nobility have rarely been bestowed by the rulers of Aglarion over the past centuries. Those who have received this highest form of honor have always aided the ruler in their most dire conflicts in times of war or other significant events. Many noble families have risen and fallen over the centuries since the monarchy was established, and only a few have remained who have survived feuds and challenges. Many of the noble houses vanished with the death of their last descendant or the loss of their wealth, and only a few new ones arose due to their services to the monarch of their times. Noble families usually own wealth and resources and are recognized by almost everyone in the kingdom, proudly wearing their heraldry. The lineages of the most successful noble houses have been able to expand their fortunes and influence with each new generation. Only the nobility has the right to raise an army with the approval of the ruling monarch, and even though they vow fealty to the ruler and the crown, they represent significant power individually as well.

GUILDS

There are three official guilds in Aglarion, namely the Crafters', the Providers', and the Merchants' guilds that have formed their associations over the past centuries to share information, regulate their trade, and set standards of quality for their professions. Members of the Crafters' Guild include every business that creates something for sale to make a living. The Providers' Guild consists of those businesses that provide services to anyone in any form, including taverns and inns. The Merchants' Guild collects all those who buy goods and resell them.

Guilds collect guild fees and taxes from their members, the latter being paid to the Royal Treasury every month. One must show expertise and a solid background and funding for their operation to be accepted as a member of a guild. Each guild has its own rules and leaders who are taken very seriously within their ranks and respected by the kingdom's citizens. They can set rules to be followed and demands that need to be fulfilled by the members, who reelect them every five years. The head of the Crafters' Guild is Jovas Paltran, owner of the Nail and Beam Carpentry, the leader of the Merchants' Guild is Zirtan Moorwalker of the Dragon's Hoard Trading House, while the master of the Providers' Guild is Omric Laronzo, who owns and operates the Golden Nectar Inn.

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CLERGY

Priests are considered important pillars of society in Aglarion. They are mostly seen as sources of support, aid in everyday troubles, and guides in times of need. Still, some consider them to be overly dangerous because of the powers they hold, primarily due to the terrible historical heritage left by the legacy of the theocracy. Since the kingdom's birth, monarchs have always been cautious to balance churches' powers and curtail their respective social statuses. Clerics of every faith, except for the faith of Light and Darkness, whose religion is not of fashion lately, are treated with respect and are honored as powerful individuals who are direct channellers of their gods' divinity.

COMMONERS

Everyone who is not a noble, a guild member, or a spell-caster of a specific organization or temple is considered a commoner. Commoners in Aglarion are the proud masses who take on all the tasks at hand. They provide all the resources and the basic services that keep the realm prosperous and are aware of this fact. King Waldrann Azennar emphasizes the fundamental significance of the commoner class in all of his public speeches and demands the same respect for them from all of his subjects as those shown to the nobility. Commoners in Aglarion have many rights, and the law protects them with all of its might, enforced by the crown and the Red Cloak Lawgivers. And so, most commoners live modest lives in a safe environment. The only exceptions are the few marginalized groups that have fallen between the cracks. The clergy of the Redeemer support these poor and sometimes even desperate individuals and families on a daily basis.

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ECONOMY

RESOURCES

Most of Aglarion's raw resources are owned by the kingdom's monarchs, though some have been gifted to noble families over the past centuries. However, these cases are sporadic and considered the highest form of gratitude from the royal family. Those nobles who have been granted lands have also always been mandated to provide the kingdom with armed forces. The peasants, miners, foresters, and any workforce on locations owned by the crown are paid directly by the kingdom on a regular basis through the Royal Army, which also serves as armed protection. The kingdom's most important resources are its ore deposits, precious metal mines, fertile lands, and lush forests.

Livestock, dairy products, many types of grains, vegetables, fruits, and other food resources are produced on farms of various sizes throughout the plains and hills of Aglarion. Two of the larger, most productive farming communities are Harveston and Willow Creek. The kingdom's best horses are bred and trained at the Royal Stud Farm in the south, where one can also find Aglarion's most famous brewery, the Monastery of the Spirited Leaf. Seafood is abundant by the shores of the Calhay Sea, but the rivers and lakes of the realm also provide plenty of fresh-water fish and crabs. The legs of the giant toads that live near the North Bay Lighthouse are considered a culinary delicacy by the nobility of Onadbyr.

Clay and marble, which are mined at the Sobruz quarry and penitentiary, are the most abundant resources of the kingdom. Iron and copper from the deep veins of the Smokestone Mine flows into Onadbyr steadily. Timber is cut mostly at Willow Creek village, but Nangrath, Gorso, and Harveston also provide plenty of wood from the surrounding forests. The unique, sound-proof darkwood can be found in shadowy Blackwood Valley, but its location is shrouded in mystery.

The most scarce and precious resources of Aglarion are actually in the hands of two noble families. Pearls recovered from the North Bay by the pearl hunters of Ronul's End are owned and processed by the Ronul family and then sold in Onadbyr at an incredible profit. Gemstones of every variety are brought to the surface in the greatest secrecy by the Karramosa family through the Monastery of Past Lives at Talanar's Pond.

Aglarion imports many of the resources that it needs and can't produce itself. The Royal Treasury and Aglarion's many independent merchants trade with any foreign entity that offers a fair deal. The most significant volume and variety of goods are shipped in and out of the east through the Royal Docks or through southern routes via the Drayl City-States. These are relatively safe passages where more serious incidents such as monster attacks, pirate raids, or bandit assaults rarely happen.

TAXES

One of the most significant forms of income for the Royal Treasury is from taxes. There are many petty taxes in place, and they are regularly collected with meticulous precision by the Royal Army and the guilds. However, King Waldrann has lowered most of the taxes and even eliminated many of the smaller ones due to the great prosperity of the Kingdom. The highest taxes currently are the ones related to

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Copper piece

Gold piece

Silver piece

Platinum piece

export and import of goods through the borders of the kingdom, as well as guild, property, and harbor taxes, a wagon tax on wagons large enough to be drawn by two large animals, a tax on temples, and one on all permanent shops. Citizens usually encounter only the gate tax of Onadbyr, which costs 1 copper piece for each passing through its gates, or 1 silver piece of bridge tax collected when crossing the Azure bridge and the Overpass of the Giants. Guilds take about ten percent from the income of their members every month in the form of fixed and calculated taxes, keep some for expenses and forward the rest to the Royal Treasury. Those who don't pay their taxes to the guild representatives are reported to the Red Cloak Lawgivers, who swiftly investigate and settle the case.

COINAGE

All coins are minted with a delicate embroidered edge to make the chipping and scraping of the coin easily recognizable. The smallest of the coins, the copper piece, is round and easy to thread thanks to its hole. The silver piece is worth ten copper pieces, and it is square and easily distinguishable from the copper and gold coins even by touch. It bears the image of the Royal Palace and river Nenock. The gold piece is worth ten silver pieces and significantly larger than the other two coins of lesser value. Both sides of the gold piece bear the image of King Waldrann Azennar. Shortly after his disastrous death in the adventure, it is changed to the depiction of Queen Aphinah Azennar. The platinum bar is the largest coinage, worth one hundred gold pieces. It is rarely used and mostly only for more significant transactions, meaning that many of the realm's less wealthy subjects have never seen one in their lives. The platinum bar bears the image of Aglarion's first king, Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar I.

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Laws

The streets of Onadbyr and every other town in Aglarion are more or less frequently patrolled by the soldiers of the Royal Army, the Royal Swords as they are known, (use the **guard** monster entry) or the forces of local nobles. Their presence ensures that the streets remain safe. They confront any criminal activity they encounter and will try to ensure that it is stopped. They have the right to restrain anyone and alert the Red Cloak Lawgivers to act as judges or investigators if the culprit is missing. In Onadbyr, a Red Cloak Lawgiver usually arrives at a scene in 2d4 + 2 minutes after a soldier leaves to call them. They also immediately embark to any remote location and travel by fast horse.

Sheathed weapons can be carried anywhere in Aglarion except for the Royal Palace, where only the Royal Guards, the members of the Knights of the Crown, and the royal family can have weapons on their person. Weapons carried openly are usually considered a form of assault everywhere in Aglarion, and soldiers or Red Cloak Lawgivers intervene immediately.

Magic can be wielded freely in Aglarion until used as an instrument for criminal activity.

Only noble families can upkeep and command a group of over twenty armed combatants, and only if they and their army swear an oath of fealty to the monarch of the kingdom. The king or queen can command or disband these armed groups at any time, and rulers usually demand services in exchange for the right to form armed units.

THE COURT OF VOICES

Established by King Vacrilos Azennar I, the first of the Azennar line, the Court of Voices was created to bring the will of the people in front of the throne in such a way that no single class would have greater influence than the others. It is traditionally composed of twelve elected representatives, each delegated by different social groups. The Twelve, as they are called, has three members from the noble houses, three from the clergy, three from the three guilds, and three from the commoners. Each social class chooses its representatives every five years by voting.

They meet the monarch on the first day of each month to raise problems, suggest solutions, and voice their concerns. The king or queen is free to discuss or neglect their issues and has the final say in the matters brought in front of their royal person.

ALERTING THE AUTHORITIES

The Royal Swords can be called to a location in Onadbyr by shouting or contacting their patrols of two. They can be found or arrive at a location if called within 2d4+2 minutes. The Royal Swords assess the situation and handle it as required, including alerting the Red Cloak Lawgivers who arrive at the scene in another 2d4+2 minutes. This is true for most settlements. However, the farther away from Onadbyr, the less likely a Red Cloak is readily available.

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PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMES

Sentences for crimes are pronounced and carried out by the Red Cloak Lawgiver at the time of arrest for lesser crimes or after consulting other Red Cloaks in cases of more complex, serious, or obscure crimes, while the suspect is held in custody at the Halls of the Lawgiver. There is no place for appeal once a sentence has been made and filed with a Red Cloak Lawgiver's signature.

Fines must be paid to the arresting Red Cloak within one day, and the officer will order the subject to collect the money as soon as possible, following them everywhere until it is collected. If the fine is not paid, the individual is imprisoned for one day for every 5 gold pieces outstanding from the fine.

Short imprisonment can last from days to months, and sentences of hard labor can be for up to five years, depending on the severity of the crime committed. Long imprisonment means over five years, sometimes decades, or even up to life, depending on the severity of the crime committed. At least three Red Cloaks must approve and validate the sentence.

Imprisoned individuals are locked up at the Dungeon of Tears, while hard labor time is spent at the Sobruz Quarry.

Executions are done by hanging from any of the bridges designated by the Red Cloak Lawgiver who was assigned to the case. They also carry out the sentence, but at least three Red Cloak Lawgivers first must approve and validate it.

Disturbing the peace	A fine starting from 3 gold pieces up to 500 gold pieces
Obstructing justice	A fine starting from 50 gold pieces and/or imprisonment
Property damage	A fine that is double the value of the damage caused and/or from short to long imprisonment or hard labor
Impersonation	From short to long imprisonment
Forgery	A fine that is double the value of the forged money and/or short to long imprisonment or hard labor
Bribery	A fine that is double the value of the bribe and/or short to long imprisonment or hard labor
Theft	A fine that is double the value of the stolen goods and/or from short to long imprisonment or hard labor
Assault	A fine starting from 3 gold pieces up to 500 gold pieces or short to long imprisonment.
Murder	Execution or long imprisonment or hard labor
Treason	Execution or long imprisonment or hard labor
Blasphemy	Short to long imprisonment or hard labor
Slavery	Long imprisonment or hard labor

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NOBLE HOUSES

HOUSE RONUL

The Ronul family is a relatively new addition to the major noble houses of Aglarion. The family's first patron was Almeiro Ronul, who served in the Royal Navy as a young cadet until taken captive by pirates near the Isles of Xantharos. He grew to be a fearless and infamous pirate, amassing great wealth from raiding Xantharosian traders. Meeting a beautiful refugee merfolk princess named Ininnizar, Almeiro fell in love and decided to give up piracy to help Ininnizar reclaim her home, close to the Aglarion coastline. Almeiro sailed to Aglarion with his fleet, the Xantharosians at his heels. Describing the Xantharosians as threats to the kingdom, he struck a deal with Queen Eirammar. He generously donated to the Queen's treasury and joined his fleet with the royal navy in return for land, title, and the northern bay's fishing rights. He then triumphed with Eirammar over the Xantharosian armada in a monumental naval battle involving hundreds of ships. Eventually, Almeiro settled on the coast with his crew and their families. He named the town Ronul's End to signify concluding the life he once led. Not able to resist the call of the sea, he started his pearl fishing business and made a fortune on it. As a famed and legendary pirate, rumors and gossip still abound about his treasures, said to be hidden somewhere in Aglarion. False rumors say clues to the treasure's whereabouts have been hidden in his house in Onadbyr.

The family's current head is Lord Dyzag Ronul, an elderly businessman whose sole focus is building more wealth. Together with his only living brother, he runs the house and tries to earn and get more favor with the royal family. These days, some people in Onadbyr are spreading gossip about Premil Ronul, Dyzag's only son, and the young lord's romantic involvement with Odryk Nangrath, Lord Arenbar Nangrath's younger son.

HOUSE NANGRATH

The Nangrath family prides itself on a long lineage of dwarves who made their home in the northern part of the country for centuries. They served as master builders for the fortresses and border fort systems. The family has always resided in the town named after their noble house. They are warriors, head to toe, and are expected to become master

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architects of fortifications. Their family tradition is firm and strict, where all sons of Nangrath are to serve the crown and be the epitome of a dwarf. Lord Arenbar Nangrath, the elder, is a venerable dwarf who has lost his belief in this world and is slowly withering away in his fort in the town of Nangrath. His older son, Yarik, lives in Nangrath and takes care of the town's actual leadership, aided by the expertise of Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer, the town's military officer and the Lord's private guard. The younger Nangrath heir, Odryk, lives in Onadbyr and has been associated in rumors with Premil Ronul, dreaming about escaping the kingdom to see other wondrous places and live through adventures with his love.

HOUSE MONDER

The Monders were a wealthy dwarven trading family who amassed their fortunes over centuries, eventually buying their lands and title with copious amounts of gold when King Grankar the Brash needed funding to expand the city outside the Old Wall. They invested heavily into ships and armed soldiers with their newfound standing and access to the right to raise a noble army. Their secret plan was to conquer the neighboring Isles of Xantharos and carve out their kingdom. Lord Gronjyph Monder led his formidable armada of hastily recruited mercenaries and adventurous locals against the many-colored half-dragon inhabitants of the Isles of Xantharos. However, he greatly miscalculated by thinking that his gold would be enough to win a war. The draconic onslaught of the righteously inflamed warriors of the Isles of Xantharos swept his fleet and army away, most of which deserted the noble's side. Returning home beaten and his traitorous plans revealed, the king confiscated Lord Gronjyph's lands and bound his only son and all of his heirs to serve as part of the paladin order of the Knights of the Crown in perpetuity to make up for their ancestor's sin.

HOUSE GORSO

The late Highlady Urmissa Gorso was a proud Knight of the Crown from a bloodline of loyal paladins who served the kings and queens of the kingdom for generations. Her sudden and unexplainable death took her whole family by surprise. It had an especially harsh effect on her devastated husband, Lord Ziademos Gorso, who could not get used to the changes in his family's domestic life, which he found hard to handle. The count locked himself up in his chambers for several years, refusing to accept food, help, or aid from anyone, including his daughter and sons. It was a mystery how he sustained himself, but one day he emerged from his room stinking, naked, covered in strange sigils, and a crazed look in his eyes. The lord's mad contemplations led him to the service of the entity he refers to as the Elemental Chaos. The crazed noble struck a pact with this patron, which gave him warlock talents and the ability to sire a bloodline with sorcerous powers of cha-

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os. His numerous children and grandchildren are all born with these magical gifts that help them spread chaos in the world. As a result, the family took on strange, socially unacceptable, and foul habits, which caused half of their household to flee, while the other half reveled in their new powers. Gorsos are considered weird and eccentric by most people, a mad bunch, and most try to stay away from them due to their erratic, unpredictable, and often murderous natures. The village is filled with the children of the Gorsos, who all bear the chaotic bloodline of their progenitors.

HOUSE KARRAMOSA

The Karramosa noble family is an ancient one dating back to the early years of Aglarion. They own the northeastern Talanar Hills and the lands around the Talanar Pond, where they support the meditating monks of the Monastery of Past Lives. Their primary source of income comes from selling their swords to the king to protect the border, from farming and animals, and a small gem mine under the island monastery. The monastery was founded centuries ago when the prospectors of a greedy noblewoman named Luriana Karramosa found a secret earth elemental node deep under the island. The gems were an irresistible source of wealth for House Karramosa, who until then only served as military aid to the king. However, the node had an unforeseen side effect – anyone who excavated the gems slowly turned into xorns with an entirely different hunger for precious stones. The Karramosas' hired miners fled the curse early on, and the Karramosa soldiers whom the nobles commanded to continue the work soon deserted. Left without options, the obsessed Karramosa nobles started to excavate the mine themselves. Luriana's husband abandoned both the strenuous task and his wife before fully transforming into a hideous xorn, and sought out the aid of the monks who currently inhabit the island to heal his half-calcified limbs. On the other hand, Luriana could not resist the lure of the shiny treasures and soon changed into a large xorn, which to this day feeds on the gems. Under commands from the Karramosas, the following generation of monks kept sneaking in from time to time to steal her leftovers and send the treasures back to the Karramosa family to be cut and sold at the Starbright Jewelry in Onadbyr. The family's current head is Lord Dyrin Karramosa, a reserved and well-trained noble in his fifties who discreetly manages the family and their business.

HOUSE DOMIREN

The Domiren are a loud bunch, but they were not always so. The latest generation of Domirens has lost the family's conservative roots mainly due to the marriage that brought the now venerable Lady Zainda, a once-renowned prostitute, to the house. As her sons call her based on her "artist" name, Lady Zaza inherited her late husband's wealth in

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gold. Before sickness took him, the aged lord sold all his landholdings to King Waldrann's father. He knew that his lands would be more efficiently managed, if managed at all, by the crown rather than by his lewd wife. Lady Zaza spends her unimaginable wealth on herself, her three fat and arrogant sons, and nine small silkhair dogs, each of a distinctively different color. Lady Zaza is a control freak, overseeing every tiny detail of her household, handling the expenses that are eating away at her treasury that steadily diminishes each year, and having the final, very loud, and usually foul-mouthed say in all matters. Her three unmarried, lazy, overweight, drunkard sons – Zajeer, Malo, and Korzen - still live with Lady Zaza and always argue with her and each other over how to enjoy their family's wealth to the fullest. They hate her dogs as much as they hate each other but act according to her will and cooperate for their own survival and out of fear of their mother. Many have tried to take the Domirens for fools and soon learned through personal experience about the hedonistic and often sadistic nature of the Domiren brothers during orgies held in the cellars of their wine shop, the Hill's Nectar.

HOUSE GOLDTOOTH

The Goldtooth tribe of goblins was always a witty and lucky bunch. Several centuries ago, their ancestor Bilakk Goldtooth acquired noble status from Queen Linolu the Peaceful by saving her from the grasp of a giant constrictor snake during one of her hunts deep in the Arden Forest. The grateful queen gifted the goblin and his very extended family with title, gold, and an estate in Onadbyr. Through the generations that followed, the Goldtooths, originally from the village of Gonshar, have either been tolerated or just frowned upon in the capital, depending on the social openness of the city. Some Goldtooths have even attended Walhem Boarding School for Young Masters, but there were times when larger mobs marched on their villa and threatened to pull out their golden teeth. Nowadays, Kabok Goldtooth, the head of the noble family, does not visit the capital too often, but his younger brother and his wife have moved into the Onadbyrian villa with their twelve children. The family has no real wealth or any particular source of income, but Kabok is a capable illusionist who is more than efficient in finding ways to earn gold for his whole village.

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HOUSE WYLTAMMER

The Wyltammer family is an ancient one whose banners have been flying in the kingdom since its very foundation. The current heads of the family, a middle-aged elf named Yram and his elven wife Taya, are at the center of the capital's social scene. They are charismatic and well-connected, liked by almost everyone in the realm, even the common folk, for the donations they raise for the city at their annual charity fundraising ball. The Wyltammer Ball is a grand event where noble and common folk are invited as equals, and everyone can enjoy the hospitality of their noble hosts. In reality, these balls are a form of sacrificial ritual, where the Wyltammers siphon a tiny fraction from the life force of every guest to feed their unnatural health and youth for the next year to come. The guests feel mildly exhausted after the event, but who wouldn't be after so much laughter, dancing, and feasting. Taya, a masterful warlock, has secretly dedicated herself to Faz'nur'thoon, the First Fang, an ancient winged spider-like entity the size of a city with immense power, searching for life force to sustain its eternal hunger. Her former assassin-turned husband Yram was inducted into the ancient ritual centuries ago after slaying Taya's first and last master, the only warlock ever to dare to take on the immense entity as his patron. The Wyltammers have no children and don't intend to give up their standing, wealth, and immortality for centuries to come.

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Organizations

Royal Army

The Royal Army is a well-organized and structured military force, one of the realm's main pillars. It is a thousand strong, consisting of several smaller and larger specialized branches that are tightly hierarchic. The largest of these units is the Royal Swords, the regular soldiers of the army who upkeep order in times of peace throughout the kingdom and form the ranks of foot soldiers during times of war. These men and women are mostly loyal and rule-abiding warriors who are proud to be considered the first line of the Royal Army and respected members of society. Units of twenty soldiers (use the **guard** monster entry) are led by higher ranking lieutenants (use the **knight** monster entry), who are commanded by captains (use the **veteran** monster entry). All captains report to three generals under the monarch's leadership. General Sundamar Stormbreaker is a studied paladin of the Wondermaker, General Malictus Crast is a wise and reserved male hobgoblin, oldest of the generals, and General Brennur Starsmit is a charismatic dwarf of high honor, a devoted monk of the Efficient Master.

The army also has smaller specialized units responsible for tasks requiring special training: The Royal Fists is a small group of soldiers who patrol, maintain, and occasionally operate the siege engines in the bastions of the Fists of Azennar. The Royal Harpoons are stationed on the vessels of the Royal Navy and are seasoned sailors. The Royal Riders is a mobile cavalry unit composed of experts at reconnaissance and fast travel on horseback. And the Royal Arrows is a fairly large unit of archers guarding the walls of the capital and providing ranged support to other troops.

The Royal Army relies on healing magic from all of the faiths publicly worshipped in the kingdom and from the divine powers of the Knights of the Crown. In addition, the temples are bound to send as many clerics to aid the monarch's troops as required in time of need.

Some arcane spellcasters can be found in the army's ranks, but no formal unit is dedicated to them due to the low number of capable arcane spellcasters. However, in times of dire need, the wizards of the Arcane Tower provide organized arcane magical support.

Knights of the Crown

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Founded by King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar I, the True, these pious paladin champions of the realm, currently numbering only several dozen, swear a lifelong oath to protect the crown and the kingdom. Their training starts at a very young age, and it is considered a privilege to be selected as a member of the order. During their strenuous training, aspiring squires are taught several different combat techniques and introduced to the religious doctrines of the Oath of Protection. They are free to choose their specialized weapons and maintain the faith closest to their hearts if they are loyal and fearless. Knights of the Crown are held in the highest esteem throughout the realm. They serve in the front lines in times of war and act as personal guards to the royal family and the royal palace. The current high commander of the knights is Crownwarden Cyne Monder, an aging noble paladin of great renown who is doing his best to rebuild the reputation of his house.

RED CLOAK LAWGIVERS

The history of the Red Cloaks is closely connected with the Melkar dynasty. The first king, King Razmyrel Melkar, who laid down the laws that brought prosperity and equitable treatment to the Kingdom's subjects, was also known to wear a red cloak – to remind him of blood spilled and anguish caused if laws are unjust and unenforced. He organized the first Lawgivers, who took the title of Red Cloak to remember this teaching and carried on for centuries.

Leading members of the organization opposed the disadvantageous deals made by King Talanar Ebrin I in his quest to build the northern fortifications as they saw it created corruption. In response, King Talanar forcefully removed their power and imprisoned the most vocal members. Red Cloak Lawgiver then became more of a title than anything else until King Vacrilos Azennar I, himself a Red Cloak, reinstated and strengthened their power and responsibilities.

Today, the Red Cloak Lawgivers are some of the most highly regarded individuals in Aglarion, usually selected from high-ranking soldiers who have been in the kingdom's service for over a decade. Some come from arcane or divine spellcasting backgrounds or have served as highly esteemed students of the College of Minstrels, while others are trusted hunters or specialized combatants. Still, the organ-

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ization has monitored all of them for years before being selected for the title. At least three Red Cloak Lawgivers must approve the nominee by measuring their personality, loyalty, trustworthiness, and their skills in making fair judgments, as well as their effectiveness in investigation and combat. Selected nominees for the title are trained and tested for three years before being given the prestigious gold-trimmed red cloak and the "Eye and Sword" amulet engraved with their names, representing their authority and title.

There are about fifty Red Cloaks in Aglarion, and though their methods and approach to solving situations might differ, their word is the law. They might work alone, in pairs, or form smaller groups and can command the Royal Swords freely if needed, making their own judgment on how many soldiers they want to commandeer until a case is solved. They can use all resources available at the Halls of the Lawgiver, which serves as their base of operations, record hall, and training grounds. As the capital does not bind their jurisdiction, Red Cloaks regularly travel to locations outside of Onadbyr to handle cases. Members are paid a reasonably high wage by the Royal Treasury every week for their highly regarded services.

A Red Cloak Lawgiver who breaks the law, which happens only on the rarest of occasions, faces much harsher consequences and more severe sentences than usual, starting from long hard labor up to execution by the organization's own members. There is no formal leader of the Red Lawgiver as they are all considered equally influential within their ranks and in the kingdom.

Red Cloak Lawgiver. Use the **veteran** monster entry with high Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores and a minimum +10 Perception, Investigation, and Insight skills. In addition to their fighter training, many might have additional spellcasting or class abilities from bard, cleric, paladin, ranger, sorcerer, or wizard backgrounds.

GOLDEN MASKS

The secretive Golden Masks is the most successful and only real criminal organization in the realm, with an extended network of informants and hidden agents in all corners of Aglarion's society. The guild is led by a group of shapechangers who operate from behind the scenes, using their anonymity to hide from the watchful eyes of the Red Cloak Lawgivers. For the past century, the leader of the Golden Masks has been a rakshasa named Samsadur, who trusts only its closest ally, the lamia Yhlsaby. Most of the agents of the Golden Masks are doppelgangers, with a few non-shapechangers who have earned the trust of the crime lord and have been introduced to the inner circles. Members of the organization are very secretive about their identity and protect it ruthlessly. They command, manipulate, or hire smaller individual groups of criminals who are usually not aware of the nature of their employers, or don't even know of each other's involvement with the Golden Masks. The organization is involved chiefly in non-violent and high-value illicit activities, such as smuggling, theft of rare items, racketeering, lending money, information brokering, or spying. They avoid raising unwanted attention with petty crimes, and during their operations, they leave the dirty work primarily to their minions. They don't tolerate any interference in their business and efficiently root out any initiative to step into their domain. The Golden Masks identify themselves with a particular gold coin that looks exactly like a regular gold piece, except for a mask symbol instead of the royal visage.

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BLACK FLAG MERCENARY COMPANY

Founded by Trazz the Cruel, a rough orc bounty hunter of ill repute, this business provides mercenaries to anyone who needs protection inside or outside of the city. His prices are steep, but his dozen or so mercenaries are some of the most skilled combatants in the capital. Trazz selects the individuals he employs carefully and tests his mercenaries meticulously. He rarely accompanies them

on jobs and prefers to allocate a magic-user or two to each group sent on a mission. These groups rarely number more than five mercenaries. He has no moral qualms about the commissions he takes but always makes sure to avoid confrontations with the authorities. Trazz has a special hatred for those who underperform in his company and mar his company's reputation. Anyone who fails on a mission can consider themselves fired and disdained by the mercenary captain. Unknown to him, the Golden Masks frequently hire his groups to serve as protection during missions or when moving valuable goods.

COLLEGE OF MINSTRELS

Master Conductor Fabrian Ethlairn, the college's half-elven headmaster has gathered some of the best instructors and virtuosos of the realm to teach the selected few he accepts as pupils. A couple of dozen aspiring bards are taught at the college at a single time, and even though they live outside the school, they still spend most of their time there, practicing and performing their art. The college is famous for its open and liberal approach to teaching. It welcomes anyone to listen in on the pupils' performances, who are usually also busy building their reputations in the city. As one of the few spots for higher education and magical training in the realm, many consider graduate minstrels powerful individuals. The most talented graduates gain access to noble houses and even the royal court, where they are welcomed to perform regularly.

WIZARDS OF THE ARCANE TOWER

Established centuries ago by Master Arlen the Constructor, the Arcane Tower is the only wizard academy in the kingdom. There are smaller schools or individual masters in the realm. Still, anyone who seeks to truly master the arcane arts and is accepted for their acute understanding must relocate to the secluded tower, located far from the capital. Applicants must be trained wizards, thoroughly tested before being judged and accepted by the archmage. They then must serve the Arcane Tower as apprentices for a minimum period of twelve years, when they can take additional tests to become academicians. Wizards of the Arcane Tower must pledge to protect the kingdom and be available for summons to serve as part of the Royal Army anytime in Aglarion. The wizards are trained in all forms of magic within the academy's walls and are taken on dangerous, exotic, and sometimes even planar excursions to prove their mettle. The cur-

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rent archmage of the tower is Master Zaophas, a morose middle-aged human evoker who excels in spell combat and coaches his students to withstand all hardships. The somewhat militaristic approach and the spartan conditions of the wizard school are not fit for everyone, so from time to time, apprentices are expelled from the institution for misbehavior or for not advancing quickly enough.

CHILDREN OF THE COVEN

The Matrons of Malice have long set their dark minds towards the kingdom of Aglarion. Their first step was to enthrall and recruit those with the most hatred in their hearts and a desire for power. They approached these individuals, commoners, artisans, warriors, and even nobles, with promises of magical abilities in return for serving their agenda. These people all took the midnight hag coven as their patrons and have served the hags willingly as warlock minions. Members of the Children of the Coven, a couple of dozen individuals, know each other's identities and come together to perform foul rituals from time to time. They act as commanded by their patrons and otherwise blend into society unnoticed. In many cases, even their families are unaware of their mystic powers and vile affiliation. They come from every segment of society, represent all genders and races, and fanatically work in unity towards the goals of the Matrons of Malice. Most of the time, they don't even comprehend the true goals of their missions or the big picture, which is only known to the hags. They kidnap, murder, steal, and lie without remorse and relish in the otherworldly powers they gain in return after years of servitude. The hags' most devoted and influential pawn is Mordio Delons, a human warlock of significant power.

THE RINGMAIDENS

The Queen's Grace Orphanage, funded by the royal family, was established over a century ago to help young orphaned ladies. Lady Thuila, a drow, was appointed headmistress and has been serving ever since. Under the leadership of the mistress, the orphaned ladies are trained to become the perfect housewives to nobles and the wealthy. They are highly educated and trained in many forms of craftsmanship required in a household. Behind the scenes, Lady Thuila emphasizes educating the girls in diplomacy, negotiation, deception, persuasion, and all forms of social skills. She convinces them throughout their training that they can only rely on each other, successfully forging a ruthless sisterhood of calculating mistresses who work together to gain wealth and influence within the kingdom. They live to serve their secret organization, which they refer to as the Ring, and their own personal benefit through the sisterhood. Their bond is so strong that some have even sacrificed themselves to keep their organization secret. Once married to the most influential men of the realm, these ladies use their newfound status to deliver information to the sisterhood that can help it accumulate as much wealth as possible. They hoard treasures of enviable proportions within their secret dungeon vaults, which they spend on their lavish lifestyle and on necessary "investments" that help their agenda. They are not trained combatants, but they don't refrain even from murder by poisoning, through hired assas-

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sins, or other subtle means if necessary to achieve their goals. The Ringmaidens never remove their simple iron ring engraved with the insignia of the orphanage, which they consider as their common bond and identifier.

THE SEVEN THORNS

The Seven Thorns is what remains of an ancient druid order, once known as the Seven Flowers, which is as old as the realm's history. The Seven Flowers was founded by feyrealm-born gnomes, committed to nurturing the natural order. For millennia, they acted as spirit guides and shamans to the humanoids of ancient times until the Dark Star and its fallen angels descended upon the land. Escaping from the ruthless angels, they fled into the Feyrealm and hid there for two thousand years. They retained scouts on the Material Plane, who joined Sarath and helped her rebellion. From the seclusion of the Feyrealm, they helped Sarath complete her ritual to banish the Dark Star and the oppressors. In the ensuing period, the druids healed the wounds on nature caused by the eternal night of the dark angels. The majority of the circle then migrated back to the Material Plane, took up new apprentices, and settled permanently.

However, after Sarath's death, the quick rise of Rodnar the All-seeing, the Priest-King of the Order of the Eternal Light, caused concern to the druids, and rightly so, for Rodnar rounded up almost every member of the Seven Flowers in a single night and had them executed for not venerating the light.

A group of survivors, led by Zilmop Snakeroot, the feyrealm-born gnome, fled and hid in an ancient sanctuary in the forest now known as the Thornwoods. He renamed the circle the Seven Thorns, and vowed never to let anyone in the woods and hunt down anyone who would harm his land. Over the centuries, his lineage carried on, and when their numbers dwindled, gnome women and babies were kidnapped and forced into marriage, never to see their families again. The Seven Thorns have enchanted many forest areas and created a legend about a forest teeming with wolves. No one knows they are responsible for the missing people and the scary stories. There have always been seven masters of the order called the Thorns. Their initiates and animal companions serve them, either willingly or forced by binding magic.

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UNCANNY VAGABONDS

This group of traveling carnies and outlaws is an extended family with some outsiders mingled within its ranks with around a hundred members, most young and spirited. Many Vagabonds are expert musicians, which is their only legal form of income. They make a living mainly by thieving and illicit practices like scams, counterfeiting, drug trade, and illegal hunting and fishing. As they travel the countryside on their caravan of wagons, or when they spend some time in the capital, they prey on the rich. However, they rarely keep their colorful tents up at one place for longer than a season and prefer to be on the move. The Uncanny Vagabonds is a very tight-knit organization, not just because of their family bonds but also because of the survival code they follow. No Vagabond will steal from another member of the group or snitch on them, even if this means giving up personal freedoms or even their lives. They are beholden to their own rules and laws and not those of the general society, living according to the rulings of the elders of the closed community.

The Vagabonds speak their own secret language, which they never teach outsiders. True family members are trained to awaken mystical innate magical abilities that run through their bloodline, enabling them to cast a single, carefully practiced cantrip once per day, chosen from the bard class spell list. The leader of the Uncanny Vagabonds is always the most successful member of the family who has proven his intellectual and physical skills through example. This person is currently the aging patriarch of the family, named Taris. His right-hand is a young man in his early twenties, named Gren, whom the whole family knows to be a bastard son of King Waldrann. Everyone in the family is aware of the details of the secret affair between Gren's mother and the king, but the outside world considers it a fabrication. Nevertheless, the Uncanny Vagabonds always boast about their royal connections and pretend to be nobles as an inside joke.

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NEIGHBORING REALMS

VORDAN

When the Dark Star and its fallen angels were defeated, a confederacy of hardy mountain tribes was formed in the northern mountains to resist the theocratic oppression of the forces of the Order of the Eternal Light. These tribes, only a handful of family clans at that time, fled higher into the mountains on the north to escape their zealous pursuers, who used divine and arcane magic to track and combat them. The tribes used the mountainous environment with which they were so familiar to gain the advantage. Combined with their ferocious fighting prowess, they kept the armies of the cultists of the Order of the Eternal Light at bay for centuries. Exposed to external threats from otherworldly beings and later being continuously assaulted by the spell-wielding theocracy, Vordanis have become hateful towards magic users and magic in general. The only magic they tolerate is the one that helps destroy magic.

The people of Vordan grew in numbers over the centuries. They became an atheistic, somewhat barbaric society, where the use of any form of magic is despised and seen as an unreliable, untrustworthy power. The Vordani are hard-working people who rely on their skills and personal prowess, brandishing strength, wits, and endurance over all else. They don't consider the afterlife as something esoteric and face death knowing that they simply cease to exist. Death is seen as a natural end of life. They live every day as it would be their last, trying to fill their days with meaningful tasks and challenges. Vordani society is composed of clans based on family ties, led by the most fitting member of the tribe who has already proven their value in a significant way.

Lacking the comfort of magic use, the Vordani have advanced in technology, especially in building complex mechanical traps, war-gear, and war-machines. One of their most dreaded war-machines, drawn by beasts, is a massive rolling battle tower, which can carry a crew of a dozen fighters and features numerous smaller and larger ballistae, as well as flame throwers. Their other famously fearsome tool of war is a hydraulic torso-mounted support with two arms, which allows its wearer to wield extra-large weapons with great agility.

The tribes of Vordan have always excelled in the domestication of various mountain beasts that they use for labor, travel, and war. Their most common mounts are giant goats and lizards, which they ride in breathtaking angles up and down the rocky mountain slopes, but they also breed massive warhorses, used for military campaigns and long-distance travel on the mountain roads. The Vordani also keep mountain panthers as their hunting pets and guardians.

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Owning slaves in the Vordani lands is considered a luxury that only a few can maintain in their lifestyles. The number of slaves a Vordani holds measures their wealth to the outside world. Slaves are rarely used outside of the house of their owners, where they act as servants, guards, pleasure slaves, or work on menial tasks saving time for the wealthy Vordanis to concentrate on other endeavors. Slaves are either captured outlanders or prisoners of war from raids. All Vordani slaves are marked with the tattoo of their owner on their foreheads.

The current king of Vordan is Ralukkar Doomhammer VI, a descendant of the long lineage of the most powerful clan, the Doomhammers. King Ralukkar and his family have defended their position for over a century now, which they gained after the power vacuum created during the failed invasion of Aglarion. King Ralukkar's latest famous act, which had significant repercussions within many Vordani tribes, was settling non-spellcasting priests of the Efficient Master, the god of competence, within his borders. These priests, who call themselves "The Pure" and who are deemed radicals even within their own religion, vowed to teach and encourage manual skills and assured the king that they would not cast any spells as it is against their religious beliefs to rely on the use of magic. Under the leadership of a soft-spoken half-orc cleric named Proctor Zacchaeus Bael, a considerate man of great wisdom, the Pure don't want to heighten tensions caused by his cult's presence at Fort Stormbreaker, near the Vordani border.

DRAYL CITY-STATES

After the defeat of the fallen angels, the separatist community of the southern people refused to accept the rulership of the Order of the Eternal Light and resisted the Order's expansionism in the region. The armed conflict took decades to settle and forged the southerners into unity. They elected their first general Kalaman Drayl, a human with sorcerous powers, as their first king long before Aglarion became a monarchy. King Kalaman the First fought two major wars against the theocracy and successfully protected his kingdom throughout his long reign. He was a devout promoter of personal freedom and ruled according to his libertarian views, interfering in the least possible manner in his subjects' lives. During his long reign, he sired sixteen children from various wives, and he gave each of them land and title. One day, the old king mysteriously disappeared from his private quarters, and his heirs could not agree on the inheritance of the country. They blamed each other for their father's disappearance, even though none of them had any real evidence or even the slightest idea where their king had vanished. Each heir already amassed a smaller or larger military force within their own settlements, and none of them wanted to move against the others without the consent and support of the majority of the other cities.

Small wars were inevitable between the more blooded heirs, and some even conquered a few other cities, which they rule even today. However, they soon realized that none of them were large enough to conquer the whole realm, and none of them were willing to give up their freedom without a fight. So the Drayl heirs decided to hold a grand council to solve their issues and avoid bloodshed. They gathered in a mass rally of their forces, over twenty thousand soldiers in a hill in the center of the realm, and the eleven heirs that remained on the council decided that it was time to end the war and to form an alliance of city-states where every heir rules over their own city. The Council of the Heirs is still held every year on top of Ancestor Hill. This is where all of the heads of the city-states, descendants of the Drayl dynasty, meet to discuss their issues and plans. The incursions from the armies of the theocracy intensified after the disappearance of King Drayl, but the forces of the Drayl heirs fought in unity every time. The war with their northern neighbors continued until the fall of the Order of the Eternal Light, which was partly achieved with the aid and intervention of the descendants of the Drayl dynasty, who discovered the resistance growing

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within the ranks of their enemies and supported Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar I, the True, in his successful rebellion against the oppressive church.

Each Drayl City-State has its own traditions and unique style. Their accents, customs, foods, fashion, and architecture differ slightly but also combine the elements of their shared culture. Some city-states are more prosperous or populous than others and some are specialized in specific trades or activities depending on their geographic location. Most Drayl City-States have about five to ten thousand citizens, while Highmoor, the largest, is home to twenty thousand residents. Current life in Drayl doesn't differ much from life in Aglarion, with whom the city-states each trade separately. Drayl is a colorful, orderly realm with happy residents who usually seem stubborn at first, keeping to themselves, but are mostly good-hearted if they open up to someone.

Eldorn is a sizable river-side city, best known for its well-stocked tradehouses. Jorar Drayl, a seasoned half-orc adventurer and monster-hunter, taxes his subjects heavily and spends much of the revenues on innovation, infrastructure, and services.

Seven Gates is a large cross-town in the junction of many roads that has become a regular spot for large fairs once in every season of the year. Arusta Drayl, an elderly human noblewoman of ill reputation, runs the city with the help of her numerous sons and daughters.

Kostryl is a small city founded on precious stoneworking and mining. Over the years, it has developed a large population of deep gnomes mixed with the human and half-human Drayl locals. Pattoonia Drayl, a brash young noblewoman with a love for gems, runs the traditional family business, taking great care of the deep gnomes and their underground operations.

Brinecoast is the largest coastal city with a sizable shipyard, which hosts mainly fishing boats and a small fleet of sailing ships. The city is famous for its skilled sailors and captains and its abundant resources of seafood. Lord Captain Samiel Drayl, the soft-speaking middle-aged human who rules over the city, is rumored to have merfolk blood running through his veins.

Highmoor is the largest city-state of the Drayl region, a vibrant city with flourishing trade and agriculture in the surrounding valleys. The city also has an ill reputation from the past when it annexed two other nearby towns by force during the War of the Heirs. Residents of these two smaller settlements, Aesthor and Willowpark, have mostly migrated to Highmoor over the centuries, leaving them as abandoned ghost towns with few residents. Bareon Rudd Drayl, the current ruler of the region, has kept his family's tradition of being able to muster an army of convincing size.

Gynleah is one of the smaller city-states that relies primarily on farming and cultivating the rare night rose, a magical and beautiful rose of black color that can be turned into a drug that takes its user to the Dreamrealm. The city's leader is Amdastrah Drayl, an ambitious female warlock with ties to the powers of the Dreamrealm and a monk assassin's guild from a land far away.

Zammastra is a small city-state that relies on farming. Valsyrio Drayl, an elderly half-elven druid of the Eternal Mother, leads the city with a firm hand and makes sure that his church nourishes the land for the benefit of the locals.

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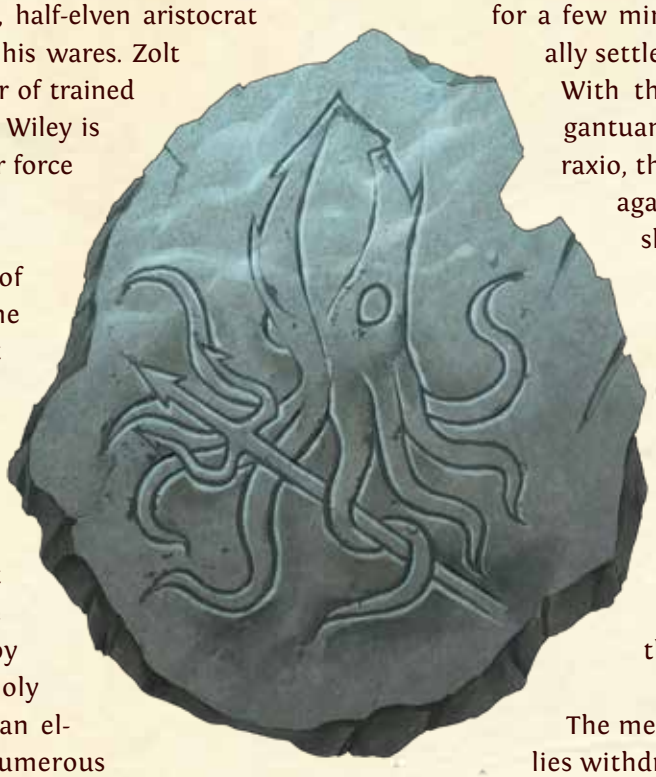
The Domain of the Sovereign is ruled by High King Alcemyr Drayl, as the mad heir refers to himself. The island city-state also governs two smaller towns on the island, Lakrian and Tallgate, and oversees the ruins of Ulantra. This third city was utterly demolished by Alcemyr's ancestors centuries ago. The island is an autonomous kingdom that does not trade with or rely on any of the other Drayl City-States since the ascension of the High King to his throne.

Zolt is a city of warriors and smiths that sits on a giant ore deposit. The city's current ruler is Wiley Drayl, a bitter, aging, fat, half-elven aristocrat who knows the value of his wares. Zolt has an impressive number of trained warriors, and rumors say Wiley is only a puppet of a sinister force hiding in his mines.



Ysmarys, the smallest of all the city-states, is home to the continent's most pompous temples. Being a city of deeply religious folk, life within its walls revolves around the temples and their services, which it lends to the rest of the realm. The city is led by Lady Zoqul Drayl, the Holy Hand of the Redeemer, an elderly high priest with numerous children.

Yellowkeep is a small city on the coast with a large castle and a network of underground tunnels. Poorest of all the Drayl cities, Yellowkeep is home to only those who cannot afford to leave it. Having seen some better days, the dirty and mostly deserted city has numerous uninhabited residential and commercial buildings. The citizens do their best to survive while their ruler, Balansyr Drayl, is a dull drunkard in his fifties, living off the remaining treasury he inherited from his predecessors.

Underwater Kingdom of A'rvanshy

As it is known to land dwellers, the Kingdom in the Deep, dates back to long before the reign of the fallen angels and the Dark Star. It has served as a central hub for merfolk and sea elves who lived together in harmony in several smaller and larger settlements for thousands of years. Their tribal society was based on family connections and led by family elders who organized trade and all other relations in a mostly peaceful manner, except for a few minor disputes that were usually settled without major bloodshed. With the aid of their ancient gargantuan dragon turtle ally Gulantraxio, they formed a collective force against the invading sahuagin slaver armies from the east, whipped into a frenzy by the Dark Star who wanted to dominate and exploit these settlements. These sahuagin, who took many prisoners and turned them into their slaves, were led by shapechanged deva commanders but could never conquer the Kingdom in the Deep.

The merfolk, sea elves, and their allies withdrew into an undersea trench to avoid further confrontation and founded a united city, A'rvanshy. This hidden city of beautiful coral and giant shell formations lies behind a massive forest of various underwater plants and fungi above an extended crevice. Centuries passed before the ancient green dragon, a seeker of secret lore, Ossiazzxontyr found the city. The green dragon did not dare attack the city alone. Instead, she awakened an ancient sleeping titan, the legendary kraken necromancer archmage Morgawr, offering the whole city as a sacrifice to feed the colossal beast's hunger.

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The dragon miscalculated as Morgawr did not feed on the tiny merfolk and sea elves, but rather, it enslaved them with its spells and mind weakening ink. The ancient dragon turtle was slain and set to guard the city as an undead minion. Ossiazzxontyr retreated to the mainland, and the kraken ruled over the city as it does even today through its vicious merrow enforcers. Currently, A'rvanshy is home to many depraved and downtrodden merfolk and sea elves who either struggle to survive or serve the necromancer kraken by betraying their own kin. Morgawr is working on achieving immortality and even more power by turning itself into a lich. It has amassed knowledge and an incredible amount of resources to achieve its unnatural goal. The city has no trade or relations with the mainland or the outside world, where one can only hear about it from long-forgotten tales.

ISLES OF XANTHAROS

The numerous scattered smaller and larger isles to the east of Aglarion that make up an archipelago are collectively called the Isles of Xantharos. The scattered chain of islands clearly resembles a dragon's shape, which in fact, is the case. The isles formed from the remains of Xantharos, one of the two progenitor fey-dragons, the largest dragon that ever lived, spanning scores of miles. It reigned in the Feyrealm long before the Dark Star and the dark angels descended until it was banished to Aglarion by Faeryl Myrryn, a powerful drow vampire conjurer from the Abyss. The dragon immediately confronted the fallen angels, and their battle was a bloody clash of claws and unholy powers. The Dark Star and its angels emerged victorious, slaying the dragon over the sea and onto a plateau that supported its immense carcass. As thousands of years passed, the dragon's body formed into the isles, surrounded by coral reefs.

The isles hold extraordinary power, transforming some exposed to its powers for years into half-dragons of random kinds. The transformation happens to only a few, but over generations, a half-dragon ruling class has emerged on the isles, which has enslaved those who don't share their draconic powers. The half-dragons of Xantharos organize themselves into clans and mate only within their own color, in which they take great pride. These extended families elect their leaders to represent them in the meetings they call the Gathering of the True. The council is always overseen by two Council Masters, who make decisions in unison. Xantharosian clans live in large households scattered throughout the islands, with only a few families occupying each. Each household has about five to ten slaves for each half-dragon present, and slaves are not just considered a commodity but also a responsibility and investment that needs to be nurtured, getting more valuable over time. Xantharosian society is one of slowly taken, well-considered actions, wisdom, emotionless cruelty, structured by laws and titles, which come with certain obligations and responsibilities towards the person and the community. There are only a few hundred Xantharosian half-dragons of many colors, who are also considered nobles by birth, even if some might not necessarily have the capacity to own a fort or extensive lands. They live very long, comfortable, and wealthy lives during which they can focus on training themselves, most commonly in arts, academic and arcane studies, combat, or philosophy. Displaying advanced skills of any form, whether mundane feats or magical aptitude, garners great respect on the Isles of Xantharos, even to the extent that slaves who show great skill can achieve luxurious lifestyles.

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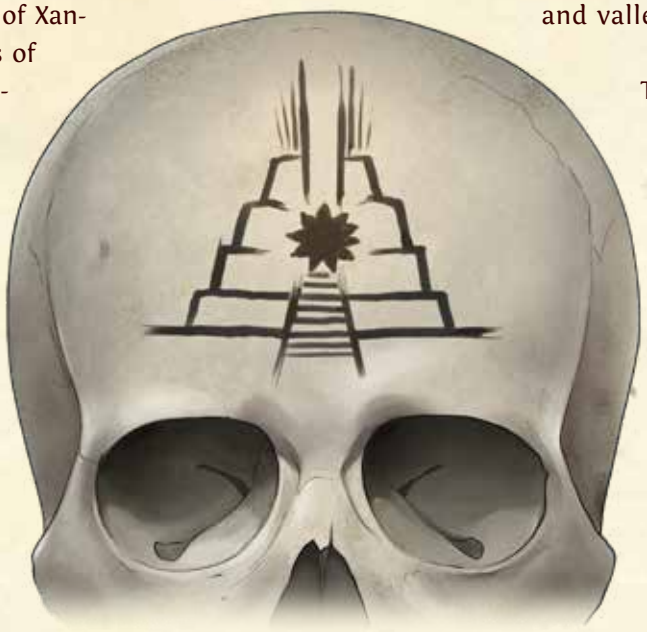
The clans of Xantharos rarely trade with other countries due to their distant location and the difficulty of crossing over the realm of the archmage kraken Morgawr. Xanthorian half-dragons accept visitors and traders in their castles and villas, but only for a good reason and short periods. Only a few selected are allowed to settle on the isles permanently. Still, these individuals need to earn the trust of the half-dragons and demonstrate a high level of expertise in something useful for the inhabitants. The last time the half-dragon clans fought a war against Aglarion was a century ago when they chased the fleets of Almerio Ronul back to the shores of his homeland. The army of Xantharos is small and consists of only the most skilled combatants from slaves led by their powerful half-dragon masters. The currently elected Council Masters are Lord Zhoulann Fralkyn, a long-winded old half-red cleric of the Efficient Master, and Lady Yryll Wyltres, the Blue Witch, a middle-aged half-blue archmage temptress with an enormous ego and matching ambitions.



ZIGGURAT CITY OF XAPTO'WA'TTYKAL

Before the Age of Dark Angels, stone-age tribes of various races roamed the lands west of Aglarion that were once high-lying plains and forests, spreading over great distances in the center of the known lands. These tribes were scattered and small, with local clan elders and no recorded history. Only oral legends tell of the day of the Mountainfall when darkness itself descended upon them. Burning mountains fell from the sky, hundreds of them, and each carried the life essence of an angel cast off from its plane of existence. These mountains crashed mercilessly upon the many smaller civilizations of primitive mortals living in this territory, killing off almost every form of life, be it intelligent or bestial. From these mountains, the fallen angels flew out, led by the Dark Star, and quickly conquered all of the known lands around their place of impact, subjugating every intelligent lifeform to rule over them and to cut them off from the divine powers they venerated. The dust from the impact did not settle for centuries, over the boulders upon boulders that tore the landscape to create the peaks and valleys of the Mountainfall.

The few mortals who survived the apocalypse stayed hidden for generations and only slowly emerged in the hope of a new life. They struggled to sustain themselves on the barren peaks of the Mountainfall and adapted to the harsh and relentless environment. It wasn't long before they discovered the fallen angels in the central mountain and learned that they were ruthless, vengeful beings who could not be matched in power. The mountainous barbarian tribes grew in number but avoided the flying outsiders that hunted the region for slaves around this central mountain, which they named the Mountain of the Dark Descendants.

For centuries the dark angels ruled over these primitive tribesmen and bred them to create descendants, a loyal and fearless race of humanoids with hair and skin the color of ash. Their hearts are infected with the hatred and cruelty inherited from their immortal ascendants and infused with utter devotion to them. Even those who do not care about religion or laws consider them their

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holy and mighty protectors and serve the community with unquestionable obedience.

During the past three millennia and after the banishment of the fallen angels, the mortals remained at the level of a savage civilization, who regularly performed sacrificial ceremonies to honor their deity, the Darkness Within and the Dark Star. The dark descendants have chiseled the mountain that houses the Dark Star's reliquary into the form of a colossal ziggurat that features levels as high as sixty feet and serves as a city for the over thirty thousand dark descendants and double that number in slaves who live around it today. Each city level has a myriad smaller or larger dwellings carved into them and a never-ending wide stairway connecting the bottom and top level on each of its four sides. The top of the ziggurat is a holy place for the vicious dark descendants where they conduct their rituals and sacrifices. A mighty shaft was cut into the middle of the mountain, revealing the huge black throne of the Dark Star carved from a crystal of the immortals left behind by the solar. A beam of darkness shoots from the shaft into the sky that is visible during daytime and even on some clear nights for hundreds of miles. The rigorously religious dark descendants are led by a fanatic named Cadmael the Flenser, the high priest of the Darkness Within, who relentlessly tries to resummon the Dark Star without any success, sacrificing countless slaves during the effort.

The ziggurat city of Xapto'wa'ttykal, the Mountain of the Dark Descendants, is unapproachable, as it is surrounded by several hundred miles of barren mountains from every direction. The dark descendants and their slaves herd mountain goats and live on the scarce shrubby vegetation that grows on these mountains. Their unique style of fashion and crafting is unlike anything in the known world, as is their language, a simplified version of Celestial speech. They are active at night and rest during the day when only their slaves work. Only a handful have seen the hidden city of the dark celestials, and no one is known to have lived to tell their tale or the fate of the remnants of the banished angels within the city.

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Customs

Celebrated Events

Day of the Mortals

Previously known as the Day of the Rising Sun during the theocracy, this day marks the defeat of the Dark Star by Sarath. Families gather in their homes on the eve of this day, and the eldest of the family tells the tale of the Dark Star and its defeat to the youngest one. At the end of the story and before the Feast of the Mortals begins, the storyteller lets a drop of his blood with a needle on the ground to honor the sacrifice their predecessors made and to symbolize their mortality.

Day of the Crown

This day marks the defeat of the zealous theocracy ruled by the Order of the Eternal Light, extreme followers of the Shining Light, after the miraculous banishment of the dark angels. The monarchs of Aglarion sponsor great games on this day to entertain their subjects. Free meals and toys are distributed, and the city of Onadbyr is loud with games and revelry throughout the day and the night.

Day of the Ancestors

On the first day of winter, everyone in Aglarion commemorates the deceased and their achievements. A popular ceremony of this day includes releasing floating candles from the Crossing of the Thousand Lanterns bridge and letting them float through the city of Onadbyr until they reach the sea and disappear from sight.

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Cycle's End

The last and first day of a year's cycle is celebrated at the peak of the winter. People gather to celebrate, tell tales about the most notable events of the past year, and boast about their plans for the new one. These small or larger gatherings usually end with the lighting of a huge bonfire in which children usually throw a special kind of acorn that pops loudly when ignited.

Greenfields Festival

The last day of spring and the start of summer is celebrated all over Aglarion with large feasts and days of revelry. Most weddings occur at this time of the year, and many consider giving birth on this day of the year the luckiest gift a family could receive. Large tents are erected all over the realm, and everyone is free to join at the communal tables laden with delicious fare. Refusing someone on this day brings bad luck, which will last for the whole year to come.

COMMON SAYINGS

- Rare like an honest Ebrin.
- Discreet as a Royal Guard in the King's bedroom.
- Silent as a blackwood helmet.
- Loves the country like a Wyltammer.
- Stinks like a swamp lily from the Ulden swamps.
- Strange like the gestures of a Xantharosian.
- Let's not be like a Vordani and settle it in peace!
- As smart as the Constructor.
- Beautiful as the sunset over Cloud Peak.
- As noble as a grandson of Vacrilos. (So not noble at all)
- Old enough to have a booth on People's Plaza.
- Orphans make a Razmyrel. (One's origins don't matter. Anyone can rise to any station in life, despite their social background.)
- As bitter as Old Gnarly without his evening feeding.

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Regions

Vordan Mountains

These mountains are ancient. They stretch from the River Nenock to the sea, with many high peaks and alpine valleys inhabited by the tribes of Vordan. Though the lush valleys support the populace, most cities and settlements are on cliffs carved high into the mountains. The largest one today is Windrip, the home of the Doomhammer clan, which is a cliff-dwelling, partially carved into a huge, shallow cave, accessible to the valley below only through the giant system of pulleys that can transport tons of supplies to the elevated town. The Vordani tribes patrol the area and tax non-Vordanis for passage, exempting only the grain trade on which they heavily rely.

Shandar Mountains

This part of the northern border of Aglarion, between the Mountainfall, from the River Halueth to the River Nenock, is an almost impassable, rugged white-grey mountain range with deep crevices and high summits. The region is shunned by most, even the Vordanis in the north and east. Legends connect the name of the mountains to an evil entity that was worshiped around here before the Dark Star, who routed it. To this day, few have ventured into these mountain ranges, and even fewer have ever returned.

The Mountainfall

The mountain-sized, burnt black rocks that housed the fallen angels during their descent to the Material Plane created this vast, unnatural mountain range. The debris around the impacts has since settled into hills and mountainsides, but the area is full of steep inclines and deep crevices, where flash floods are common. These mountains are not traversed, and most living people avoid them due to the dark powers emanating from them.

Drayl Mountains

A natural barrier to the Drayl City-States, these tall mountains are uninhabited due to their sheer height, continuous avalanches, and the cold climate. Traveling through this region is all but impossible.

Roads

The King's Road is a cobbled stone road with shelters every few miles along its path for travelers to rest. East of the River Nenock and in the Ulden Lowlands, the road is kept in reasonably good condition due to the volume of trade that moves on this thoroughfare. However, the Trade Road west of Gorso through the woods is in worse shape, with wagons usually traveling alongside the road on cleared forest paths due to the missing cobblestones. In these areas, the shelters are quickly populated by all manner of beasts, so it is usually best to beware and avoid them altogether. The Green Road that cuts through the Thornwoods and the King's Forest, winding north towards Nangrath from the Crossroads, is better maintained and used for regular transports of ore from the northern mountains.

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RIVER NENOCK

The majestic River Nenock flows from the far north and reaches Aglarion in a valley between the Shandar and Vordan Mountains, winding through the country and emptying into the Calhay Sea at Onadbyr. As it flows into Aglarion, the River is 400-600 feet wide, fast-flowing, ranging between 20 to 30 feet in depth with treacherous currents and a distinctly red color. Some say it is blood seeping from under the Shandar Mountains, but the sages disagree. North of the village of Gorso, the river widens into low-lying wetlands, over a mile in width, significantly slowing down and losing much of its reddish hue. The slower waters allow the Gorso ferry to operate. South of Gorso, the river narrows and deepens, allowing for barging, which is the primary method of transporting timber and ore that arrive at Gorso from the west. Apart from the Gorso ferry, only one bridge exists between Gorso and Onadbyr – the Azure bridge – built by Master Arlen the Constructor during the founding of the Kingdom.

RIVER HALUETH

The source of River Halueth is somewhere in the North Mountainfalls. It reaches Aglarion through a rift between the Shandar Mountains and the Mountainfall, in an area with hundreds of waterfalls. It is a treacherous and rapidly running river, full of cascades and river bars, making it challenging to navigate with boats. It flows south between the Arden forest, the Wedgewoods, and the Leeward Hills. Around the Arden Hills, it becomes milder in the south, allowing smaller barges to move cargo south toward the Drayl City-States. However, only the best river sailors can traverse the treacherous waterways. There is only one bridge in Aglarion over the river, the Overpass of the Giants, which stands between the Wedgewoods and the Arden Forest, built to enable transportation of cargo from the mountains and the Arden Forest to Gorso. South of this bridge, most travelers refrain from stopping on either river bank. The legends of the fallen angels' lingering presence on the eastern banks and the stories of dangerous woods on the western banks are recounted all over Aglarion.

NORTH BAY

The Calhay Sea opens into a large bay with calm waters, where schools of fish abound and where a group of merfolk and lizardfolk have made their homes around the shores of Ronul's End. The village is known for the pearl divers who live here and bring up the valuable treasures fashioned into magnificent jewelry by the craftsmen in the town. A tall lighthouse stands on the southern shore of the bay, with a large family of lizardfolk that manage it, who also breed giant frogs and toads to sell as delicacies in Onadbyr.

SEAHORSE COVE

The southern bays are known breeding grounds for giant sea horses that usually live in the depths of the Calhay Sea and approach the shore to mate. As such, this is an area where those who are brave enough to confront the rough seas come to catch the seahorses in the autumn.

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Talanar Hills

Named after King Talanar I, famous for building a chain of fortifications in the north to prepare against a potential Vordani attack, these hills are sparsely populated today. As a result of the truce with Vordan, most of the watchtowers and small keeps slowly fell into disrepair, and only a select few key locations are garrisoned. In addition, this area was once known for red-furred goats, a preferred source of meat that has been hunted almost to extinction so it is incredibly hard to find.

Onadbyr Plains

The plains between the King's Forest and the River Nenock are bountiful and host one of the main population centers in the kingdom, with many rural communities dotting the land. Sprawling farms, grain fields, and pastures cover almost the entire countryside region. Between the River Nenock, the Ulden Swamps, and the Calhay Sea is a plateau that rises from west to east, with jagged cliffs high above the seacoast. There is a marble mine and multiple stone quarries surrounding it, and the area is dotted by windmills due to the elevation and the constantly blowing winds from the sea.

Ulden Plains

These plains are inhabited mainly by farmers, where the fields are worked for blue corn and wheat. The road to Harveston, the farming center of the kingdom, winds from the southwest to the northeast.

Ulden Lowlands and Forest

Apart from the area around Onadbyr, this is the second-largest population center of the kingdom, with small villages and farmlands covering vast swaths of the land. The southwest part of the region supports the most fertile and coveted farmlands, where the soil is said to bring triple the crop than anywhere else. As a result, the farmers of Harveston can sell their products with a significant premium to Onadbyr through their bargain position as the breadbasket of the realm. This area also covers the Ulden Swamps, which are fed by water from the river Nenock, and as a result, the areas around the swamps are generally not well-traveled. The swampland is home to special flora & fauna, with unique herbs growing here. The monastery of the Spirited Leaf and its monks use these to make their well-known brews. North of the Ulden Forest, a chain of watchtowers reinforced and patrolled from Southkeep guard the border with the Drayl City-States.

Leeward Hills and Cloud Peak

The legends regarding Cloud Peak tell of the Dark Star, who perched and collected sacrifices here, establishing its power over the lands, and whence it was banished by Sarath. The surrounding areas in the Leeward Hills and the neighboring forests were home to many fallen angels at the time. The remnants of this era lie scattered in these regions - ruins overgrown by vegetation and shunned by visitors for a good reason. These dark and thick forests are unpredictable and home to horrors left behind by the reign of the Dark Star.

The Leeward Hills are rarely traveled, both because of its infamy and the dense scrubs that cover the rugged hills. Travelers are warned to avoid the tainted area because those who return come back changed, if they ever return at all. The cries of the murdered still haunt this area.

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BLACKWOOD VALLEY

This valley is hidden among the hills and the forest and has been here since ancient times. The borders between the Shadowrealm and the Material Plane are thin, and the valley is covered in continuous shadow. These extraordinary circumstances allow for a particular type of tree called blackwood to grow here. These trees have pitch-black bark that absorbs sound, making the valley an eerie place to visit. From time to time, a shadow or two slips through and lairs here. Only a few know of the existence of this valley, and even fewer have actually traveled here to collect the bark, mainly small troops of lumberjacks accompanied by a druid. Once harvested, the bark of the blackwood needs to be treated with a *barkskin* spell on the spot. Otherwise, it loses its unique quality.

KING'S FOREST

This forest serves as the royal hunting grounds and has done so for centuries. Special laws prohibit hunting without personal approval from the monarch, and the woods abound with game. Based in and around the Royal Hunting Lodge, the Royal Hunters make sure that nature is not disturbed by anyone apart from the royal family and their associates. The only exception is the woodcutting license that Willow Creek has received due to the increased need for wood in the capital over the past century.

WEDGEWOOD

The Wedgewood is a large forest that covers the middle of the kingdom. It is a wildland where nature rules and wild animals abound. It is said that many black and brown bears inhabit this area. The only known road that passes through is the Trade Road, an old brick road in serious disrepair.

THORNWOODS

As the name implies, these woods are an unwelcome area with thorny plants and undergrowth, poisonous and dangerous plant life, and freely roaming wild beasts. No one enters the Thornwoods, as there are legends about hauntings, underscored by many people disappearing in the forest. Building the Green Road that cuts through the Thornwoods and the King's Forest three centuries ago was a bold undertaking, and stories still circulate about missing work crews. In reality, these woods are vicious because of the druid circle of the Seven Thorns, a gnome druid circle hell-bent on keeping every outsider out of their sacred woods.

ARDEN FOREST

The Arden Forest is an untamed wilderness with a couple of logging outposts, which house many who want to get away from their past and make a decent living with hard work. King Razmyrel named it in gratitude after Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, who was the first lawgiver for this region and the last of his line. In the company of his close friend Thelarmas the bronze dragon, the Red Cloak Lawgiver once patrolled these lands to keep the rule of law in the wilder, less developed regions of the Kingdom.

This area was also said to be the last region where the great Arlen the Constructor was working on something monumental, a task that most say was never finished. The south of the forest is enchanted by old magics that make everyone lose their way, the site of the Stride of the Elders that leads to the Hagtree, which is the only remaining gateway to the Feyrealm.

CLEARWATER POND

A large, still pond fed by water from the wild Halueth river is a favored location for the local wildlife due to its clear waters and abundance of fish.

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Important Locations

There are different types of locations in the Kingdom of Aglarion. Like all major towns and geographical landmarks, some are public and widely known, while some are connected to specific encounters that only happen if one visits the location. Yet others are secret and hidden until characters learn of them and the paths that lead there. However, almost all locations have a significant role in Chapter 4 of the adventure after the Midnight Curse has struck the realm. The following summary describes the pre-curse conditions of each location in case the characters choose to travel the Kingdom before the events in Chapter 2 unfold. Where an additional name appears in the location's title, it refers to its name and role in Chapter 4 of the adventure, where the full map of Aglarion is presented. We have also marked secret locations that only appear in the adventure when the characters find them.

1. Onadbyr

Onadbyr is the capital of Aglarion, the largest settlement in the land. See the Onadbyr section for a full description.

2. Tomb of the Constructor

(SECRET LOCATION)

The Tomb of Master Arlen, the Constructor. See Tomb of the Constructor section in Chapter 2.

3. Ethereal Cloister

The remnants of a sunken temple of death that once stood on a rock pillar rising from the sea can be seen through the clear sea water from above. The location was a holy site where only the clergy of the Inevitable was allowed to enter. The monastery stood on the border of the Ethereal Plane that was so thin that those who walked the halls of the cloister could hear the voices of the dead. Those clerics who spent much time at the site could even converse with the souls of the deceased. Unfortunately, Morgawr, the kraken necromancer, destroyed the rock pillar, and its undead apprentices sometimes visit the site to extort information from the dead.

4. Willow Creek

Willow Creek is a small settlement of farmers and woodcutters who make a decent living by selling their produce mainly in Onadbyr. Rowan, a reserved and resourceful ranger, is the head of the village council. This village also serves as the

Rowan

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staging ground for any Royal Hunt into the King's Forest. The majority of the fields between the King's Forest and the Talanar Hills are owned by the townsfolk of Willow Creek.

5. Grorrarr's Lair

Inside the King's Forest, nesting in a cave by an ancient tree, lives Grorrarr the owlbear druid, with its two younglings. Grorrarr keeps to the deepest parts of the woods and is content with raising its cubs in peace. However, it does not welcome visitors and has already gotten into multiple disagreements with the lumberjacks of Willow Creek when they had intruded on her territory.

6. Ronul's End

Lord Dyzag Ronul

The pearl fishing village of Ronul's End is a relatively new settlement, only a century old, founded by Almeiro Ronul - famed pirate and founder of the Ronul family. The town is inhabited by a mix of merfolk, lizardfolk, and other settlers and is a tidy and profitable little village. Lord Dyzag Ronul, the elder Ronul baron, manages the town from the old Ronul Villa built from and around Almeiro Ronul's beached flagship, the Boundless Pearl. His closest ally and friend, "Salty Eel" Sykes is a seasoned veteran who is the loyal right-hand of the aging lord.

"Salty Eel" Sykes

7. North Bay Lighthouse

The primary lighthouse that guides ships in the North Bay is inhabited by a lizardfolk family that keeps it operational while also breeding giant frogs and giant toads adjacent to the building for sale as delicacies to Onadbyr's famed inns and taverns.

8. Mossy Tower

An abandoned watchtower in the Talanar Hills is overgrown by moss among the scattered boulders of the hills.

9. Abandoned Farmhouse (Well of Roaches)

This farmhouse in the northern reaches of the Talanar Hills has been abandoned for generations. An active well lies next to its crumbling walls.

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10. Monastery of Past Lives

In a forested area, south of the Talanar Hills, sits a small lake with an island in its center. On the island stands the Monastery of Past Lives, founded by the Karramosa family and built on top of an earth elemental node that contains a high amount of gemstones. The deep node is inhabited by Luriana Karramosa, who had transformed into a vicious large xorn that feeds on the gemstones. The monks of the monastery, secretly in the employ of the noble family, sometimes descend to the node and steal some of the constantly resurfacing stones in stealth, which are then cut, and sold in Onadbyr.

11. Cache of Almeiro Ronul

(SECRET LOCATION)

Almerio Ronul's pirate treasure is buried in the northeastern section of the Talanar Hills. Its location is only known to Almerio's descendant, Lord Dyzag Ronul, who guards this secret with his life. Some speculate that the fabled treasures of Almeiro Ronul are hidden in these hills, however these are merely rumors among the countless tales that Lord Dyzag spreads about the cache to disseminate misinformation. In Chapter 4 of the adventure, the Heroes of Virtue will have found the cache when the characters approach the excavation site.

12. Abandoned Lodge

In a hidden valley, the northern area also houses the secret hideout of the Heroes of Virtue, a group of duplicitous adventurers. The gang's members are rarely found in the lodge, which is maintained by their hirelings. These hired thugs have no knowledge of the accumulated treasures that are stored in the secret cellar of the building that is trapped in multiple ways to keep out intruders.

13. Royal Hunting Lodge

This lodge and the surrounding buildings were built during the Ebrin dynasty over the base of a villa originally used by the leadership of the Order of the Eternal Light. Some say that the most important decisions were made here at the time, in the seclusion of the forest. The lodge is mostly unused during the majority of the year, with only a couple of soldiers, hunters, and a minimal staff stationed here on a permanent basis. However, in case the monarch decides to go on a hunt, the lodge is quickly filled up by the famous and wealthy. Unknown to most but the oldest loremasters, under the basement and accessible through the well is a crypt where the Order's leaders entombed a group of clerics who doubted the legitimacy of theocratic rule centuries ago.

14. The Green Road (Thick of the Woods)

The brick road between the Crossroads and Nangrath cuts through the woods and is not as well-tended as the King's Road to the south. Two deep grooves mark the passage of countless wagons laden with ore that have passed through the wooded area. The forest around the road is teeming with wildlife.

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15. Nangrath

The town of Nangrath, once the focal point of the war effort against the Vordani confederacy of tribes, is now a tiny, poor, backwater village inhabited mainly by dwarves and humans. Although most of the inhabitants have an ancestor who fought or supported the war effort, most of the populace consists of weathered peasants who make a living from farming. As trade to the north and mining activities dwindled, the village got poorer and poorer, with some inhabitants deciding to move to the south to other towns such as Willow Creek or Harveston. The buildings are sturdy and well constructed, but many are empty and unused. A large part of the old stone wall around the village was taken apart and used as a resource for repairing Nangrath Bastion, rising at the center of the circular village. The town is overseen by Lord Arenbar Nangrath, the elderly dwarf patron who still remembers the days of the war. He lives in Nangrath Bastion, which is essentially a thick-walled tower surrounded by a stone wall, guarded by the Lord's commander, personal guard, and confidante, Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer. The lord's elder son, Yarik manages the day-to-day activities of the village, and most townsfolk hold him in high regard as a just and honest person. His younger son, Odryk, lives in Onadbyr and manages the family villa in the capital. The town has a small magic shop operated by Thermerson the Wise, a mage and archeologist, who travels these areas in search of magic trinkets, mainly found in locations of known battles in the north.

16. Fort Stormbreaker

The ruins of Fort Stormbreaker dominate the landscape. Dwarves and humans built the fort on top of ancient ruins to serve against the attacks of the Vordani barbarians. As part of the truce with Vordan, the two sides agreed to dismantle the forts, and two Vordani families were settled next to its ruins as part of this agreement. The Vordanis don't mingle or mix with the people of Aglarion and are ready to signal Vordan if the ruins of the fort are ever disturbed or armies were to march on Vordan from Aglarion.

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer

Thermerson the Wise

Lord Arenbar Nangrath

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17. Fort Blackbell

Fort Blackbell was the main fortress guarding the road to the north. As long as memory serves, there was a fortification in this location. The fort housed a magical bell that could be heard even as far as the Talanar Hills. Since the treaty with the Vordani tribes, Aglarion has removed the troops from this location and is content with just Nangrath soldiers patrolling the area from time to time. The ancient fort is uninhabited and stands in ruins.

Lord Ziademos Gorso

18. Darkstone

The cave opening leading to the Dark Below is well hidden among the many depleted mining sites in the area. However, deep in the lower caverns of Darkstone are the ramshackle remains of an old duergar trading post built over an ancient onyx mine. Miners collapsed the entrance to the mines centuries ago due to otherworldly and deadly influences at the heart of the deeper mines. (See Chapter 6 - Darkstone Mines for details.)

19. King's Road (Crossroads)

The King's Road is a well-maintained red brick road overseen by the engineers of the Royal Army. The crossroads to Nangrath and Gorso also has a signpost with a multitude of planks showing the different settlements, their directions, and distances.

20. Gorso

The village of Gorso is ruled by a noble family, the Gorsos, whose members are entropist fanatics, nihilistic hedonists devoted to the force of the Elemental Chaos. They are led by the entropist warlock patron of the family, Lord Ziademos Gorso. The town is situated along the River Nenock, surrounded by stone walls and watchtowers, with the motte-and-bailey castle of the Gorso family in the center of the town. There used to be a bridge next to the fort, which was destroyed in a peasant uprising, so the Gorsos now operate a ferry that transports passengers and cargo across the river. Almost everyone in the town is used to the erratic and often oppressive rule of the Gorso family, accepting it as the state of the world, given that the Gorsos provide work to the majority of the populace.

Gianas Lor'ghianki

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Lately, rumors say that as part of his crazed quest in service of the Elemental Chaos, Lord Ziademos Gorso has been obsessed with a hunt for a unicorn to further his studies into the forces of chaos and law, employing many hunters in this endeavor.

Gianas Lor'Ghianki, a friendly but lewd tiefling, dismissed from the College of Minstrels, runs the Flirty Nymphs brothel, catering almost exclusively to Ziademos Gorso and the members of his family.

21. Trapped Woods

This part of the forest is called Thornwoods, for the thorny underbrush covering most of the forest. Most hunters or loggers also shun this area as it is unnaturally overgrown by the thorns that sometimes cover deep pits. In reality, the gnome druid circle of the Seven Thorns has dug several pit traps in this area, as they know that most animals don't roam here due to the briars. The xenophobic gnome druids patrol the woods and try to keep any intruder away, preying in the form of dire wolves on the sporadic logging operations.

22. Circle of the Seven Thorns

This area of the Thornwoods is a densely grown, thick forest that hides the Circle of the Seven Thorns, an ancient radical gnome druid circle led by Tonk Wildwander. The gnome druid circle is a remnant of the Seven Flowers, who were hunted almost to extinction and have been in hiding for centuries. The neighboring peoples call this part of the woods the Vanishing Woods as they say everyone who ventures into the dense thicket is never seen again.

Tonk Wildwander

23. The Maze of Flowers

Tucked between the hills under the veil of the forest is a magical maze made out of plants, which continuously grows and changes. Its walls are thorny bushes, floors covered with vines, and ceiling overgrown with thick branches. Flowers constantly blossom and wither within its confines in the span of a few minutes, as if time flows faster in this location. The mixed smell of the decaying and flowering plants nauseates any who enter. Legends say druids of old built the maze to serve as a testing ground and that only wise decisions and the knowledge of the magic of nature can help to find its center. There looms an old druid shrine to the Eternal Mother containing a portal, which allows travel to the Stride of the Elders in the southern section of the Arden Forest.

24. Battlefields of Torak

This is the location of one of the greatest battles fought between Vordan and Aglarion, where a complete Vordani war chariot company, the Blood Wheels, was wiped out. After the war and as part of the truce, the two kings of the opposing forces erected a huge stone slab to commemorate the event and the fallen.

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25. The Dragon's Bones

This is a hilly landscape that is very rarely traveled. Hidden between the hills is the skeleton of the ancient gargantuan bronze dragon Thelarmas, ally to Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden. His youngest offspring, Selvaro, blinded from an encounter with the oozes who took over its father's lair, tends to the bones as a hermit in human form.

Selvaro

26. Shrine of the Blind God

The lair of Thelarmas, the ancient bronze dragon, was overrun by oozes summoned by worshippers of the Blind God, an evil deity of oozes. They transformed the lair into the Shrine of the Blind God and, in their mad search for communion with their god, transformed their own bodies into a manifestation of the Blind God itself. As a result, oozes infest the lair, and the souls of the cultists have been cursed in undeath to eternal worship as a spectral congregation. The gargantuan gelatinous cube guarding the entry to the caves burns out the eyes of anyone who enters.

27. Garden of Plenty

The story of the creation of this magical garden has been lost to time, but local sages recall a garden where bushes grow berries of which a single one can feed a grown person for a day. The garden is well hidden and is currently the lair of a huge brown bear, who has found the magical berries and is feeding on them, keeping all other contenders away.

28. Clearwater Pond (Waters of Wrath)

The waters of Clearwater Pond are pristine, its shores teeming with life.

29. Smokestone Mine

This mine is the source of the majority of the iron and copper ore mined in Aglarion, with rumors of several deep gold veins. Smokestone was a decent town when Aglarion was founded, but over half a millennia, people left, and it became solely a mining community overseen by the Royal Palace. The mine is under the direction of Ilberd Serpentpike, a halfling minor noble, who manages the mine with a retinue of Royal Swords. The miners are paid well, and the ore is periodically transported to Onadbyr.

30. Nest of the Crackling Crows

The peak of Mount Aurnmere at the edge of the Mountainfall has served as a nest of rocs for hundreds of years, from where they swoop down to the Arden forest to hunt caravans or river barges. The rocs are said to cackle with shrill voices when they dive upon their helpless victims, snatching up entire vehicles, and flying away with their prey towards the peak.

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31. Gate to the Darkness Within

An immense dark gate opens into the cliffside on the top of a mountain plateau, created by the last remaining survivors and loyalists of the Dark Star during their escape after Sarath's victory over their lord. It is a magical portal leading to the darkest section of the divine realm of the Darkness Within. None have returned from those who ever managed to cross through the gate.

32. Abulior Whitegate's Workshop

Abulior Whitegate, an expelled academician from the Arcane Tower, has been researching Master Arlen's work and its connection to angelic lore in his hut at the foothills of the Mountainfall. His original intent and area of interest were in building constructs and, in particular, the potential to create constructs with true intelligence. The wizard was expelled for stealing an ancient dark celestial parchment annotated by Master Arlen himself that related the story of a dark deva named Samkiel, banished with the Ziggurat of the New Moon for his prophecies of doom. Abulior then settled in this area due to the legends surrounding Master Arlen's final construct, the Colossus, for which he is searching.

Abulior Whitegate

33. Greymoss Clan Lair

This area has long been inhabited by stone giants, the Greymoss Clan being the last of their line. In return for guarding the border against any incursions through the Mountainfall, they are accepted and allowed to dwell in this area and hunt to satisfy their needs. The clan halls are carved into the side of the mountain with enormous gateways and tall and wide corridors.

34. Lodge of Wanderlust

This lodge has stood in the Arden Forest since anyone can remember. It resembles a fortification made of thick and sturdy granite blocks, protecting travelers on the road for ages. It is managed by Cygnus, the couatl paladin of the Shining Light, who established it as an adventurer's guild over a thousand years ago. In the guise of a human knight, Cygnus employs adventurers to find and notify the lodge of any activity that might signal any re-emergence of the Dark Star or the Darkness Within.

35. Overpass of the Giants

This stone bridge was built centuries ago over the River Halueth and spans almost half a mile, 200 feet above the riven canyon. The bridge is not garrisoned and is not very well maintained – chipped rocks and loose stones make the traverses quite hard for wagons.

36. Golemcraft Cave

The hills in the eastern section of the Arden Forest are dotted with small to large caves. One such larger

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cave hosted Master Arlen the Constructor while he built the pieces of the Colossus. The enormous cave is a stone quarry, with scaffolding and pulleys covering one of the walls and rubble at its bottom. Inoperable, rusty, and broken daedal wrights stand around the cave, with an active golem still guarding the location. The spell employed in the animation of the Colossus is carved on the walls of the cave, although a large portion of it has been damaged or destroyed by floodwater from above. The section that remains explains how to stop or start the colossus, but there is no explanation of how it can be controlled.

37. Barrow of the Colossus

The forest here teems with life, and unbeknownst to all, Master Arlen's Colossus is lying here, where it buried itself under the forest at the command of the archmage. The colossal construct is inanimate, missing a crucial element of the spell to function.

38. Trails of the Colossus

This encounter location only appears in Chapter 4 of the adventure when the Colossus animates.

39. Waylaid Pilgrims

This encounter location only appears in Chapter 4 of the adventure after a group of pilgrims are waylaid by the Blackfur bandits.

40. Mothfang Family Residence

This mountainous area is home to the Mothfang goblin family, exiled from Gonshar due to slights against Lord Kabok Goldtooth. They wanted to wed their youngest daughter Zikniq to Lord Kabok, who was not too keen on the proposal. Afterward, they tried to make him agreeable by using magic but were found out by Kabok's spies. So Kabok found it best to exile the family and forget about the whole affair.

41. Gonshar

Gonshar is a simple and relatively well-kept town with a decent community of friendly and hard-working folks made up of mostly goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears who live under the rule of Lord Kabok Goldtooth, Supreme Wizard of Gonshar according to his self-awarded title, a descendant of Bilakk Goldtooth, the famed goblin warrior. Kabok is an illusionist and cares a lot about his village and subjects. Lord Kabok Goldtooth claims to have forged an alliance with the legendary and rarely seen gold dragon Xykot, who guards the village. The dragon is actually an illusion sometimes conjured by Kabok to maintain his scheme and standing and as protection to ward off any hostile acts against the village. Thus, buyers don't argue if the magic items sold here don't work or work differently than explained. Gonshar itself is not very self-sufficient and imports most of its food from Gorso.

Lord Kabok Goldtooth

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42. Blackfur Bandit Hideout

A group of bandits and outlaws – the Blackfurs – claim the south of the Arden Forest as their own. They long for the treasures rumored to have been amassed by the dragon Xykot and take every opportunity to get more intelligence about Gonshar and Kabok. They also prey on merchant caravans through the Arden Forest. Their numbers are slowly growing due to their success and the fact that the King and his army are far away and less interested in defending the goblinoid village. The band is led by Ishnari, a half-orc and -elven druid mercenary who turned to a life of crime far from the capital and hungers after the dragon's hoard.

Ishnari

43. Stride of the Elders

(SECRET LOCATION)

The Seven Flowers created this magically hidden pathway in ancient times to hide and protect the planar gateway tree they planted, which is now the Hagtree. This challenge is intended to keep out those unfamiliar with druidic spells and knowledge and is impenetrable by any other means than the ancient magic that still works here. See On the Stride of the Elders section in Chapter 4 for more details.

44. The Hagtree

(SECRET LOCATION)

Originally planted by the Seven Flowers millennia ago, this ancient tree exists on four planes simultaneously – the Material Plane, the Shadowrealm, the Ethereal Plane, and the Feyrealm. Unfortunately, after millennia of serving as a gateway between the realms, the Matrons of Malice discovered the tree. They corrupted it by bounding the souls of other hags into the tree, infusing it with malicious intent and sentience. See Traversing the Hagtree section in Chapter 4 for more details.

45. Ruins of the Water-Raiser

The forest overgrows the ruins of an ancient massive water-raising mechanism at the shores of the River Halueth. The village-sized construction was once used to transport water to the Leeward hills over aqueducts during the time of the dark angels. Today, it is the secret home of the half-elven philosopher woodworker Bryn Helgraz and his family, hiding from the world and preparing for the end times.

Bryn Helgraz

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46. The Groaning Pillar

Among the tall trees, hidden within the forest is a huge monolith, covered with ancient runes and long-rusted chains, with celestial hieroglyphs carved on its sides. The pillar, originally called the Pillar of Mercy by the fallen angels, has been dubbed the Groaning Pillar by later historians. It was said to be used for delivering "mercy" to those who committed crimes against the laws of the Dark Star. However, ancient vestiges of magic remain and whoever approaches the pillar has to endure the lingering punishment of the fallen angels. Zevius, the oracle spirit naga who camps here, was expelled from its nest for being unfaithful to the Inevitable and its brood at the Cairns of Bone.

Zevius

47. Cairns of Bone

The north-western part of the Leeward Hills also contains ruins from the ancient age of the Dark Star. In reality, some of the hills are enormous cairns filled with the bones of the mortals who resisted and were, in turn, sacrificed by the fallen angels. The area is home to a nest of three death-worshipping spirit naga oracles, who make their home over one of the cairns. They study the bones and deduct different sacrificial rituals used in this area by the evil angels thousands of years ago. The nagas are seclusive and avoid contact with anyone who approaches them.

48. Cloud Peak (Camp of the Redcloak)

Cloud Peak is a solitary mountain that is always covered in clouds. Legends claim the mountain has a direct connection to the Dark Star. An ancient altar was used to offer blood sacrifices to the Dark Star at its peak. Sarath broke the altar as she used this location as a focal point in her ritual to power the Radiant Sphere of Annihilation and break the moon, thereby banishing the fallen angels. Climbing the 13,000-foot mountain is a feat not many people can survive.

49. The Weary Ogre

The Weary Ogre is a relatively new establishment built only about two centuries ago to serve the needs of the travelers who come to visit the Arcane Tower. Ozar the Exquisite purchased the fortified inn decades ago. He is a jolly, fat, half-ogre master chef and transmuter who made it his life's quest to serve the best food in the kingdom. Today, the Weary Ogre competes for the title of the most

Ozar the Exquisite

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famous and coveted restaurant all over the continent. The dishes he serves bring in visitors from even other countries from time to time.

50. The Arcane Tower (Vaults of the Arcane Tower)

The Arcane Tower, built by Master Arlen the Constructor and his students, houses the most senior and experienced wizards in the realm and an extensive library on the wizardly arts. Entry to the Arcane Tower is rare and only for arcane spellcasters, though other magic users or sages have been admitted from time to time. The King's Road ends at the gates of the Tower. The acting archmage of Aglarion, Master Zaophas, runs a rigorous, tidy academy. For a full description of the Arcane Tower, see The Arcane Tower section in Capter 4 of the adventure.

Master Zeophas

51. Ulden Lowlands (Field of Nightmares)

These lowlands are very tranquil and relatively empty. Two brick roads wind through, one in the direction of Harveston, and another, less traveled one, to the Arcane Tower.

52. Harveston

Harveston is less of a village and more of a trading ground. The surrounding farmlands and farmers come here to trade, meet, and manage their affairs. As such, Harveston has a temple to the Eternal Mother, a cattle market, a general market, a huge tavern, multiple blacksmiths, and the Kicking Bull – a festhall that can host over a hundred people at the same time. The annual Cattle Fest, during which the locals choose the Bull of the Year, is an event of drinking and revelry that many people from Onadbyr and even the Drayl City-States come to visit.

53. Leaning Watchtower

This region has several active watchtowers built from stone and wood, which are maintained and garrisoned from Southkeep to monitor the southern border. Lieutenant Nermal Ottington usually spends more time in these watchtowers than in Southkeep on his border patrols.

Lieutenant Nermal Ottington

54. Southkeep

Southkeep is a garrison overseeing the kingdom's southern borders, housing a storied light cavalry

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that patrols the borders. Since the age of King Razmyrel Melkar, the keep has stood as a motte-and-bailey built of wood, with a large campsite outside the walls. The current commander of the keep is Captain Renrik Nuhak, a senior Red Cloak Lawgiver, and well-known military commander. His second-in-command is Nermal Ottington, a competent lieutenant and independent and uncompromising crusader for justice and adventure, who usually leads the patrols on the south border.

55. Monastery of the Spirited Leaf

The Monastery of the Spirited Leaf, home to a score of monks, is devoted to the Redeemer, the god of life. The large, two-story stone building has welcomed visitors and aided those in need for long centuries. The monks here also mastered their skills in brewing specialized alcoholic drinks. Their most famous brew is the Spirited Leaf, made out of special herbs that only grow in the Ulden Swamps. The monks are led by Tortitudo, the dwarven abbot master brewer who is the most spirited of them all. Master Brewer Tortitudo is the only point of contact to Vaddon the Hermit, who lives south of the Ulden Swamps. In reality, the abbot relies on Vaddon to find newer and newer herbs to process in the brewery and refine the Spirited Leaf.

Tortitudo

56. Azure Bridge

The Azure Bridge is one of the two bridges that cross the River Nenock. Master Arlen magically constructed it from a strange blue crystal that magically sticks everything to its surface if commanded to do so by the holder of the *Azure Bridge control rod*. The current bearer of the rod and tasked with managing the bridge is Klinikk Jordus, a somewhat ambitious and greedy man who is looking for advancement in the kingdom's bureaucracy. Small wooden fortifications guard the bridge at its two ends, and everyone but the royals needs to pay the toll to the corrupt bridgemaster.

Captain Klinikk Jordus

57. Mud Funnels

This encounter location only appears in Chapter 4 of the adventure when the heavy rains from the Midnight Curse create mud funnels in the Onadbyr plains, infested by ankhegs.

58. Ulden Swamps (Kelzar's Log)

The Ulden Swamps is an extensive swampland that is unpopulated. It is a thriving natural environment

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where several special herbs grow that are the basic ingredients to make the unique beer brewed by the monks of the Spirited Leaf Monastery. Many dangerous animals and beasts live here, and as a result, there are not many who wander into its depths. The southern section of the Ulden Swamps is an even more densely overgrown area. A troll family inhabits this region, who keep to themselves and usually avoid contact with the outside world. They tend to their domesticated alligators and occasionally trade with Vaddon the Hermit. The head of the family is Kelzar, who hunts with its alligator turtle companion. The family lives in a massive tree log that floats on the swampy waters.

59. Vaddon's Abode

Vaddon the Hermit lives at the edge of the Ulden Swamps and makes his home inside a tree hut. Vaddon can talk to and understand plants better than people and makes his living by collecting unique natural resources and brewing potions and ointments from them. Tortitudo of the Spirited Leaf also relies on his expertise to find and bring back new herbs for their brewing process. Vaddon knows the surrounding areas very well but is hard to talk to - his speech resembles croaking frogs, buzzings of insects, and other sounds of nature.

Vaddon

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60. Sobruz Quarry and Penitentiary

The Sobruz Quarry's clay pits are worked by the convicts of the penitentiary, who are mainly there for more serious crimes. The hard labor here is considered a more severe punishment than being jailed in the Dungeon of Tears in Onadbyr. As a result, the guards protecting this penitentiary are unusually vigilant and sometimes outright brutal with the convicts, who are some of the most hardened criminals of the realm.

61. Royal Stud Farm

This area houses the Royal Stud Farm. The Royal Groom, Countess Unper Maritayl, lives in a manor house next to the surrounding stables and barns. She is required to take care of the King's horses, among them, his favorite steed, Blackheart.

62. Old Windmills

There are several old windmills in the center of a collection of large neglected farms. One of the mills is named the Old Grinder. The farmlands around the mills have long been abandoned after they lost their fertility due to a strange fungal phenomenon known as the Rooteater.

63. Ruins of the Royal Summer Palace

On the high cliffs along the coast lie the ruins of the Royal Summer Residence of Queen Eirammar, grandmother of King Waldrann. Eirammar built the villa as a place of festivities, and rumor says the villa's walls have seen many secrets the Royal family might want to keep to themselves. Queen Eirammar was known for gambling and as a sore loser. On one of her bets, it happened that she lost a fortune to a minor noble, Count Plitvar, who had the audacity to request sexual favors in place of payment. The enraged queen had the noble murdered, and his body interred in the walls inside her residence. Afterward, the ghost of Count Plitvar started to wreak havoc. It was very inconvenient for the royal family, so they simply abandoned the villa to stifle any gossip and have not used it since. However, the ghost of Count Pitvar still haunts the ruined halls, mad for vengeance against the treacherous queen.

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64. Ziggurat of the New Moon

(SECRET LOCATION)

This is a secret location known to no one. It was constructed around the planetar Morkiel's crystal of the immortals housed in the Ziggurat of the New Moon and used to imprison the fallen deva Samkiel, by banishing the entire ziggurat to the Astral Plane. Master Arlen and King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar found the hidden ziggurat and gleaned long-lost secrets from the mad deva imprisoned within with the highest secrecy. The ziggurat is transposed to the Astral Plane and can only be summoned at its former location, at the highest point of the new moon, and with a specific command phrase. Even then, it remains for the briefest moments before it moves back to the Astral Plane.

SAMKIEL

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City of Adventure

The capital city of the Kingdom of Aglarion is full of interesting places to explore and people to meet. It is a thriving city that welcomes all races and beliefs just like the rest of the kingdom until they don't mean harm to others. It is an ancient city built on the secrets of the dark celestials who established it and had it constructed on the sweat and blood of the mortal slaves they ruled over. Those who walk its streets with an observant eye can find remnants of its rich history everywhere.

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ONADBYR

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History

The area where Onadbyr stands today has been frequented by migrating tribes since the dawn of history. The first permanent settlement was established by the decree of Tannur, the planetar general of the Dark Star, who claimed the Calhay Sea as its own territory, and made this location its main residence. The planetar named the city Oun Adh Eilon, meaning "The City of Chains", and established it as a center for slave trade, a place where slaves were forced into servitude and bent to the will of their dark angel masters. Legend says that the villa and the fortifications built for Tannur were beautiful and magical beyond belief. However, its secrets were well kept, as all the slaves and workers who built it were massacred by the evil angels, leaving the bodies in a single enormous pit under the area where the Royal Palace currently stands.

When Xantharos, the Father of All Dragons, was banished from the Feyrealm to the Material Plane by the drow vampire conjurer, Faeryl Myrryn, the dragon attacked the city, killing thousands and destroying most of it. However, the fallen angels who battled it over the Calhay Sea far to the east from the coastline eventually defeated the dragon and its immense body fell into the sea, forming the Isles of Xantharos.

In the centuries that followed, the number of secret followers of the Shining Light slowly grew in the city, and when the uprising of Sarath resulted in the banishment of the angels, the mortal loyalists of the Dark Star were also punished for their deeds against their own kin. The Order of the Eternal Light renamed the city Oun Adbyr, the City Of Mortals, and made it their capital. The city's name morphed into Onadbyr over the centuries from this archaic origin. The ruined city was rebuilt, and the Order commissioned multiple shrines to the Shining Light, one of them the Eternal Torch on the coast, which was where the souls of the heretics were consecrated by dropping them into the fires of the temple. The most significant temple was the grand Cathedral of the Sun that spread its

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ever-glowing rays over the entire city. Soon after the death of Sarath, the new quarters of Rodnar the All-Seeing, Priest King of the Order of the Eternal Light, were built over Tannur's fort, laying the foundations of the Royal Palace. The Order also established the House of Brilliance, where the hand-picked acolytes of promise were indoctrinated and trained to serve and support the Order of the Eternal Light. Only pupils from these schools were allowed to use magic outside of the hierarchy of clerics of the Order. In the surrounding hilltops, the nobility, endowed and supported by the Order, moved in to claim the best plots of land.

During the revolution of King Razmyrel, all the temples and shrines to the god of the Light and Darkness were razed, Master Arlen himself melting the foundations of the Cathedral of the Sun and collapsing the structure. Having long suffered under the Order, the enraged population destroyed everything that had the mark of the zealous priests. Rebuilding took a lot of effort, and King Razmyrel consciously planned the newly-built capital with the help of Master Arlen.

During Queen Myrel's reign, several escaped descendants of the Order secretly plotted to bring a terrible plague to the capital, called the Laughing Plague. It is said that those who contracted the highly virulent disease went into fits of laughter that would not abate, and when their bodies could not take it anymore, the afflicted died. However, Queen Myrel supported by the new temples, was able to find the cure and save a lot of souls from the raging plague.

King Grankar the Brash expanded the city outside the Old Wall and built the New Wall and Grankar's Chains. This part of the city development was also consciously planned, for the most part, and made several nobles extremely wealthy.

The Vordan Wars did not reach Onadbyr, as most of the battles were fought north of the King's Forest, in the Thornwoods and Talanar Hills. During this time, the capital was further fortified and gave place to some field hospitals. There were only two occasions when the capital was attacked after the onslaught of Xantharos. First, when the Xantharian fleets arrived on the coast, pursuing Lord Almeiro Ronul, the noble-turned pirate lord. The forces of the enraged half-dragons were repelled by the combined strength of the pirate lord's fleet and the Royal Armada. The second siege was the unexpected attack of Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, who destroyed much of the city, including the Nine Arches bridge, before being forced to flee by King Daerios Azennar. King Daerios was succeeded to the throne by his son, King Waldrann. The current king is famous for his manly challenges and flirtatious adventures, but his life so far has been shadowed by the tragedy of losing his first queen, then his firstborn son. Despite his personal tragedies, the realm enjoys never-before-seen prosperity and a seemingly bright future.

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DISTRICTS

Onadbyr has a long and colorful history that has left its marks on the city. It has been the seat of many different rulers who added more or less to the city's current form. As a result, Onadbyr is a mix of old and new architecture, expanding even today. During the past centuries, Onadbyr's layout and structure was developed through centralized city planning, creating each district to serve a different purpose and function. The old city was built around the Royal Palace, around which most of the old noble houses constructed their residencies. The wealthy settled in large estates on spacious plots on the northern hills, while residents with lower incomes have been drawn to the south, where buildings are more densely packed and living is cheaper. Traders and merchants populated the north-western section of the city by the main gate, close to the wealthy and the nobles. Crafters of all kinds moved to the south of the river, where they can be all found within a few minutes of walking.

The city's infrastructure has some flaws, but it is large-scale, well-maintained, and reliable. The city's roads, gates, and bridges are well-built and went through multiple repairs over the centuries, all funded from tax revenues. The outer and inner gates have enormous, iron-banded wooden wings with portcullises. The city's sewer system runs under the capital's main roads and flushes its content into River Nenock and the Cliffside on the east. The smaller streets only have drains next to the walkway's paved sections, washed off by the residents who live there. The city's street signs are mostly intact, even in the smaller alleys, but no numbers are displayed for the houses.

One can find almost any type of legal and mundane service within Onadbyr. The ones listed on the city map are merely the exceptionally interesting or important ones, either the best in their trade or unique for some reason. Feel free to add any profession or service to the city if the characters are specifically looking for them.

COIN DISTRICT

Over the past centuries, the merchants of Onadbyr have realized that being in close walking distance from each other is advantageous for their business, especially if they are located on the Riverside Promenade. This main road brings visitors from the west. Amid the modest residential buildings, many small and larger shops await the purses of Onadbyr. Residents of the Coin District are well-to-do individuals who earn enough gold to live in a modest neighborhood that lacks luxury but provides a safe and very comfortable environment.

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HIGH DISTRICT

Beautiful villas, lush gardens, well-kept roads, and fancy street lamps are the most striking characteristics of this elegant neighborhood. The High District is an enclosed, separate city within the city, where the nobles of the capital live, some not even crossing the district's gates more than a couple of times in a year. The walled neighborhood is sparsely populated, its wide roads and sizable parks patrolled by the Royal Swords night and day. Entry through the gates is tightly controlled, with passage allowed only to those who can present a stamped letter of errand from a noble house, local business, or institution.

NORTH DISTRICT

The wealthiest of the city, who are not of ancient noble lineages, live in elegant homes or large compounds on the hills of Onadbyr. This large district is less densely populated than any other part of the city outside the Old Wall, and it is also much cleaner and more well-kept. Large trees and the occasional iron and stone fence of a villa on the Short Road hide entries to small streets or private roads that run up the hills. The Royal Swords are frequently seen patrolling the area, which is considered the safest among the residential districts outside the Old Wall.

SOUTH DISTRICT

Narrow alleys and tiny houses are packed next to each other in a mix of shapes and forms in this neighborhood. Most of the buildings are in moderate or bad condition here, the streets are smelly and dirty, and the residents are loud and rude. It is easy to get lost in the dark back-alleys and zigzagging intersections of the South District, where crime is at its peak in the city. The Long Road and the Old Man's Road are always busy, day or night, patrolled by the Royal Swords.

SWORD DISTRICT

This neighborhood is in no better condition than the South District, but its northern section is heavily occupied by many essential services operated by the kingdom's authorities. Besides the residential buildings, mostly inhabited by those who work for the crown, there are also many personal warehouses located by the New Wall, guarded by private guards.

THE CLIFFSIDE

This elevated rocky area by the sea is a barren terrain with a few houses by the wall and a single, famously lively festhall by the sea cliffs. The drop from the cliffs' top is over a hundred feet, with sharp rocks and massive crashing waves at the bottom. No gates open to this remote corner of the city, and it is accessible only from the north or through a steep flight of stairs starting at Fish Gate. These stairs descend to the sea level, where a small dock with a few Royal Sword guards awaits ships that are not allowed into the city for some reason.

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THE PANTRY

This collection of large private farms is the closest agricultural site to the city. The farms don't differ from the many farms found throughout the kingdom, besides the fact that these farmers are the ones who can get their products to Onadbyr's markets the fastest. Small dirt roads entwine the ample fields and pens, leading from one family's farm to the next.

THE SEABED

The land by the sea south of River Nenock is low-lying where the fishermen of Onadbyr reside. The small docks anchor countless fishing boats in front of small residential buildings painted blue for good luck at sea. This part of the city is the liveliest in the early morning hours when the fishermen sail out and before sunset when they return with their catch to the Seafarm Fishmarket.

THE SHANTIES

Those who can't afford to buy or rent a room in the city move to the Shanties to live in self-constructed favelas. Visitors are immersed in an orgy of sounds, foul smells, and a maze of small alleys and houses constructed of wood, clay, and whatever the residents can find. It is a densely populated area where the Royal Swords only enter when pursuing someone, and as a result, the Shanties is the least safe neighborhood of Onadbyr. The Golden Masks control most of the Shanties through local enforcers and recruit many of their operatives for simple tasks from the impoverished here.

TOOL DISTRICT

Crafters usually don't make enough gold to rent or buy houses and shops on the northern side of the river, and they are also happy to be close to their clients, who mostly come from the South District. Instead, they provide their services and sell their wares from small workshops throughout the neighborhood, densely populated and webbed with narrow backstreets. It is a relatively safe but dirty area, rarely visited by travelers to the city.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

ROADS

Long Road

The dirtiest, busiest, and noisiest road of the city connects the two main bridges in a long curve through South District.

Old Man's Road

Serving first as a shortcut between the two ends of the Long Road, this road has widened over the years. However, it is still a dirty gravel road that is quite busy during daytime and easily flooded by heavy rains.

Riverside Promenade

This elevated, well-fortified riverside road presents a beautiful sight with tall iron street lamps and shiny cobblestones. At regular intervals, flights of stairs descend from the high street level to piers on the river. It is a common pastime of the locals to sit on the benches by the river and watch the palace and the bustling southern side of the city.

Seaside Road

This wide dirt road is a side road from the Long Road.

Short Road

Large elegant houses, gardened villas, and small parks populate both sides of this broad and relatively clean road, which is the main thoroughfare through the elegant North District.

Skeleton Road

This wide dirt road is a side road from Short Road.

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SEWERS

The sewer system outside the Old Wall was built when the city was expanded by King Grankar the Brash. It is a relatively simple network of tunnels that run under the main roads and end outside the walls, collecting sewage and emptying it into the River Nenock and the Cliffside. The waste is carried away by the natural water flow, cleverly channeled from the river into the sewers and then redirected back into it. Rainwater and waste from the streets are channeled into the sewers through numerous drains located throughout the expanse of the roads. The sewers consist of awful-smelling, 10- and 15-foot diameter round tunnels with walkways, accessible through tight and intricately decorated maintenance holes on the main roads. Smaller streets connect to the sewer system through deeply cut overground gutters fed by the drains. The houses of the High District have their own sewage system, where each house is directly connected to the river through a narrow pipe system. There are a few primary drainage cisterns that collect the waste and empty them with complex mechanical drainage and disposal valves.

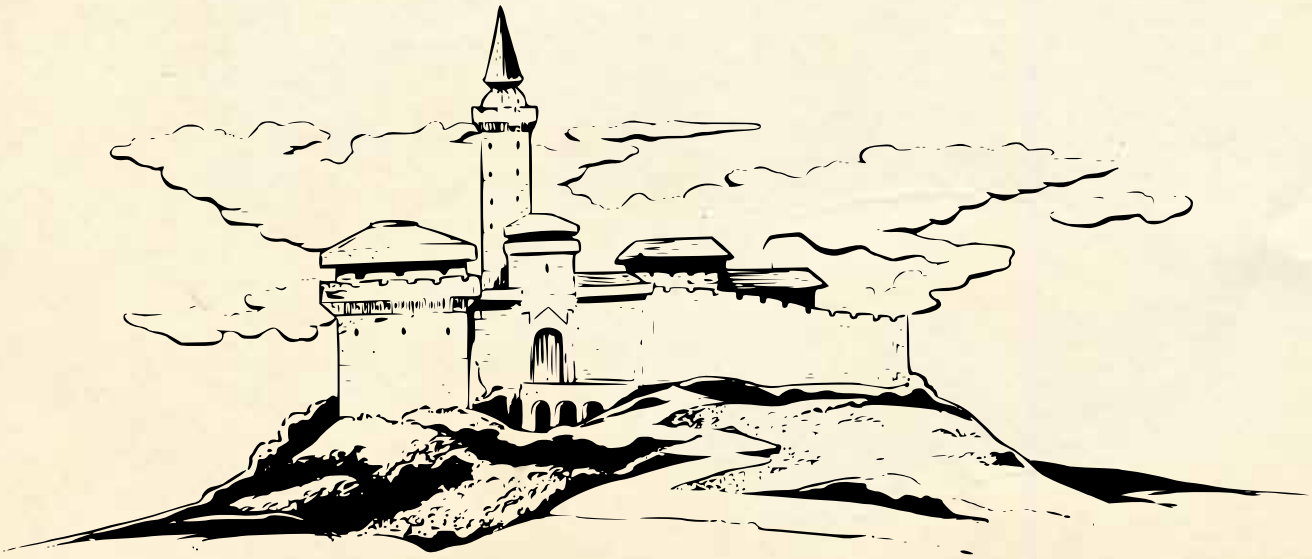
WALLS

New Wall

The outer walls of the city were built two centuries ago. They are segmented by small watchtowers at every 500 feet, which can accommodate four guards at a time. Nowdays, only two guards occupy every second tower. Signs of flooding are still visible on the north-eastern sections of the wall.

Old Wall

Weathered and visibly ancient, this 30-foot high wall was erected by the city's founders during the age of the Dark Star. Its cracks and huge blocks of dark grey stone could tell a million tales, as can the markings here and there on the surface of the ancient stone blocks. The weathered carvings are hard to find, and it's even harder to comprehend their meaning. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.



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GATES

Crown Gate

The widest gate of the city, this massive, fortified gate, is considered the main entry into Onadbyr, where wagons and large groups can enter or leave the capital. The cobblestones on the ground are loose and worn out, leaving everything covered in mud. The gate sees heavy traffic during daytime and is always attended by a larger group of Royal Swords.

Fish Gate

This gate is busiest in the early morning hours and is mainly used by the residents and the fishermen of the Seabed, who bring their loaded wagons with their daily catch to the city.

Mule Gate

Relatively few visitors enter the city through this gate due to its proximity to the Shanties, which is avoided by most caravans and all reasonable visitors.

Sea Gate

The northern seaside gate of the capital sees less traffic than any of the other gates due to the low number of residents in the Cliffside. As a result, guards are also fewer in number at this gate, which on rare occasions might even be closed for short periods due to “important duties” of the few Royal Swords present.

Skeleton Gate

Frequented mostly by farmers and visitors from the north, this gate sometimes sees heavy traffic jams due to long inspection times.

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IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

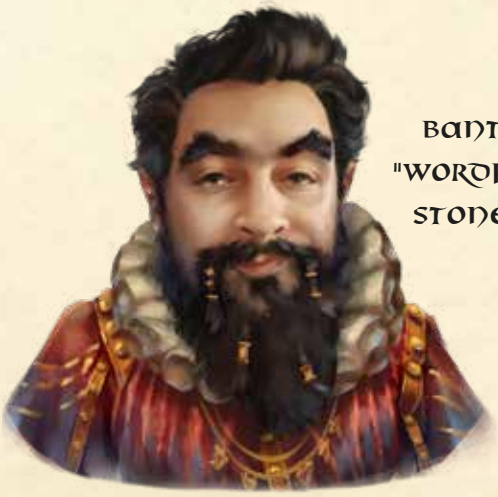
- BRIDGES
- PARKS AND PLAZAS
- MARKETS
- PLACES OF AUTHORITY
- HISTORICAL LOCATIONS
- HOSPITALITY
- PLACES OF WORSHIP
- CEMETERIES
- CRAFTERS AND SERVICES
- SHOPS
- NOBLES' VILLAS
- SCHOOLS
- MYSTICAL LOCATIONS
- ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

1. CROSSING OF THE THOUSAND LANTERNS

This simple but massive broad wooden bridge allows crossing over the river before entering Crown Gate. Thousands of locals celebrate the Day of the Ancestors here every year by releasing floating lanterns onto the flowing waters below, representing the souls of lost ones. The lanterns float through the city for all to see before spreading out to the sea and disappearing on the waves.

2. TOTALLY LOCAL

Bantallyr "Wordplasher" Stoneshield is a young dwarven self-made poet bard with limited talent. He guides entertaining tours around the city, during which he recites the history and the legends of the landmarks in his uniquely rhythmic and dynamic style. He warns clients about the dangers of some of the locations on his tour but takes no responsibility for any harm suffered. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.



BANTALLYR "WORDPLASHER" STONESHIELD

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3. Hill's Nectar Winery

This cozy little shop offers the best wines of the kingdom and some even from exotic lands. Its extensive cellar system is accessible from the street level through a long ramp and a heavy iron double door that remains locked at all times. This gate is not only to serve as the protection of the wares of the Domiren family but also to keep unwanted attention away from the private bacchanalias the three Domiren sonsorganize in the wine cellars. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

GULFA

4. Thysalonious' Stables

This large stable has a good selection of horses for sale. Thysalonious is a witty middle-aged human in love with the animals he breeds. His favorite and personal horse is a black war stallion named Midnight. Many Knights of the Crown have paid a high price for a foal from its breed.

BLIGHT

5. Triple Nine Gambling Hall

This windowless block building is highly illuminated with colorful lanterns on the outside at all times. The proprietor is a doppelganger named Hauris, posing as Gulfa the bugbear, who is known for his minimal tolerance policy, bringing relative stability to this operation of the Golden Masks. High-rollers are offered credit at a reasonable interest, but only after securing a lock of hair from the player. Blight, a daring flameling gambler who has provided someone else's lock of hair to remain untraceable, is the current high-roller. She is winning big for now but is planning to cover her losses if needed, by disappearing with the large amount of borrowed gold in her pockets.

6. Bearded Warrior Weapons Shop

Run by Kagrian Ironsinew, a gruff former adventurer of dwarven ancestry with a long beard, this tightly packed weapon shop has every kind of melee weapon imaginable, even exotic and rare types. Kagrian is most fond of morningstars, of which he has a large collection, even some magical ones.

KAGRIAN IRONSINEW

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7. Merchant's Rest

One of the largest taverns in the city has plenty of space for thirsty travelers who enter the capital, near the vast staging ground for carriages nearby. The crowd is a mix of primarily merchants and travelers who loudly bargain and strike lucrative deals, but it is also a favored place of the modest citizens of the North District and a few nobles who visit from time to time to meet with them. The tavern is run by Rythis Balric, a flirty blond half-elf who bought the place after several other failed business ventures.

Rythis Balric

8. Darustil's Haberdashery

This shop sells the full spectrum of low-value items, trinkets, common household goods, and some toys, all packed on huge shelves. Darustil, the gnoll owner, collects everything and is reluctant to throw or even give away anything of which he has come in possession. He charges high prices for even the most neglectable items and generally overshoots the value of his wares. Darustil was formerly a depressed dwarf before he committed suicide after a mining accident he caused that took the lives of many of his family members. He was later reincarnated into the body of a gnoll by a member of his family's elders by using an ancient magic ointment. He has come to accept his new form and now clings to his wares with the same devotion as his new life.

Lady Nezana

9. The Princess' Boudoir Parfumery

While this all-female staffed business has a full stock of various perfumes, it secretly houses a side business in its back room known to few of the well-to-do and nobility. Elixirs of enchantment are sold here that would be useful to achieve the customer's goals if their skills in persuasions have failed. Lady Nezana, a human lady of great charisma, is the perfumery's owner. She deals entirely in secrets in exchange for the back-room deals. She has recently come into possession of a secret of the royal family. An empty vial came into her possession recently, its content supposedly poured into the king's mead. The vial has a distinctive odor that Lady Nezana knows all too well, that of a *philter of love*.

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10. STARBRIGHT JEWELRY

Visited mostly by the elite and nobility of the city, this small, well-protected jewel and gem store is owned by the Karramosa noble family. Security is provided by a lumbering half-red dragon from the Isles of Xantharos, Draxias, who is a retired cleric of the Relentless. He is known for telling very bad dad jokes. His favorite ones are:

- Why did the old man fall in the well? Because he couldn't see that well!
- Why did the invisible stalker turn down the job offer? He couldn't see himself doing it!
- Why don't skeletons ever go to the Lucky Leap? Because they have nobody to go with!
- Within minutes, the Red Cloak knew what the murder weapon was. It was a brief case.
- I think my wife is putting glue on my weapons. She denies it, but I'm sticking to my swords!
- I once tried to tell a mummy a story. He told me to wrap it up.
- Red dragons are terrible at business. They just fire everyone.
- Sailors drink as they swim – they go down quick. Makes for a cheap date.
- I heard of a skeleton, who had a bone to pick with a necromancer about a raise.

DRAXIAS

11. TRADERSMEET

A market of caravans for traders from outside of the city dominates the center of Coin District. Special resources and handcrafted goods make up most of the merchandise sold here. The plaza is also a famous meeting place for travelers from the rest of the kingdom and the residents of the city. Unfortunately, it is also frequently visited by pickpockets and thieves who prey on travelers.

LYSANDR VON SCHPEKLESTEIN

12. ELEGANT ELEPHANT

The "wardrobe of the High District" as some call it, this shop sells perfectly made and fitted attire for noble and wealthy ladies and gentlemen alike. A large selection of pre-made clothes are always on sale, but custom or even magical ones are created for those who can afford the exorbitant price tags. The store is run by two half-elven sisters, Hacrila and Illistra, and their half-brother Lysandr Von Schpeklestein, an uptight human artificer with a curly mustache who enchants clothes in the most imaginative and creative ways.

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13. Choosey Otyugh Culinary Treats

Bundaro Astrizal is the most famous chef in the capital who regularly cooks for the royal family. His selected food products are all rare culinary treats displayed in a tantalizing fashion in his lavish store. Bundaro has a spicy rivalry with Ozar the Exquisite, the half-ogre wizard chef of the Weary Ogre, an establishment located in the countryside far from the capital.

Bundaro Astrizal

14. Emporium of Marvelous Rarities

The magic item shop of Master Bertio Ranberd, a renowned wizard, is famous all over the continent. Many visit him from lands afar to get the best deals on magic items. He is patient but very secretive and trains his loyal apprentices, who are sworn to defend his valuables and become masterful abjurers. See the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities section in Chapter 2 for more details on this location and Master Bertio Ranberd.

Master Bertio Ranberd

15. Silent Kiss Brothel

The hosts at the Silent Kiss never speak, and everyone who visits knows of this unique characteristic of the house of lust. They are clean, well-behaved, and making them moan with pleasure is something only a few can brag about in the city.

16. Shimeon's Pouches

Even though the king is famous for disliking magic-users, this shop is one of the most frequented places by those who wish to purchase spell components of all kinds. Orz De-Quat Shimeon, the owner, a tiefling with a cunning and very charming demeanor, chooses every word carefully to lure people into buying his wares. He has pale red skin with black horns twirling around his head. He is quick to offer his spell-casting services to anyone who seeks them and can pay good coin. He is quite a capable wizard, and is very liberal when requests cross to immoral or even forbidden uses of the arcane arts. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter related to the location.

Orz De-Quat Shimeon

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17. The Dragon's Hoard

This general trading house focuses mainly on travelers coming through the Skeleton Gate. The company maintains three large warehouses by the Skeleton Road and buys and sells bulk quantities of anything it can get its hands on for cheap. If someone needs ten shovels, a thousand feet of rope, or a ton of wood, they come to the Dragon's Hoard. The owner, Zirtan Moorewalker, is a bitter old no-nonsense man who lost his son and wife many years ago. He is dedicated to earning as much money as he can. He needs a lot of gold because he has struck a deal with an archdevil to gain eternal life if he builds a life-size statue of the devil made entirely of gold. And Rajmahor, the General of the Scythe, is a humongous devil.

18. The Wanderer's Cartographer

Rikka Stam buys maps he finds valuable and only sells copies of the originals in her lavishly furnished shop, decorated with exotic items. She is a capable illusionist, which helps her in copying the maps. She also has a magic scroll that stores illusionary input from spells, which she uses to build a layered world map based on the maps she has acquired so far. Her most valued possession is a map of the ancient empire of the fallen angels to the west, tattooed on the cured skin of an unknown unnaturally white-skinned humanoid.

19. Oryntar's Metallurgy

Oryntar's large warehouse in the North District allows him to keep a stunningly wide selection of goods fashioned out of metals. From copper through silver to even adamantine, one can find any item commonly fashioned out of the given material. Oryntar is an outgoing merchant who has been in the business for decades and is no one's fool. However, he leaves it to his apprentice, Ranith Shadesong, to handle the day-to-day affairs of the shop. Ranith is a cynical half-drow with green eyes and a limited magical aptitude.

Ranith Shadesong

20. The Halfling's Treasure

This pastry and candy shop is owned by Taem and Gyo, a middle-aged halfling couple and their eight children who all help out. Their sweets are famous all over the capital. Their oldest daughter Byra dreams of becoming a famous adventurer. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

21. Monster Menagerie

This garden with a lake at the center houses the crown's famous monster collection. It is a popular location, as families with children can enter for free to view the various magnificent beasts that have been captured or have been gifted to the royals and put on display here. The spectacles include a giant crocodile, a mated pair of triceratopses, peacockatrices, a pair of griffons, giant ants, and Softplume the owlbear. See Hunt for the Royal Architect section in Chapter 2 of the adventure.

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22. Emrik's Complex Flavor Blacksoup Bar

Emrik, a grumpy old half-elf, has a small bar wedged in between two other shops. It has pretty much been converted from an alleyway that has been blocked off. So, it is just a shop front where people order the special energizing drinks he makes for takeaway. He dabbles in alchemy and has a bit of arcane skill to roast special beans and infuse them with many different flavors. His copper and bronze equipment has a myriad of dials and tubes, operating with a hiss of steam as he makes his brews that are famous throughout the city.

Emrik

23. Deadwoods Cemetery

Planted by the Clerics of the Dead, these tall birch trees all mark the graves of those buried here. Some say that the trees whisper the secrets of the dead. However, nothing besides a name on a small wooden sign reminds the visitors of the deceased, merely the trees that grow over their bodies. Tolerated mostly out of negligence by the priests of the Inevitable, Nelhelm the Studious wanders from tree to tree, trying to find a client for his necromantic services, mostly speaking with the recently deceased through their trees. The grumpy gnome is quite helpful when asked about a grave as he can generally recollect the location of most of them through personal interactions with the departed.

Nelhelm the Studious

24. Temple of Death

A handful of black-cloaked, taciturn, low-level clerics with white paint on their faces worship the Inevitable in this temple. It is a featureless block building with small windows and a few smaller entrances. The priests hold funerals and plant the Trees of Souls - birch trees - over the graves in the Deadwoods cemetery. Clerics of this sect refuse to use any healing or restorative magic as they consider it against their god's will. Among the morose grave clerics, the most charismatic figure is Kalós Poimenikós, a depressed, tall feyrealm-born cleric who is often quite inebriated and finds it hard to focus on his tasks.

Kalòs Poimenikòs

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25. College of Minstrels

This small three-story, worn down building is always loud with the sounds of instrumental music or singing, to the dismay of its neighbors. Many locals visit the school to witness the entertainment and the magical effects conjured by the practicing bards. The headmaster of this lively place is a cheerful, enthusiastic middle-aged half-elven gentleman named Master Conductor Fabian Ethlairn. He always dresses extravagantly and is wholly devoted to teaching his pupils. The most striking figure beside the headmaster is Tallis Deepwood, the Lead Singer of Songs, an overly cheerful and loud human bard with a great voice.

Tallis Deepwood

26. Burning Desire

This brothel exists on two planes simultaneously. Within a magical glass-domed circular central stage, magically bound incubi and succubi writhe in humanoid forms performing acts of uninhibited sexuality. The inside of the dome is located in the Abyss, but it is impossible to pass from one plane to the other here. Only visual and audible experiences can be conveyed. The brothel is run by Ravona Darkglow, the Pleasure Master, a powerful succubus enchantress. She relishes her dominance over both mortals and her own kin and masquerades as a tall black-haired elven woman.

Ravona Darkglow

27. Dawn of the Ages

This small and packed pawn and antiquities shop is a front of a Golden Masks smuggling and burglary operation. The organization resells anything it can, either refashioned into a new form or just under the table. The secret leader of the operation is a doppelganger posing as Balantur, an old dwarf with many tales. The face of the shop is Meiram Landau, a half-elven smuggler with a calm demeanor.

Meiram Landau

28. Nangrath Villa

The Nangrath family villa looks very much like a small fortress. The noble family, who got their title and lands through their military service as generals through the wars with the northern tribes, is a very stern and frugal House. The family members adhere

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to military traditions and usually serve as war councilors to the monarch. Lord Arenbar Nangrath, the head of the House, lives in the village of Nangrath, together with his firstborn son Yarik, but travels to the city if the king demands his council. Odryk Nangrath, the lord's younger son, spends most of his time in the Onadbyr villa. However, he secretly dreams to leave his duties behind and escape Aglarion on a ship with his love Premil Ronul, heir of the Ronul family, to find fame and their own adventures.

29. Platinum Peacock Park

The most elegant park of the capital is decorated with beautifully polished iron statues of peacocks in majestic poses, serving as a gentle retreat to all who visit the Noble's Rest cemetery. The leader of the small team of gardeners of the park, Drefoi Trenader, is a reclusive middle-aged human who is lately very concerned about the thefts of the garden's rarest roses. He has alerted the Royal Swords on numerous occasions, but they have not been able to find the culprits and have started to neglect his calls for aid.

30. Noble's Rest

This enclosed section of the Platinum Peacock Park is a cemetery littered with mausoleums of small to large size. They each host smaller chambers above ground and many larger vaults underground where the blue-blooded ascendants of noble families rest eternally.

31. Zephran's Ruins

These are the demolished remains of a villa owned by a once-great noble house, now forgotten. The family villa was abolished by a mob of the city's civilians one night over a century ago. It is rumored to be haunted by the resonances of the cruelty beyond imagination that took place here.

32. The Crooning Willow

This immense tree with silvery bark and leaves has been standing in front of the Temple of Nature for centuries. Once every year, on the Holy Day of Renewal, the tree hums a tune in a soft and deep female voice.

33. King Vacrilos II Park

The park bears the name of the "Grandfather of the Realm", the second of the Azennar line, a beloved king from over two centuries ago with many wives, dozens of children, and scores of grandchildren. The park is known for its many food stalls and buskers and the occasional pickpockets that mingle among the distracted crowds.

34. Temple of Nature

The temple itself is a collection of small huts and a central open-air place of worship in the park dedicated to King Vacrilos II. The Caretakers of Life dedicate their service less to the city's citizens and more to its gardens and flora to compensate the land for what has been taken away from it. They are also frequent visitors to the Pantry district, where they facilitate the work of the local farmers with their magic. The most revered cleric of the faith is Hularis Asporal, a venerable human who is more fond of the company of animals or plants than two-legged beings.

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CAIELIN

35. PARK OF LONELY SPIRITS

This quiet park gives home to the Garden of the Sleepers, a collection of small crypts and mausoleums maintained by the families of influential residents. A mysterious half-elven wizard named Caielin sits on the same beautifully carved bench every day from late afternoon until sunset. No one knows where he goes and why he has this almost ritualistic habit. When asked, he does not respond. Some say he is mute, while others speculate that he is waiting for his lost love to return from her grave.

36. GARDEN OF THE SLEEPERS

This cemetery is the eternal resting place of those wealthier residents who are neither commoners nor nobles. This garden of graves and small crypts is part of the Park of Lonely Spirits, where families come to pay their respect to the deceased.

37. GOLDEN NECTAR

The most elegant inn in the capital for those with heavy purses and a reason to stay in the High District. The food is fabulous, the rooms are spacious, the staff is kind, and the proprietor Omric Laronzo is a charismatic, discreet, and observant person with secretly whispered connections to the Golden Masks. The lavishly furnished taproom of the inn features a small, delicately carved ivory gazebo that serves as a private stage for the inn's famous performer Dorian. The smug bard graduated from the College of Minstrels with a perfect score in all instruments and many recommendations from her masters and quickly became a celebrated artist in the city, especially after joining Omric's inn. Unfortunately, she was left with a cut ear after an overly enthusiastic fan tried to kill her on stage during a performance before turning the dagger on himself in a failed suicide attempt. Dorian bears a grudge towards the half-orc bouncer of the establishment, Trym "Fang" Cul'dok, for failing to stop the assailant in time. Trym is an elegant, no-nonsense, and soft-spoken individual with an imposing physique who gently escorts the overly drunk nobles out of the inn when their behavior becomes untenable. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

DORIAN

TRYM "FANG" CUL'DOK

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38. Goldtooth Villa

The home of the only goblin noble family in town is an eclectic and confusing structure, worn down and never fully renovated. Roofed extensions pop out at unexpected places and weird angles, balconies of strange shapes hang from the facades, and walls are painted in a myriad of once brilliant hues. Nowadays, the house is loud with the cheers of goblin children as the younger Goldtooth brother of Lord Kabok, Durr, has moved in with his extended family from Gonshar. Visitors are greeted by the family's faithful triplet butlers, secretaries, and couriers - Fletch, Wheez, and Maggle - a trio of stoic goblins in matching elegant outfits.

39. Gorso Villa

The Gorso Villa has stood uninhabited for decades because the strange Gorsos have relocated to their manor house in the town named after their family. The three-story villa in the capital has spacious balconies and flat roofs. The building and the garden are overgrown and neglected, with crumbling shutters over the large windows and glass doors. Some say they sensed a strange and unnatural coldness near the villa on more than one occasion. This phenomenon is caused by the brown mold infestation that has taken over the once majestic building. The brown mold originates from the house's cellar where a careless servant has left the door of the ice-room open. Over decades, the brown mold has proliferated over almost every inch of the inside of the house to the extent that its freezing aura can be felt even at the fences of its garden. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

40. Walhem's Boarding School for Young Masters

This elegant and spacious school for young nobles is overseen by a happy halfling who is often confused for a child by first-time visitors, to Walhem's great annoyance. Despite his child-like appearance, he is a rigorous yet empathetic teacher. He can speak most regional languages and enjoys tutoring the children in etiquette, reading, writing, art, history, and the liberal arts. Unfortunately, due to the highbrow opinions of the nobles, many of them hate him and are trying to see him removed from office to be replaced by a more pliant and also slightly dim-witted nobleman's eldest son.

Fletch

Wheez

Maggle

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41. Minaret of the Speaker

A 200-foot tall slim tower with magical properties is used to announce essential information or raise attention to important events in the city. The voice of the High Speakers from the top of the minaret can be heard even outside the city walls when announcements are made. The current leader of the High Speakers of the minaret is Wharrynn Theloanthas, a slightly over-stressed bard who can barely take the pressure that results from the importance and magnitude of his responsibilities. The commander of the small garrison stationed at the minaret is Andrue Nihols, a steadfast human minor noble Knight of the Crown with a braided ponytail, who takes pride in his late ancestor who protected the minaret during Malzdreziret's attack.

Wharrynn Theloanthas

Andrue Nihols

42. Silver Scale

This moneylending banking business is managed alone by Huran Myle, an experienced human ex-adventurer knight with magical aptitude. The vast treasure the calculating and cold knight has accumulated over his years serves as collateral for his business. Huran has many magical items with divining qualities that enable him to track down those who forget to pay their debts. He stores most of his assets in a special Bag of Holding, which he can summon at any time out of thin air.

43. Fists of Azennar

Built over six centuries ago by Master Arlen the Constructor, these massive towers house several levels of mundane and some magical siege engines to protect the city in times of war. These siege weapons can be easily repositioned with the aid of iron railings that allow them to rotate. The bastions can also extend massive iron poles over the river on both ends to block boats from accessing the High District. The bar is operated by over a dozen soldiers and takes time to position. Damage from multiple elements is still clearly visible on both towers, where they were ravaged by Malzdreziret the Scaled Impostor.

44. Lucky Leap

The locals of the North District frequent this relatively small tavern. It is usually loud with music and laughter, which Ricio Tane, the aging human owner, is always ready to motivate with an extra round of free drinks lest they should fade. Customers can make a jumping entry to the tavern and are rewarded with a free drink depending on the distance they can cover. See Escape to the Lucky Leap and A Leap into Fire sections in Chapter 2 for more details on this location and Ricio Tane. The Crown of the Oathbreaker Map Pack also contains an additional map showing the state of the location before the events of the adventure.

Ricio Tane

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45. Soap and Cream

The capital's only bath, sauna, and massage parlor is owned by a friendly blind female merfolk named Coral. Her story is sad and closely related to the Ronuls. The establishment features four open-air hot baths of different heat levels and mineral compositions within the beautifully decorated courtyard. Each pool has a different gargoyle statue with a steady flow of water erupting from its mouth.

46. Aunt Salibra's Natural Healing Concoctions

Aunt Salimbra crafts non-magical concoctions for sicknesses and to make wounds heal faster. Her knowledge comes from a long generation of witches who practiced their malign powers less and less with each generation. She still has a copy of an ancient cookbook called the *Recipes of Corruption* as part of her heritage, but she keeps it locked away and never dares to look into it. However, her husband, Old Troumbald, found it a few years ago and is practicing a very special recipe, which he secretly tests on the homeless of the city at the Temple of Life. Some strange occurrences have already raised the attention of the acolytes. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

47. Purple Book Worm

Ransdir Falconer, a middle-aged optimist, and tiefling with purplish skin tone, collects, buys, and sells books in his cozy little bookshop. One can find many types of books, from Draylish love novellas to encyclopedias, on his tightly packed and well-organized shelves. Ransdir also serves tea to anyone who cares to stay a bit to read in one of his two comfy armchairs.

48. Imprints of the Half Goat

There are two deep hoof-shaped indentations of giant size in the rocks near the sea cliffs. Everyone in the city has their own theory of why the other imprints of the other two hoofs of the goat are missing. In reality, these are hoofprints left by King Dasmag, who a thousand years ago fought a battle on this cliff against a wizard who tried to enclose him in the rocks. The satyr lord could grow to giant size, which helped him escape the wizard's spell.

49. Loud and Lusty

This brothel is a dirty and loud venue where the servers wear almost no clothing, drawing those who seek the pleasures of the flesh like bugs to a lantern. The madame, Yhlsaby, is a charming and outgoing young matron adept at dismissing sensitive questions about guests who have unfortunately fallen to their deaths from the balconies overseeing the cliffs by the sea. In reality, she is the lamia right hand of Samsadur, the rakshasa master of the Golden Masks. The place acts as a base of operations for the criminal organization and has many secret and hidden entrances and rooms. Yhlsaby's confidant is a charismatic but lewd tiefling named Thymo, who is responsible for hosting the exclusive guests of the establishment.

Yhlsaby

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50. Zhankar Plaza

Few recall the tales about Zhankar, the magnificent entertainer and his performers who lived during the Wyltammer Period and held amazing shows at this plaza. Under his huge colorful self-folding tents, Zhankar entertained large crowds every night for a week at the start of every season of the year. His performances of grand illusions ended abruptly and no one knows why.

BLIMBO

51. Golden Touch Gent's Barbershop

Dallius "Finebeard" Skrazdillar, a young human with an extravagant style, has opened his shop just lately, already outperforming his competitors with his marvelous skills. Nobles and those who can afford a silver piece for a masterful cut flock to Dallius, making it hard to secure an appointment with him.

52. Temple of Light and Darkness

This small island houses a sizable lighthouse that also serves as the Temple of Light and Darkness. The massive tower's ground floor functions as a communal area, while the higher-level rooms are occupied by the priests of the temple. Father Kalozark Solamyr, an aging tiefling with bright yellow-colored skin, maintains the huge lantern-like apparatus that focuses the bluish light of the magical light spells under the mirrors that can be seen from miles. His most beloved acolyte is Xeno, a young human with prodigious clerical abilities. The temple was rebuilt on the remains of the demolished Eternal Torch, a holy site originally erected by the Order of the Eternal Light almost a thousand years ago.

53. Cheeky Mermaid Inn

This seaside inn is visited mainly by those who come for a short visit to the seaside. The inn's common room is a huge ballroom with a large bar and many tables to accommodate even the full crews of several ships at once. A curious regular is Blimbo, a witty halfling sailor with a fake eyepatch who poses as a ship captain for hire. No one has ever hired Blimbo, and the first time it would happen, to Blimbo's surprise, it would put him in a difficult situation.

54. Royal Docks

ARIOS

These bustling docks are open to any ship that pays the daily docking fees. Numerous sailors, both local river ships and many from the neighboring Drayl City-States, frequent this location, but sometimes ships from exotic far-away regions also dock here to sell their wares at the mouth of the River Nenock. The local Royal Swords are always on the lookout for pirate ships that would try to dock and masquerade as merchant vessels. Krestanyr Wint, the harbormaster of the docks, is a seasoned mariner and a captain of the Royal Harpoons. A regular face at the port is Arios, the waterling merchant-wizard who manages trade between the isles of Xanthros and the mainland with his small fleet of merchant ships.

55. Grankar's Chains

Enormous chains hold up this double-towered narrow bridge. It was built by King Grankar the Brash, who expanded the city beyond the Old Wall during the Melkar

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Dynasty over five centuries ago. Both bridgeheads on both sides of the river feature large sitting lions with open maws. Some say that the sculptor who created these lions committed suicide as the residents ridiculed him for forgetting to sculpt tongues for the beasts.

56. Royal Shipyard

The royal shipyards are reserved for the Royal Armada and the numerous craftsmen, sailors, and clerks who work here. The largest battleship of the navy, the *Wild Whale* has spent the past decade in the drydocks of the shipyard as is only lowered to water once a year for servicing or in times of war.

57. Seafarm Fishmarket

One can smell the fish market from several streets away. Everything the sea has to offer is on display here. Giant frog legs, a highly sought-after delicacy, are brought in by North Bay's lizardfolk to everyone's delight in the city.

Mur Seph

58. The Buried Tower

Only the pointy rooftop of an iron-wrought tower protrudes from an indestructible rocky surface, without any way in. It has no doors or windows and bears no signs of significance. No one knows how it got there, why it is buried deep into the rock, or how to enter it. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

Garin Se'eray

59. Dungeon of Tears

The dungeons of the realm hold prisoners both mundane and magical. Over two dozen soldiers and a captain are present at all times, with numerous servants attending to their needs and taking care of the prisoners. The most famous prisoner of the institution is a crazed-looking middle-aged man called Terin Merduz, who has been accused of a series of murders in the Rose Garden years ago. Terin was actually possessed by the ghost of a Draylish noble from Brinecoast who was lured to the garden with promises of love and then betrayed by his rivals centuries ago. His restless soul returns every eighty years to take revenge on the capital's citizens.

60. Halls of the Lawgiver

The Halls of the Lawgiver is the high court of the Kingdom and the base of the Red Cloak Lawgivers. The majestic building has austere towers with wide bases that thin out as they rise, strikingly resembling a fort rather than a typical building. Huge statues of Red Cloaks and their Eye and Sword symbols decorate the sides of the gate. The most commonly encountered individual at the front desk is the insomniac Mur Seph, a disheveled human. He runs a small team of scribes to manage the public office, information, and contacts. One of the most outstanding figures at the Halls is the kennel master Garin Se'eray, a looming half-giant over eight feet tall, who breeds large dogs for the Red Cloak Lawgivers for use in their pursuits and tracking. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

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61. Royal Warehouses

A complex of several large warehouses where everything from resources to documents, and confiscated contraband is stored. These huge storages are kept under close surveillance by the Royal Swords, and access to any of them is granted only with an official letter of authorization.

62. King's Forge

The royal smithy is where everything from metalware to gears of war is crafted when the crown requires it. The official coins of the realm are also minted here. The smithy is known for its towering chimneys and hallways painted orange by the light of the dwarven' forges. It is a well-guarded location with many soldiers stationed around the premises. The most imposing figure in the swarm of crafters and workers is Somrin "Fernidad" Ironhammer, an imposing giant of a dwarf who is over eight feet tall. Somrin is a barbarian shaman from the edges of the Mountainfalls, a strange and abandoned land of endless mountain peaks, who crafts the most reliable weapons. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

Somrin "Fernidad" Ironhammer

63. House of the Soldier

These are the barracks of the Royal Army, the soldiers of Aglarion. It comprises a walled compound of six long, two-story buildings and a simple large service building of bricks with a slight greenish hue. The single gate is always well-guarded, and the location is usually clamorous with the sounds of physical training and shouting. A regular face at the gate is Jacob Hammersmyth, a lazy and cynical old warrior who worked his way into a position of stamping entry and release documents. He seems like a weak-willed fellow who could easily be fooled, but in reality, he is a fiercely loyal and meticulously observant servant of the crown.

Jacob Hammersmyth

64. Karramosa Villa

This imposing villa is surrounded by beautiful gardens that speak of wealth. The gratuitously decorated structure is striking amidst its surroundings, including beautiful stables and carriage sheds. The stone pillars of the main gate are decorated with small semi-precious stones that are deeply embedded. However, some of them have been skillfully picked before the gate guards could prevent the thefts. As people call it, the

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Starry Gate flickers in the night as the light of the moon shines upon it. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

65. Rose Garden Park

Bordered by beautiful villas, this park is home to many varieties of roses of all colors and sizes, making it a favorite place for romantic getaways. A few years back, a serial killer was hunting for couples in the park, leaving them in macabre displays. Red Cloak Lawgivers locked a suspect in the Dungeon of Tears, even though he was not the real killer. Some still fear entering the park after dark, and there are always two Royal Swords on patrol.

66. Tomb of the First King

Within this gated building in the Royal Court is the resting place of King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar I. It is a ten feet high unworked block of granite onto which his friend and ally, Master Arlen the Constructor, molded the king's perfect likeness with the use of magic. Engraved on the surface of the imposing rock is a single line that says, "Order is our solid foundation." The letters are hard to make out, as it is a custom to touch the engraving for good luck so the stone has smoothed out over hundreds of years from the hands of countless visitors.

67. Bastion of the Knights

This large building in the Royal Court accommodates the Knights of the Crown and serves as their living quarters and training halls. A broad stairway leads to an ornate stone gate that encloses a somewhat dimly lit interior with narrow corridors and small cells. A fencing hall and a chapel are located on the ground floor, while the dining hall and private cells are on the following two levels of the building. Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder spends most of his time with his knights at this location rather than at his ancestral villa in the High District.

68. Royal Court

The Royal Court is located on a large walled island that incorporates the Royal Palace, Bastion of the Knights, and Tomb of the First King. The Palace includes such notable areas as the Royal Quarters, Mausoleum, Throne Room, Guest Quarters, and the Royal Treasury. It is a closely guarded complex where the royal family and its servants, guards, assistants, and advisors live their daily lives under the protective watch of the Knights of the Crown. See Triplets of Malice section in Chapter 3 for a detailed description of the Royal Palace. The Crown of the Oathbreaker Map Pack also contains an additional map showing the state of the location before the events of the adventure.

69. King's Bridge

This slim, walled, and roofed bridge, designed and built using magic by Master Arlen, allows only one carriage to cross at a single time. The bridge walls are so narrow that one can't even open the doors of a carriage in the passage, which is also dotted with arrow slits running on both sides. It is heavily guarded at all times.

70. Queen's Bridge

This narrow bridge is almost identical to the King's Bridge, with the addition of magically movable large stone blocks at its center that can block passage on the bridge if needed.

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71. WYLTAMMER VILLA

The ancient and continuously renovated villa of the Wyltammer family displays the elegance and subtlety of elven designs. Intricate ornaments extrude from seemingly natural surfaces as if the building was grown organically rather than built. Its large garden and the greenhouse that occupies its center are perfectly kept. The glass greenhouse features exotic flowers and some rare birds, harmless insects, and small rodents, which are usually found near elven settlements. The family's assistant, Xela Stormfane, is a kind and warmhearted chubby human lady secretly writing a lengthy poetic novel about angels in love with mortals. Xela graduated from the College of Minstrels and has absolutely no idea about the secrets of her masters but knows a lot about their everyday activities and assets. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

XELA STORMFANE

72. TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE

A once majestic, now neglected temple that serves as a public library is currently run by Father Golvin, a young half-blue dragon cleric of the Wise One from the Isles of Xantharos. The young cleric took over duties at the temple after the disappearance of his tutor, Father Lestor, the former head priest. Books are available for reading at the temple and sold at almost symbolic prices.

73. DOMIREN VILLA

The Domiren family villa is a once majestic building now in a state of utter neglect. The iron-wrought front gates and fences are overgrown, as are its gardens. The previously magnificent and highly fashionable topiary bushes have become unrecognizable, twisted forms of themselves. The few servants who can bear the family only remain in their service because of the lavish payment. As a result, visitors are rare and also of the shady type most of the time.

74. THE NAPPING GIANT

This colossal weather-worn statue from ancient times depicts the reclining form of a green-skinned giant or a humanoid of giant size. No one is sure what form the statue depicts. It has an unidentifiable glyph on its forehead. The findings of an earlier excavation confirm that the statue has the remains of wings on its back that were broken off ages ago using chisels. This find has led historians to conclude that the statue was raised in honor of the planetar Morkiel over two thousand years ago and then toppled and dewinged by Sarath and her followers. The site is roped off from the streets, and no one is allowed to enter except for the members of the Chamber of Royal Historians. Andre, a serious-looking tattooed half-orc soldier, is permanently stationed at the site to ensure no one enters.

ANDRE

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75. House of Clenched Fists

Master Aurello teaches self-defense techniques to the youngsters of the South District for free. He has a few pupils who have become trained fighting monks over the years and live at their master's house. The school is a nicely renovated two-story building with a small courtyard at its center.

76. Arno's Ancient Tomes

A small building with a few smaller windows is the home and store of Arno Hawkspear, a nerdy and nervous human librarian who collects rare and old tomes he offers for sale at reasonable prices. Some of his books date back to the times of the Order of the Eternal Light, considered banned by the monarchies that followed the era.

77. Hall of Temerity

This training hall for swordsmen is run by Temerity, an optimistic and always cheerful tiefling paladin of the god of Competence, the Efficient Master, with entirely black eyes. Temerity takes only up to four pupils at a time, whom he trains individually during regular daily sessions.

78. The Furlough

This canteen is frequented mostly by Royal Swords in their free time. The kitchen is managed by Reznek Syngris, a half-elven chef who always seems rushed and behind orders, except when in the kitchen, which is a place of organized calm. The proprietor is always fidgeting and leaves serving to his three sons.

79. The Curious Calligrapher

Kapushek Borontyr is a halfling scribe who creates beautifully illustrated and illuminated letters, cards, and even complete copies of books. Only a few know that the scribe is also willing to create near perfect forgeries if the payment is large enough.

80. Shrine of the Shining Light

This hidden shrine is visited by only a trusted handful of followers of the disdained cult of the Order of the Eternal Light. It is run by the zealous elderly dwarven priest Drunnag Steelarm and his young human acolyte Ozian, who follow the ancient radical beliefs of the Order. The temple itself is within a normal-looking, narrow residential two-story house with a secret entrance from a back alley. Father Drunnag is a dwarf retiree with a human stepson, and the two usually try to keep to themselves in their secret worship.

Reznek Syngris

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81. Giant's Boots Tavern

The entrance of this sturdy building is flanked by the actual iron boots of a fire giant. The establishment's inside is also decorated with the weapons and armor of the same fire giant, supposedly killed by the owner, Zor Nafalios, an ex-mercenary from overseas who turned the giant's enormous shield into a table in the center of the tavern. Sitting next to it is a privilege for any guest, and empty seats are rare. Many soldiers and merchants drink here, and the tavern is usually loud with physical contests, cheers, and the occasional fistfight every night. With a permanent seat at the shield, the meanest looking guest is the mercenary Yeetarr, a fully armed hulking gnoll with a vicious set of metal teeth. Yeetarr is a seeker of justice despite his deadly looks and is interested only in quests involving dangerous situations and righting wrongs.

82. Ironweaver's Market

The "Metal Market," as the locals call it, is maintained for those who sell used or mint condition household metalware, weapons, or armor. The air is constantly filled with sounds of clanking and the scraping of metal against metal, as well as the sounds of haggling and deals being struck.

83. Black Flag Mercenary Company

This small, old building is neglected both from the outside and the inside. The top level functions as the small home of Trazz the Cruel, who runs the mercenary company. The storefront is decorated with weapons, shields, and the occasional trophy of some wild beasts and smaller monsters. The courtyard is a small training ground where Trazz demands his employees to train daily. Trazz keeps an eye on his favorite mercenary, Lendra Thread, a female no-nonsense, confident airling who is always ready for a challenge to a duel. Lendra's fiercest competition within the mercenary company, usually sent on separate missions by Trazz, is Tempest Umbermoor, a tiefling pact of the blade warlock who leads the team assigned him with no regard for its safety. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

Trazz the Cruel

Lendra Thread

Tempest Umbermoor

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84. The King's Pride

The extensive stables of the King's Pride are where horses in the crown's service are kept. All of the horses at the stable were bred and brought in from the Royal Stud Farm from outside Onadbyr.

85. Odds and Ends Pawnshop

This ramshackle pawn shop is the front of the local smuggling activity of the Golden Masks. Some might even find their own goods in the store if they have been robbed lately. There is always a personal recommendation of "rare" goods to those the owner, a rude dwarf named Gywyn Talabosh, deems worthy of his time. He can procure many things one would not expect to be available in a pawn shop.

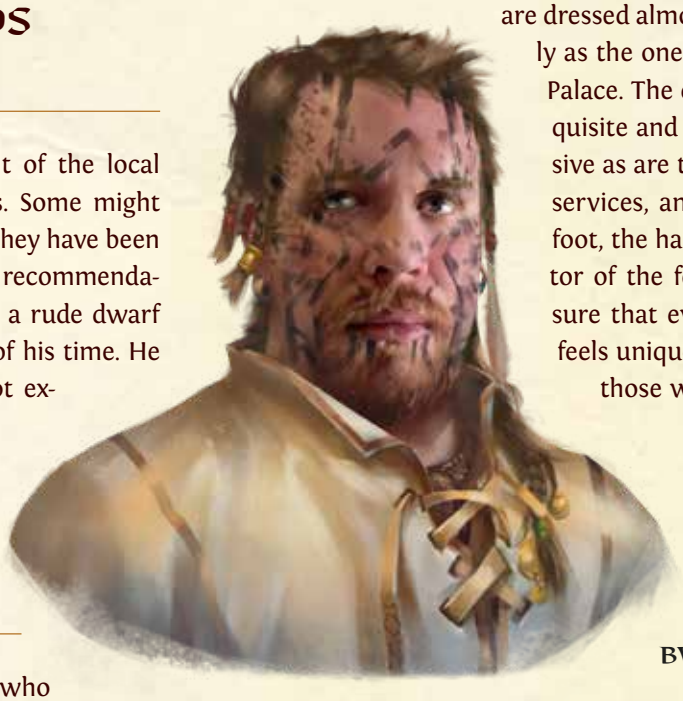
86. Grazilda's Apothecary

Markya Marosta is a young herbalist who smiles a lot as she runs her late grandmother's business with great skill. She dropped out of the College of Minstrels to assist her granny and became a strong devotee of the Redeemer. Being able to cast lower-level curative magics, she also distills magical potions with limited availability. In her service are Dr. Samael Volkov, a human physician and studious necromancer with a blunt attitude who doesn't care much for anesthetics, and Bweltoe, the half-giant ex-barbarian delivery man from Vordan who is secretly in love with the musically gifted cleric.

Markya Marosta

87. Angels' Choir Festhall

This large elegant, domed building is home to most of the birthdays and weddings of those who can pay the hefty price for renting the establishment. Its large marble central hall is lavishly furnished and the servants are dressed almost as elegantly as the ones in the Royal Palace. The catering is exquisite and highly expensive as are the rest of the services, and Raun Surefoot, the halfling proprietor of the festhall makes sure that every occasion feels uniquely special for those who attend.



Bweltoe

Dr. Samael Volkov

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88. Ronul Villa

The house of the infamous Ronul family is one with lots of balconies and open spaces akin to the helm of a ship. It is said that Almerio Ronul built his house around the mast of his original flagship, and that part of the house is underwater, catering to the few merfolk in the family. Lord Dyzag Ronul, the family's patriarch, seldom visits since he is kept busy overseeing the pearl fishing in the north bay in Ronul's end. His only son, Premil Ronul, keeps the house in order and stays here most of the time. The young noble is secretly in love with Odryk Nangrath, the older son of House Nangrath. From time to time, gossip goes around the black markets and rogues of the city that Almerio Ronul had hidden his famed cache of treasure somewhere in the city, and that the clues about its location are hidden inside the house. Lord Dyzag Ronul would tell you that this was only a bad joke that his grandfather made and regretted immediately. Since then, the Ronul family had to pay fortunes to protect the house from burglars and sometimes adventurers who believe the tale.

89. Monder Villa

The current Crownwarden's villa is a simple yet robust structure. His family, which has always trained its youngest members to become part of the knighthood, lives a sheltered, simple, yet generous and socially sensitive life. Lord Cyne Monder has no heirs and just a few housekeepers to manage the villa, whose wide strong gates are always open for those in need. See The Couatl Feather - The Delivery section in Chapter 1 of the adventure.

90. Royal Gardens

These beautifully kept gardens are open to the public but are always closely monitored by the Caretakers of Life and soldiers stationed here. The park was built over the ruins of the Cathedral of the Sun, which was razed during the rebellion against the theocracy of the Order of the Eternal Light. Gorgeous plantlife from distant lands is cultivated here, while the beautiful small meadows are open for picnics, and little hidden retreats with benches offer secluded havens for introspection. There is also a perfect view over the Royal Palace from hanging balconies by the Old Wall.

91. Ruins of the Cathedral of the Sun

The place of worship of the Shining Light, raised more than nine hundred years ago during the theocracy of the Order of the Eternal Light, stands long abandoned. The vaguely recognizable structure of the ruin speaks of the imposing architecture it once displayed. The few waist-high walls that remain are only fragments of the original architecture, which once spread all over the western half of the southern section of the High District from the Angel's Choir to the Gentlemen's Refuge. There is a royal decree in effect, forbidding any excavations in the ruins, which have been maintained in their original forms as a memento of the ancient history of the realm.

92. Weeping Kobold Fountain

The monument dominating the area opposite the Eyrie of the Fabled was erected to commemorate Skerg Nethercrest, renowned Court Jester and confidante of Queen Linolu the Peaceful. The statue depicts a weeping kobold dressed in a jester's robe. The statue is repainted in bright colors every year. The lost notes of the song Skerg sang to the queen and which secured his role at the court have been sought after by many of the bards of the realm, but none have yet been able to find them.

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93. Gentlemen's Refuge

Cassius the Helpful

More of a gentleman's club than a drinking establishment, this tavern features everything from games to comfortable sofas and expensive drinks to accommodate the male elite of the capital. Access is granted only to those invited by a member and upon payment of the steep annual membership fee of the establishment.

94. Eyrie of the Fabled

The Eyrie of the Fabled is a theater where the nobility and wealthy can meet to enjoy high-quality entertainment and show off their social status. It is a small yet richly decorated venue built to fulfill every need of visitors from high society. The theater's auditorium and stage area is covered with darkwood, making it completely soundproof. See Eyrie of the Fabled location in Chapter 3 for a more detailed description.

Schofire the Vengeful

Chancebdunn

95. The Deep Warrens

Formed out of an abandoned and partially collapsed segment of the sewers, this tavern is run by a group of ex-convicts who turned away from a life of crime. One is Schofire the Vengeful, a friendly ex-pirate from Ronul's End. The next of the gang is Chancebdunn, a satyr rogue who poses as a tiefling and is a professional card player. The third member of the crew is Brak, an arrogant lizardfolk prize hunter, who regretfully reminisces of days before when he drowned wizards in the Ulden Swamps. They take care not to ruin their reputation as hard-working men in the eyes of the Red Cloaks. The deepest domed cellar of the tavern hides the remains of an ancient stone door with a sun symbol on it. The massive stone block is jammed beyond repair under a dilapidated lintel that no one has dared to force open. Beyond the door is a small room where the resistance of slaves and followers of the Shining Light gathered in secret during the reign of the Dark Star. A crumbling skeleton lies in one of the corners, still holding onto a holy symbol in one hand and with the other to a magical spear of solid adamantine that pierced through his body and the stone floor below it. A regular at the tavern, Cassius the Helpful, is a human with a devilish bloodline and a flamboyant outfit who sells information to those who pay the right price. The tavern staff is not fond of his private business here but look away for now. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

Brak

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96. Alley of Menace

This alley by the Old Wall is believed to be cursed. Residents avoid it, and those who live next to it urge others to stay away. At any time, day or night, accidents happen to those who enter this relatively simple, dirty, narrow street section that runs between the back walls of several residential buildings. The markings on the side of the Old Wall in this alley are haunted by the souls of the slaves who built it. Their sorrow and agony emanate through their ancient sigils. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

97. Shrine of the Unforgiving

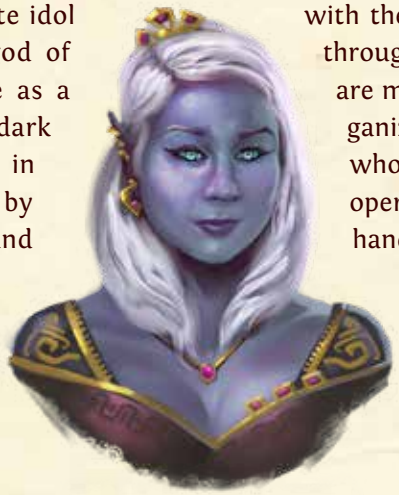
This secret shrine is at the end of a sewer tunnel below the city's streets. A composite idol that features the god of death, the god of Strength, and the god of Competence as a three-headed figure stands in a small dark alcove. The statue is usually covered in blood and surrounded by sacrifices left by those who have learned of the place and seek revenge, harbor hate or murderous thoughts, or are under extreme traumatic pressure which they hope to remedy by praying at this isolated shrine. No one knows who or if anyone at all oversees the unholy shrine, but dark candles burn at all times at the feet of the idol.

98. King Boldizzar Azennar's Statue

Standing on a granite pedestal, this giant iron statue rises above Dragon Plaza and depicts the late king in the moment of his victory against the invading Vordani armies.

99. Queen's Grace Orphanage

This large red brick building with elaborate ironwork is a highly regarded school and residence for young female orphans. Because of royal patronage, conditions in the orphanage are better than in most homes. The girls are raised very rigidly but in a noble demeanor and are trained by the calculating drow headmistress Nyx Malari in all the trades and duties of a lady who is to become a master of a wealthy household. The orphans are well regarded as suitable matches for younger sons of the well-to-do or even for the nobility on rare occasions. The orphans don't have dowries, estates, or family alliances, but they prepared on posture, courtly dances, running a household, raising children, and many financial tasks. Lady Nyx utilizes the contacts these married girls represent and keeps close contact with them after they leave the orphanage through frequent visits. Some select girls are members of the Ringmaidens, an organization of underground operatives whom Nyx Malari leads in clandestine operations. The headmistress's right hand and lead agent is Silent Shadow, a curious catfolk rogue with extraordinary burglary skills. The catfolk has proven able to retrieve anything at the Ringmaiden's request.



Nyx Malari

Silent Shadow

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100. Blackhorn

Owned by the Blackhorn family for generations, this is one of the oldest taverns in the Onadbyr. The family brews and sells its signature mead that is famous all over the kingdom. The Blackhorns have great pride in the recipe and are in a fierce competition with the monks of the Spirited Leaf Abbey. The tavern is frequented mainly by locals from the Sword and South Districts.

101. Temple of Strength

A large, sturdy, and featureless building with small windows dominates the side of the Long Road. Its massive double doors open into a vast training ground, an atrium decorated with weapons and large marble statues of the church's most famous muscular male and female priests. The most charismatic and approachable priest of the clergy is Casimer, an ambitious half-elf with a well-built physique who capitalizes his knowledge of the body not only in training and keeping a healthy lifestyle but also when using his healing magic.

Casimer
the Pure

102. Meat Market

The butcher's market sells all types of meat, live domesticated and wild animals, and sometimes even the remains or live specimens of fantastic beasts brought in by monster hunters.

103. The Dog Pit

The Dog Pit is an arena of sophisticated duels to the first blood during the day and illegal blood sports without any rules at night, where anyone can fight and win some money if they are victorious. The place is overseen by a psychopathic halfling named Joffer Pebblefoot, who loves the sight of blood and gore even more than the gold he makes on his gruesome night business. During the night, the arena seems to be closed, and only those invited can attend the matches, which are kept under wrap by magical silence effects. So far, the Red Cloaks have not discovered the night-time business. The real brains of the operation is Joffer's silent partner Ruali Ousse-araheal, a reserved crafty elven rogue with sudden blazes of anger against her rivals.

Ruali
Ousse-araheal

104. Varrik the Rat Catcher

Varrik the Weary, a human druid, poses as a drow with the alias Enimbros in remembrance of his long-lost drow love. He lives on the fringes of society in the Shanties and makes a living by providing pest and rodent control services to anyone who knows about him. He keeps a dozen ferrets in his shabby hovel, which reeks of animal musk and filth.

Varrik the Weary

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105. MAGGOT'S END

This building is home to many miserable wretches who live on drugs and have already forgotten what real life is. Anyone can enter and stay indefinitely if they can find a small spot where they can collapse. The house and its residents are not even worth robbing as they are poor, sick, and without any value to anyone. The only person taking care of the destitute addicts is Dromier Cutter, a middle-aged priest of the Redeemer who appears to be in his fifties. Dromier's mean demeanor and harsh temperament hides a caring soul who preaches to the homeless of Maggot's End about changing their ways before distributing alms to them.

DROMIER CUTTER

106. FIERY HOOVES

The little shop is tucked into the cramped space of the city's outskirts, close to Mule Gate. Its entrance is marked by a metal cut-out sign depicting a rider and a horse with flaming hooves. The shop's interior is designed to block the view of the workbench for a good reason. The shop is known by its customers for its high-quality harnesses, saddles, leather gear, and other equipment, which seem to be highly durable but at the same time light in weight. Rumor has it that the saddler, Mordio Delons keeps a little dragon-like creature in his workshop to harden the materials. The truth is that Mordio is the head of the Children of the Coven, malicious servitors of the Matrons of Malice. He received an imp servant as payment for his devotion, and besides for spying, he also uses the tiny fiend to work for him on tasks that require great precision.

MORDIO DELONS

107. GREEN-EYED NYMPH

Only green-eyed servers work at this large festhall facing the Dragon Plaza. The hall features regular group dances for locals and is frequented by many of the students of the College of Minstrels, who always make sure to keep the guests and themselves entertained at all times of the day.

108. TEMPLE OF MAGIC

Marvelous colorful, sparking columns of heatless fire dominate the entrance of this temple, which is rich in detail. Its large rose glass windows seem to shift as shapes form and disappear in them slowly. The inside of the building features magical enchantments and imagery, which always awes visitors and faithful alike. The priests of the House of the Wondermaker welcome all who are fascinated by their god's power and those who wish to hire their magical services. These services are usually provided by Wilm the Virtuous, an aged, stolid hu-

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man priest who is all too pragmatic about the magical wonders he sells. The highest-ranking cleric of the temple is a venerable human named Polodrin of Gynleah, a foreigner from the Drayl City-States, who was invited by King Waldrann decades ago to take the Pulpit of Wonders. His second in command is Father Beau Semias, who pretends to be a charismatic pastor but, behind his mask of deception, is a scheming devotee of the Matrons of Malice. Father Beau vies for power, and the midnight hags easily corrupted him by offering magical powers that he could use to overthrow Father Polodrin. With his newfound warlock powers, the vile priest already has a plan in motion and regularly reports to Mordio Delons, the cult's leader. See Temple of Magic section in Chapter 6 of the adventure.

Beau Semias

109. Basket of Plenty

The primary food market of the capital is a vast sea of colors and sounds filled with an ever-flowing mass of people and a full range of enticing aromas. One can buy almost any type of food, even from far-off exotic lands, except for meat, which is only available at the Meat Market. Long rows of tiny curtained stalls, most with only seats for two customers, line the sides of the market where one can find any type of street food at all hours of the day.

110. Ratcatcher Inn

The Ratcatcher is the worst place to stay at Onadbyr but also the cheapest. The proprietor, Gibras the Meek, is a silent introvert with dark sunken eyes and an air of eerie strangeness about his person. The loudest regulars at the place are always Fingle Jewelstomper, a bearded chubby gnome rogue with wizardly skills who asks way too many questions, and his friend Keeg, a charismatic, carefree con-artist and steady drinker who claims to be an ex-pirate captain of the west.

Fingle Jewelstomper

Keeg, Pirate Captain of the West

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111. Dragon Plaza

Formerly known as the Plaza of the People, this enormous empty plaza is dominated by the bronze statue of King Daerios Azennar, the current king's father. He defeated and chased away Malzdreziret the Scaled Impostor. The statue depicts the heroic king as he wounds the massive dragon with the Falcon Blade.

112. Music of the Spheres

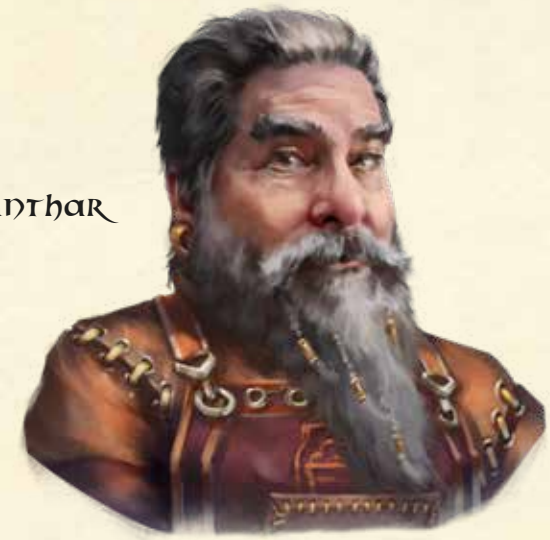
The venerable gnome instrument maker Master Xagim Doubletoe undoubtedly has the most refined ears and most skilled hands in the capital. Most of the students and maestros of the College of Minstrels have their instruments made and repaired by him. Even though he has slowly gone deaf, he can still tune any instrument perfectly by feeling its vibrations.

113. The Bottomless Well

This ancient, crumbling well looks like any other old neglected well, except for the fact that no one has ever been able to reach its bottom. Lanterns on ropes of extreme length have been lowered into it until the light just slowly faded away. The brave who have tried to climb or even fly down with magic either gave up or never returned. Inside there's a long stretch of ladders and handholds fabricated together and added continuously by those who dared to explore, but at one point, it just stops, marking the depth where the last brave explorer gave up the descent. Legends say that a few times in the past, the corpses of strange creatures, possibly fey, have mysteriously fallen out of the well.

114. Mug and Bottle

A goodhearted middle-aged dwarf named Guunthar runs this fine brewery. Unfortunately, Guunthar has a sad history with a red dragon. Guunthar was a highly skilled armorsmith and adventurer back in the days before briefly meeting Arzatraxos, the red dragon in Drayl, then promptly changing his profession and life goals. He has a rotund cat named Pudge and a pet skunk that believes itself to be a cat, named Stinky.



Guunthar

115. Roundbread

The Roundbread bakery is an institution by itself. Long lines of hungry shoppers wait for their turn in front of its doors every morning. People would do anything for Gallad, the stern-looking but kind airling master baker, who is a renowned and respected pillar of the community.

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116. Grinning Goblin

Owned and operated by the goblins of the Goldtooth noble house, this tavern is always noisy with shouting and raucous laughter. Constantly guarded by the disciplined and courteous hobgoblin house guards, the locals consider the inn as a safe place to get drunk. One of the loudest guests is Breesy Alebeard, a smuggler with a purple glass eye and a jade tooth, who is always ready to bet large in a game of cards.

Breesy Alebeard

117. Old Pharion's Remedies

Jamos Pharion is the sweetest old man, always talkative, and very helpful, especially when offering his herbal remedies primarily to other elderly residents. He also sells several plant-based poisons from his small shop to those who know his secret signal. Jamos' most valued treasure is an ancient adamantine mace that once belonged to one of the fallen devas during the reign of the Dark Star.

118. Aunty Alania's Sewing Shop

Aunty Alania was the wife of a wealthy merchant who died decades ago. She has spent her entire life sewing since she was a child and she makes the most beautiful and fashionable dresses worn by the nobility and elite of the city.

119. Sylvan Striker Bows of Elven Quality

Twen Foebane came to the city from an elven conclave in Drayl to forget a tragic romantic affair. He has watched the city grow for over a century now and established a name for himself as one of the capital's most skilled craftsmen. Twen is always accompanied by his animal companion, a loyal dog named Kylo.

Twen Foebane

120. Galnyr, Master Armorer

Galnyr was a member of a Vordani tribe until he realized that his armor-crafting skills are valued much more in Aglarion and the capital of Onadbyr. The seasoned blacksmith has created many masterpieces worn with pride by their owners.

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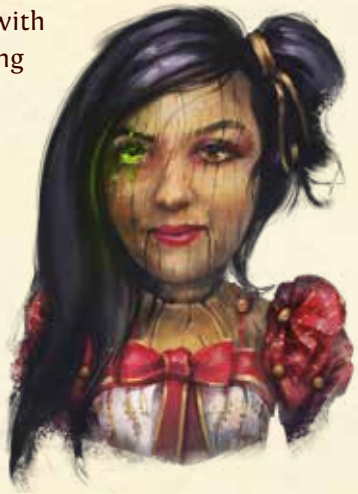
121. FIGURINES OF WONDER

Vilter Kirtan, a middle-aged human maker of fine dolls and puppets, creates wonderful toys and dolls of various sizes to the delight of young and old alike. The puppet maker lost his wife and daughter, Dorotia, to a long and severe illness a few years ago and was soon confronted by the Matrons of Malice in his dreams. He was told that if he recreated Dorotia as a puppet, it would gain sentience and eternal life so he could love her forever. The heartbroken master crafter accepted the offer without hesitation and soon finished the doll. It was as promised, and during the next night, the doll came to life and has been by Vilter's side ever since. The puppet maker hides the secret of his live puppet from everyone, but it is always with him in the shop during the day, falling prone and acting lifeless if anyone enters. The puppet was initially kind and loving, but it grows viler over time as her haglike personality starts to surface, changing her appearance bit by bit.

DOROTIA



122. ZURAFKIRA'S FINE FOOTWEAR

This small cordwainer's workshop is the shop and home of Zurafkira Shoemaker, a single woman of great skill and a mysterious connection to the Shadowrealm. Zurafkira has a twin sister born to the Shadowrealm when their mother gave life to them and died in the process. The Shadowrealm-born Zurafkira is a skillful survivor who manages on her own within the desolate world of shadows. At the same time, the Material Plane Zurafkira became a skillful cobbler who always tried to help her slightly bitter sister with information and advice. The two sisters can see and communicate telepathically with each other when they both look into a mirror. The sisters became informants, and direct proteges of Samsadur after the leader of the Golden Masks found out about their secret. The girls enjoy the company of the crime lord, the excitement he brings to their lives with his missions of reconnaissance, and the gold pieces he pays them.

ZURAFKIRA SHOEMAKER

123. TEMPLE OF LIFE

The Temple of the Redeemer is a sprawling low-ceilinged building with large communal areas and a central pulpit. The temple can accommodate hundreds of people, and many clerics attend the hungry, wounded, sick, and destitute. Anyone can stay at the temple for free for an indefinite time, provided they assist in the daily labors of the acolyte clerics. The ranking cleric of the faith is Ry Kaly, a low-level priest who does his best to attend the

OTMER HONORMAIL

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most severe cases. The most dedicated and active member of the clergy is Otmer Honormail, an unarmored, unarmed dwarven paladin who tends to every need of the disenfranchised in his simple dirty robes. See the Introductory Adventures section for an encounter at the location.

124. Knight's Pride

This large weapon and armor smithy is run by a massive hobgoblin named Bruukattyr the Iron Grip, who served in the Royal Army for years. He received an honorable discharge after losing his left hand in a battle against a mob of sahuagin that attacked Ronul's End over two decades ago. As a result, he constructed a bulky iron left arm prosthesis for himself that has a tremendous grip but is too bulky to be used for anything else but swinging a hammer.

125. Nine Arches

This flat bridge is built upon nine stone arches. The bridge was destroyed by Malzdreziret the Scaled Impostor, before being rebuilt only a decade ago by King Waldrann. Newlywed couples often take rowboats and navigate to one of the many bridge pillars to carve their names there.

126. Diamondback Trout

This cozy tavern by the riverside features its own small docks and canopied terraces over the river. The owner, Okamirou Haristan, is a knowledgeable man from a distant land to the east and a long-time friend of King Waldrann.

127. Nulobor's Fine Locks

Nulobor, the gnome, is an introvert who does nothing besides making and repairing locks and eating his favorite lemon pie strictly at sundown in his favorite chair overlooking his small fireplace. He keeps adding drops of the essential oils he buys from Old Troumbald of Natural Healing Concoctions to his fire, which should supposedly ease his frequent headaches. He works most of the time and sometimes has strange, suffocating dreams in which ugly deformed women sit on his chest and hold a glowing bag over his mouth.

128. Ronnar's Pelts and Fine Leather

Ronnar, a middle-aged half-orc, buys, cures, and sells the most exotic pelts and hides from all over the kingdom. He also sometimes deceives some of his wealthier clients with expert forgeries. Ronnar's best supplier is an elven druid named Theduthas Ravine, who uses his powers to find beasts with pelts of the highest quality in the King's Forest, where he hunts illegally.

Theduthas Ravine

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129. TEMPLE OF COMPETENCE

An unremarkable-looking two-story building in the middle of the densest part of the Tool District is home to the devotees of the god of Competence, the Efficient Master. The temple hides many small workshops where the skilled can discuss their trade or the unskilled can learn confidence in a skill from the temple priests. There is no formal leader of the faith because all priests consider each other as equals and act as independent teachers and preachers of their own experiences. One of the friendlier faces in the temple is an acolyte who, in reality, is a young doppelganger named Namacursess posing as Jarlin, the former street urchin who found his way into the temple. The introvert boy is a master poet who is willing to share his art with anyone eager to listen. Namacursess is a loner and not affiliated with the Golden Masks, who will approach and tempt the creature if they find out its true identity.

JARLIN

130. NAIL AND BEAM CARPENTRY

Jovas Paltran and his team led by his three sons have built the most magnificent villas over the past years. They also do major repairs but leave the smaller, less well-paying jobs to others of their profession.

131. THE WONDERMONGER

This messy workshop, owned by Tully Vespers Skincat Watercat, is only a small room packed with strange devices and another space in the back separated by a curtain. Some might consider the animated clockwork contraptions of the warm-hearted gnome artificer wizard useless or even funny, but many have great functions that make one's life easier. Tully is always friendly and curious and does not consider it offensive when people belittle his automatons and clockwork tools. Tully is actually a werecat in control of his powers who occasionally roams the rooftops of the city at night.

TULLY VESPERS SKINCAT WATERCAT

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Grankar's Chains (55.)
King's Bridge (69.)
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Cemeteries

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Historical Locations

Imprints of the Half Goat (48.)
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Ruins of the Cathedral of the Sun (91.)
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Tomb of the First King (66.)
Zephran's Ruins (31.)

Hospitality

Angels' Choir Festhall (87.)
Blackhorn (100.)
Burning Desire Brothel (26.)
Cheeky Mermaid Inn (53.)
Deep Warrens (95.)
Diamondback Trout (126.)
Emrik's Complex Flavor Blacksoup Bar (22.)
Eyrie of the Fabled (94.)
Gentlemen's Refuge (93.)
Giant's Boots Tavern (81.)
Golden Nectar Inn (37.)
Green-Eyed Nymph (107.)
Grinning Goblin (116.)
Loud and Lusty (49.)
Lucky Leap (44.)
Merchant's Rest Tavern (7.)
Ratcatcher Inn (110.)
Silent Kiss Brothel (15.)
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Triple Nine Gambling Hall (5.)

Illegal Activities

Maggot's End (105.)
Odds and Ends Pawnshop (85.)
Old Pharion's Remedies (117.)
Shimeon's Pouches (16.)
Shrine of the Unforgiving (97.)
The Curious Calligrapher (79.)
The Dog Pit (103.)

Markets

Basket of Plenty (109.)
Ironweaver's Market (82.)
Meat Market (102.)
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Mystical Locations

The Alley of Menace (96.)
The Bottomless Well (113.)
The Buried Tower (58.)
The Crooning Willow (32.)

Nobles' Villas

Domiren Villa (73.)
Goldtooth Villa (38.)
Gorso Villa (39.)
Karramosa Villa (64.)
Monder Villa (89.)
Nangrath Villa (28.)
Ronul Villa (88.)
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Parks and Plazas

Dragon Plaza (111.)
King Vacrilos II Park (33.)
Monster Menagerie (21.)
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Bastion of the Knights (67.)
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Halls of the Lawgiver (60.)
House of the Soldier (63.)
King's Forge (62.)
Minaret of the Speaker (41.)
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Royal Docks (54.)
Royal Shipyard (56.)
Royal Warehouses (61.)
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Places of Worship

Shrine of the Shining Light (80.)
Temple of Competence (129.)
Temple of Death (24.)
Temple of Knowledge (72.)
Temple of Life (123.)
Temple of Light and Darkness (52.)
Temple of Magic (108.)
Temple of Nature (34.)
Temple of Strength (101.)

Schools

College of Minstrels (25.)
Hall of Temerity (77.)
Queen's Grace Orphanage (99.)
House of Clenched Fists (75.)
Walhem's Boarding School for Young Masters (40.)

Shops

Arno's Ancient Tomes (76.)
Bearded Warrior Weapons Shop (6.)
Choosey Otyugh Culinary Treats (13.)
Darustil's Haberdashery (8.)
Dawn of the Ages Antiquities (27.)
Elegant Elephant (12.)
Emporium of Marvelous Rarities (14.)
Fiery Hooves (106.)
Hill's Nectar Winery (3.)
Oryntar's Metallurgy (19.)
Starbright Jewelry (10.)
Princess' Boudoir Parfumery (9.)
Purple Book Worm (47.)
The Dragon's Hoard Trading House (17.)
The Wanderer's Cartographer (18.)
The Wondermonger (131.)
Thysalonious' Stables (4.)

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INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURES

A large number of locations provide plentiful opportunities for adventures both in the capital city of Onadbyr and in the Kingdom of Aglarion. The background stories of many sites presented in the Aglarion and Onadbyr setting descriptions are left open for you to expand as a DM. You can tie them into the main storyline or use them individually to spice up the adventures of the characters. You could also use them to bring your characters from level 1 to level 5, getting them ready for the main story arc, armed with an extensive understanding of the setting. We have created the following encounters that will involve the characters with the setting and many NPCs in the adventure.

LEVEL 1 - 2 ADVENTURES

Rules Are Rules

Background

Anyone new to the city, or those who just wish to know it better, might want to take a guided tour with Bantallyr "Wordsplasher" Stoneshield of the Totally Local (Onadbyr location 2.) tour guide agency.

Environment

The tour starts at the Crown Gate on the Riverside Promenade of the Coin District and makes its way around the entire city.

Scene

Members of the daily tours are met by Bantallyr "Wordsplasher" Stoneshield (use the **minstrel of the college** monster entry with a Charisma score of 10), the young dwarven self-made poet-bard and tour guide, who laces his introductions and welcomes with limited talent and rote performances.

"Welcome, all you visitors to splendid Onadbyr, whether you be humanoids, sprites, or shapeshifters in altered form! Haha! Unfortunately, I cannot pride a litter for noble guests, but I can try to carry you on my shoulders! Haha!"

Bantallyr "Wordsplasher" Stoneshield introducing his tour of Onadbyr and cracking up at his own jokes.

The rhyming poet follows a regular path after setting down some rules that concern taking the dwarf's guidance near some of the more dangerous locations of the city. Two loud and irresponsible **gnolls** (armed with hand axes) within the guided group make belittling comments about some of the landmarks and the tour guide's lame jokes. When they reach the Alley of Menace (Onadbyr location 96.), Bantallyr warns the group and describes it as a most perilous and mysterious place where none should enter. The gnolls push him aside and enter the alley while mocking Bantallyr, and after a few minutes of silence, they rush out of the alley raging with bloodshot eyes, ready to attack anyone nearby. The characters must defend themselves and stop the gnolls in any way possible. The same confusion and rage effect befalls anyone who enters the alley and does not succeed on a **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw. This effect is caused by hallucinations, which make the subject witness and bear the tortures suffered by the slaves of the dark angels during the building of the Old Wall.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points if they can uncover the secret of the Alley of Menace.

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A Shameless Party

Background

The characters can encounter one or all three of the Domiren brothers in any situation, perhaps aiding them in some way or serving the nobles on a task. In return, they are invited to one of the nobles' wild parties under the Hill's Nectar Winery (Onadbyr location 3.) with a secret password, "Flowing Delights."

Environment

The extensive cellar system of the famed Hill's Nectar Winery is accessible from the street level through a long ramp and a heavy iron double door. The gates are guarded by House Domiren private guards, clad in exquisite dress uniforms.

The wine cellar is a sprawling space lined by rows of wine racks stacked with thousands of bottles from various vintages and lands. A central area has been converted into a lounge, with a fountain of wine in the center, with statues of satyrs in revelry and wine flowing from their musical instruments. Numerous serving tables laden with fine drink and canapés stand around the space, and ornate divans surround the entire lounge. Groups of naked partygoers are engaged in acts of debauchery, highly intoxicated, raucous, drinking, or engaged in various acts of carnal pleasure. Several house guards are spread in the deeper recesses of the cellars, out of view but ready to be called by the Domirens. Servants wearing hoods and fine suits discreetly fill the empty glasses and plates on the tables but otherwise stay out of sight.

Scene

When the characters speak the password to the guards at the outer ramp, they are allowed to enter and are greeted in the cellars by a group of intoxicated partygoers, all of them naked, including the three fat Domiren noble heirs, Zajeer, Malo, and Korzen, (use the **noble** monster entry) who invite the characters inside and ask that they undress and join the party naked. If they partake in the festivities, the characters will need to avoid being dragged into a series of uncomfortable situations that can be avoided with two consecutive successful **DC 11 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation,** or **Persuasion)** skill checks. These situations might include: avoiding offers of mixing drinks without raising too much attention, avoiding the pushy and bullying noble brothers, getting dragged into vulgar or dangerous games, having intercourse with questionable prostitutes (contracting the disease: **unwelcome gift**), and finally leaving the secret bacchanalia without offending the swollen egos of their hosts. Critical failures or a series of failed skill checks might result in physical atrocities with the guests or even the Domiren brothers.

The Domiren brothers can call four house **guards** should the need arise. The guards sometimes expel unwanted visitors or offenders from the party.

Unwelcome Gift. When a humanoid creature has sexual contact with another creature that carries the disease, the creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or become infected. It takes 1d3 days for symptoms to appear, including painful pustules near the genitals. At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the character remains affected by the disease and gains one level of exhaustion, up to a maximum of three exhaustion levels. On a successful save, the character's exhaustion level lowers by one step until the infected creature completely recovers from the disease.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points if they can escape the Domiren's party without suffering any ill effects or offending the hosts.

Wicked Witchery

Background

A strange disease is spreading around the Temple of Life (Onadbyr location 123.), and Father Ry Kaly, head priest of the Redeemer, is worried. Three members of his community, all seeking his temple's aid in some form, have fallen sick and are showing strange symptoms. They are slowly losing their intellects, consum-

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ing almost anything they can, as their skin thickens and hair falls out, and their limbs and faces transform. As if they are somehow slowly transforming into... pigs.

The disease is one spread by Old Troumbald, Aunt Salimbra's husband from Aunt Salibra's Natural Healing Concoctions (Onadbyr location 46.), who has been duplicitous in his intentions to help the less fortunate and sometimes comes to provide "help" in the temple in the soup kitchen. He uses a recipe from his wife's inheritance, the Recipes of Corruption, a collection of vile recipes of witchcraft owned and safely kept hidden by his wife. Old Troumbald recently found the book and is experimenting with the recipes' effects at the temple.

Environment

The squat Temple of Life is a busy place, especially in the morning hours when the food kitchen of the temple distributes meals to the hungry and poor. Supplicants stream into the central hall of the temple, where the temporary residents, mostly homeless people or poor travelers, are cleaning the communal areas and their sleeping cots.

Scene

The characters are recruited by Otmer Honormail, the right-hand acolyte of Father Ry Kaly to investigate some strange occurrences around the temple over the past few weeks. Otmer is a dwarf who left his order as a paladin and has forsaken all violence. He is dressed in his simple dirty robes, and he humbly begs for any assistance.

"I sense that you are sensible and capable folks. The Redeemer has placed a sacred task in my path, which is finding sharp minds that can shine to cleanse our afflictions! The Temple of Life requires your aid, against mysterious transformations at the temple."

Otmer Honormail requesting the character's aid to the Temple of Life.

If the characters eat from the soup being served, they must make a successful **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or become inflicted by the disease - **porcine morphosis.**

Porcine Morphosis. While infected with this disease, the target slowly transforms into a pig. An infected creature loses 1d4 points of Intelligence every day as long as they are diseased until their Intelligence score drops to 2. Within one day, the victim's skin hardens and grows bristles. On the second day, the victim's hands and feet become trotter-like. On the third day, their nose transforms into a stub, and on the fourth day, they completely assume the form of a pig. Infected creatures can repeat the saving throw against the disease every day, ending the infection and the transformation.

The only clue to the mysterious transformation of the victims can be found if characters examine their meals and plates on which these were served. At the bottom of their bowls are traces of an oily, dark greenish substance. If the characters follow the clue to the kitchens, they can catch Old Troumbald with a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check as he is pouring a dark liquid into the bowls as they are being served. He breaks down and sobs if confronted but does not reveal the recipe book he has found and the nature of the concoction. Characters who succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can realize that Old Troumbald is hiding something as he keeps professing his wife's innocence. If the characters question Aunt Salimbra, she breaks down and tells the truth about the ancient recipe book that she found and locked away long ago. She only surrenders the book to the Red Cloak Lawgiver Nathael Wester, who arrives at the scene after a few minutes. Nathael Wester is an observant and honest investigator of the order and carries a swordstick as his weapon, which he rarely draws. He impounds the Recipes of Corruption and apprehends the old man. Aunt Salimbra is ashamed of her husband's deeds. Old Troumbald gets convicted for assault by magic, is fined heavily, and gets imprisoned for several years in the Dungeon of Tears. Nathael Wester can be a great source of information to the characters in the adventure, especially on the laws and known organizations in Onadbyr.

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Nathael Wester

"I, Nathael Wester of the Red Cloak Lawgivers, pronounce my sentence: By the dictates of the law and the evidence presented by Aunt Salimbra and [characters' names], I find Old Troumbald guilty for assault by magic. I order he pays a fine of 500 gold pieces as compensation to the Temple of Life and I sentence him to 5 years imprisonment in the Dungeon of Tears. The sentence has been pronounced."

Nathael Wester concluding his investigation of the crimes.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points if they reveal the vile experiments of Old Troumbald.

Skeletons in the Tunnel

Background

The characters learn of the disappearance of Drakk Tightlips, a sensible dwarven blacksmith, crafter and purveyor of fishhooks, who has been missing from his favorite harbor tavern for days now. People say that he was loudly bragging about a certain labor that will finally come to fruition, which will make him rich and famous. Drakk discovered a secret tunnel under his house a couple of months ago, along with his father's notes that describe his ancestors' intention to dig into the Buried Tower to uncover its secrets. Drakk continued the work where his father left off and soon reached the side of the tower, where he activated a protective warding glyph that summoned skeletal apprentices to his side before being deactivated. The mindless undead trapped Drakk inside. Two of them have stumbled into his house, while another two have remained in the hard rock bored tunnel. Drakk was lucky enough to be trapped in the storeroom of the cellar, so he has managed to survive but fears leaving the confines of this room with the skeletons roaming outside.

Environment

The small house of Drakk Tightlips is located in the Seabed District, close to the harbor and the Buried Tower (Onadbyr location 58.). The house is a simple one-story building with a common room serving as the dwarf's workspace and a bedroom with very few amenities. The tunnel under the house has a 5-foot diameter and is about 150 feet long.

Scene

When the characters investigate Drakk Tightlips' house in the Seabed District, they find it locked but can easily enter the premises by breaking a window or the front door. Inside, they find the house rummaged and partially destroyed by four robed skeletons, **skeletal apprentices,** who are aimlessly wandering inside and knocking things over. Two others remain in the cellars, at the mouth of the storeroom and the tunnel dug by the dwarf. They attack anyone who enters the building or the cellars.

Skeletal Apprentice (CR 1/2, 100 XP). Use the **skeleton** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Spellcasting.*** The skeletal apprentice is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 8, +2 to hit with spell attacks). The skeletal apprentice has the following wizard spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, shocking grasp*
  - 1st level: *false life, mage armor*

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Drakk is most appreciative of being saved. Moreover, he offers his personal items of value to the characters in return for his rescue.

Drakk Tightlips

"I thank ye kindly! In a bit of a jam, I was in, as ye can see. I hope there's no more of those blasted skeletons at the end of me tunnel. But I did reach the Buried Tower! None have achieved this feat that I know of! It seems it is more dangerous than anyone could image. And who knows what lies inside? I shall call the Red Cloaks at once and inform them of the danger!"

Drakk Tightlips intensely thanking the characters for the rescue and explaining the defenses of the Buried Tower.

Treasure

Drakk 's home has a mix of minor jewelry and silverware worth 77 gold pieces altogether.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points if they find out what happened to Drunnar. If reported to the Red Cloaks, the authorities collapse the tunnel.

Dancing with Giants

Background

The remnants of the moon are at their highest. On such evenings, which are called the Nights of the Witch Moon, hags can weave stronger curses.

Environment

The Witch Moon is high in the skies, illuminating the night streets on Onadbyr and casting long shadows on buildings and the few who roam the streets. Crittermouth, a green hag who has been preying on the residents of the Shanties, has recently kidnapped a small boy named Jostan and is dragging the wailing boy away into the alleyways.

Scene

Under such a Witch Moon, the characters encounter a young woman on the streets, dragging a dirty 4-year-old little boy who is crying and wailing uncontrollably. His terror is unmistakable. The woman is Crittermouth, a **green hag** in disguise, harboring vile intentions. If confronted, the evil fey curses the little boy before becoming invisible and fleeing. Her words, "You shall not walk until a giant dances with you!" take immediate effect, and the boy's feet collapse, too weak to hold him up. With the boy in despair and the hag gone, the characters will need to figure out how to break the curse.

Jostan's family is hard to find in the city, but a **DC 8 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check is enough to locate their ramshackle home in the Shanties. If the characters start searching for giants, it requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to find out about two giant-blooded people in the city. One of them is Somrin 'Fernidad' Ironhammer, who works as a smith at King's Forge (Onadbyr location 62.), and the other is Garin Se'eray, the kennel master at Halls of the Lawgiver (Onadbyr location 60.). Garin can be easily convinced to help, but Somrin is a morose individual who needs to be reassured that this is not a joke. It requires a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince him to dance with the boy. When the characters bring Jostan to ei-

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ther giant-kin, and they dance with him, the boy soon regains control over his feet. Everyone celebrates the characters, and the giants go back to their work.

"What? Are you serious? I have no time for a jig with a disabled child. Leave me be! I have an axe to grind."

Somrin "Fernidad" Ironhammer dismissing the call to a dance.

"Come to my arm, my dear child! We shall dance the wiggly jig and shake the jinx off of you in a jiffy!"

Garin Se'eray joyfully lifting Jostan and whistling a tune as he begins to dance woith the boy.

However, Crittermouth is bitter about the characters' intervention, and she can become a recurring villain to plague the characters in the adventure.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they help remove the curse from Jostan.

Delivery from Shimeon's

Background

Orz De-Quat Shimeon (use the **mage** monster entry) of Shimeon's Pouches (Onadbyr location 16.) has marked a character and has sent some haunted cremated remains to them. He expects the characters will be forced to get rid of the unwanted spirit that haunts the urn before he tries to recollect it. He intends to sell the spirit-free dusty powder as a valuable spell component.

Environment

The characters can be approached with the package anywhere, either at their dwellings or at a place where they are meeting.

Scene

One late night, a courier hands a package to one of the characters and says it was sent by someone who described them by their exact appearance. The package contains a copper urn with "Warmond Sydell" engraved upon it, and some ashy remains within. If asked, the courier explains that he was hired at his booth for this local delivery and can describe the person who sent the package as a young, short ginger-haired human acolyte of the Arcane Tower, wearing a white shirt and black baggy trousers that almost resembled a skirt.

The urn is actually haunted by the spirit of a hanged man that manifests as a **shadow** every midnight around the urn and attacks anyone present while whispering, "I'm innocent." If the characters kill the shadow, it will not return any more. The following morning, Orz De-Quat Shimeon approaches the character who received the package in an illusory disguise made to resemble this character. He describes that the package was mistakenly delivered to the wrong person and was originally intended to be sent to him by a colleague from the Arcane Tower. He refutes any accusation concerning the shadow, pretends to be unaware of the urn's contents, and tries to leave with the urn as fast as possible. A character can see through his deception by succeeding on a **DC 11 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check. If reported to the authorities, a Red Cloak Lawgiver arrives at the scene and apprehends Orz De-Quat Shimeon for questioning. However, the tiefling mage will try to bribe the characters with 50 gold pieces per character, so they don't involve the authorities. And he also offers to buy the item, with the ashes included, for 100 gold pieces.

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"This is surely some confusion of mistaken identity, as we do seem to look alike. I'm glad I have finally located the package, for I have been tracking it since yesterday. My ex-colleague in the Arcane Tower posted it over a week ago and I was messaged that it arrived to the city through a courier. I know nothing of its contents but would like to have my package please."

The disguised Orz De-Quat Shimeon explaining the situation and asking for his package.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they uncover Orz De-Quat Shimeon's treachery.

LEVEL 3-4 ADVENTURES

House Cleaning

Background

Trazz, the head of the Black Flag Mercenary Company (Onadbyr location 83.), has been employed by the Gorso noble family to rid their estate in Onadbyr of undesired elements. The house needs to be secured because one of the family members wishes to visit Onadbyr and stay in the mansion for the first time in years. However, Trazz considers the job unworthy of his valuable assets and has decided to subcontract the work. The villa is overgrown by brown mold inside, and several ice mephits were accidentally released from captivity when the bottles that held them broke.

Environment

The Gorso villa (Onadbyr location 39.) stands in the High District on the riverfront, next to the Minaret of the Speaker. The mansion is locked and completely abandoned. Its rafters are closed, the yard is unkempt and covered by weeds, and it is dark inside the villa. When the characters approach the gates to the property, they can feel a faint aura of tangible, unnatural cold emanating from the building.

Scene

Trazz or one of his mercenaries approaches the characters and offers each of them 20 gold pieces if they investigate and clean the Gorso estate. If they take on the task, they receive the keys to the abandoned house. As they open the villa's front doors, they find it overgrown with **brown mold**. The characters must find a way to apply cold damage to the large patches of mold all over the villa or to get rid of it any way they can. When the characters can move further into the building, they encounter a group of four hostile **ice mephits** who cultivate the mold to enjoy its icy effect. The mephits are not willing to give up their newfound lair. If attacked, they try to expose the characters to **brown mold** (see page 105 of the Dungeon Master's Guide) and use the corroded stairs and galleries for tactical advantage, trying to collapse them under the characters. There's nothing of value in the abandoned building except the frostbitten furniture and a small pearl earring with tiny U. G. initials engraved into it. The jewel is stuck between two floorboards. It can be discovered by a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Treasure

The pearl earring belonged to Urmissa Gorso and is worth 200 gold pieces. If returned to Ziademos Gorso in Gorso village (Kingdom of Aglarion location 20.), he cheers up for an hour and celebrates with the characters before falling back into madness.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can get rid of the mold in the house.

Writings on the Wall

Background

Several clues attest to the city's dark history, like the few secret markings left by the slaves of the dark angels of the Dark Star. These ancient scripts point to the

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secret hideout of the slaves under the city, one of which is located behind a sealed gate in the cellars of the Deep Warrens tavern that is run by a group of ex-convicts. Characters will need to convince the owners to access the gate and find the secrets of the sealed chamber.

Environment

Any location at the Old Wall around the High District.

Scene

One of the characters standing next to the huge blocks of the Old Wall notices a series of tiny letters carved into the stone. It is an ancient dialect of Common, written in glyphs known only to the most skilled historians familiar with the Age of the Dark Angels. It requires a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** skill check to identify the glyphs and comprehend the writing on the wall, which says: "Find the hideout at the top." This refers to the top of the wall right above the engraved script.

Climbing the sheer wall requires a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check, which might raise the attention of the Royal Swords. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check can avoid the attention of the Royal Swords patrolling nearby. At the top of the wall under the balustrades, there is another inscription in tiny letters, which reads: "South of the river, third from the west, you can find the rats' nest." This refers to the location now known as the Deep Warrens, a tavern fashioned out of an old tunnel and sewage system, next to the third tower of the Old Wall when counted from the west. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History)** check reveals that the slaves used the river and the towers as major waypoints within the city during the Age of the Dark Angels and that they were not allowed within the walls.

Based on this information, the characters can locate the former hiding place of the slaves of old at the tavern currently named the Deep Warrens (Onadbyr location 95.). The tavern is run by a group of former convicts who decided to give up their lives of lawlessness and settle in the capital. Schofire the Vengeful is a friendly ex-pirate from Ronul's End (use **bandit** monster entry). The other is Chacebdunn, a **satyr** rogue who poses as a tiefling. And the third member of the crew is Brak, an arrogant **lizardfolk** prize hunter, who regretfully reminisces of days before, when he drowned wizards in the Ulden Swamps. The owners will not risk breaking the law to endanger their thriving business. The ex-convicts know that the cellars and tunnels under the building are ancient and are aware of the ancient blocked gate in their deepest cellar, but they are not happy to escort strangers around on their property. A successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check and some gold pieces are enough to change their opinion and make them show the gate to the characters. The owners oppose any idea of opening the gate, and it requires a successful **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check and 200 gold pieces or more to convince them to do so. If the check fails, the group won't budge and will escort the characters out of the restricted areas by force if necessary.

"Aye, we do have a very strange, ancient gate in the cellar. It has collapsed and we haven't ever gotten around to clearing the massive stone and peeking inside. It would cost a pretty copper and I am sure there is pirate treasure here."

Schofire the Vengeful revealing the location of the closed gate in the cellar.

"All the noise, and the dust, and the masons running around...That's a major inconvenience for us and the regulars who come in after days of fishing on the Calhay Sea. You surely need to make it worth our while to allow excavations in our tavern...."

Chacebdunn demanding payment for opening the gate while playing tricks with his signature cards.

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"Brak eat you if you don't give gold! You be prey-folk, not friend!"

Brak bluntly threatening the characters if they don't meet the owners' demands.

Opening the stone gate requires mostly masonry work because the massive stone slab is stuck under the similarly robust stone lintel. It takes a full day's work to chip it to pieces with a pick or similar mining equipment. Behind the door is a small featureless cellar chamber that is the final resting place of an ancient crumbling skeleton slumped in one of the corners. The skeleton is in tattered rags and is still holding onto a holy symbol of the Shining Light in one hand and an adamantine spear of solid iron pierced through his body and into the stone floor below in its other hand. A haunt manifests when the spear is removed from the body, assuming the visage of a wrathful and evil-looking deva angel covered in blood. The angel cries out in rage and dissipates in a flash of utter darkness. Every creature in the room must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character gains disadvantage on saving throws against effects that would render them frightened. This effect lasts for a week and can be removed with a *remove curse* spell.

Treasure

The spear is a magical *+1 adamantine spear.*

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they successfully recover the spear.

Saving Byra

Background

Byra, the eldest daughter of Taem and Gyo of the Halfling's Treasure bakery (Onadbyr location 20.), is a wild one. She is always on the move, constantly trains with weapons, and seeks adventure wherever she can. Byra believes to have found her first serious assignment, delivered to the city by a lumberjack from the village of Willow Creek (Kingdom of Aglarion location 4.). The man spoke of a beast with the head of a lion that can swing its tail to hail spikes the size of spears. Byra had heard of manticores before and stormed off to hunt the beast after a heated argument with her parents about life goals and risking one's life for thrills.

Byra was confident in her fighting skills. She is clever and prepared plenty of ranged weapons, a good sword, a sizable shield, and even some mean bear traps, but her greatest hope lay in a magic clay statue that she found on one of her previous out-of-city adventures. The statue looked like a spidery humanoid creature standing on a webbed platform. She only had a vague understanding of its workings and thought that when the statue would be broken, it would summon a web so strong that it could hold even a dragon in place. Byra found the manticore and planned to entangle it to shoot it to death with her bow from a safe distance. She didn't know that the statue was actually the prison of a giant ettercap called Stingfang, who was imprisoned ages ago by the Matrons of Malice. Breaking the statue summoned the ancient ettercap in an enormous burst of webbing that trapped both Byra and the manticore in a web, as the prey of Stingfang. Both are still alive as the ettercap waits for them to die of exhaustion before feeding on their bodies.

Environment

The trail of Byra starts at Willow Creek village and leads to a lumber camp near the King's Forest, then deep into the woods.

Scene

The characters can pick up Byra's (use the **scout** monster entry with the **halfling** traits) trail in Willow Creek if they travel there. She stayed at a local's house for a night, and many saw her asking questions around town about a possible manticore threat. The manticore is real, and the villagers can direct the characters to the lumber camp at the edge of the forest, where they directed the young halfling. At the lumber camp, the workers, many of them wounded,

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tell the characters that Byra has taken to the wilds to bring the manticore down.

Within the forest, the characters find Byra stuck in an enormous, 100 feet diameter webbing, which also encloses the trapped **manticore** about 30 feet from her, entangled so hard that it is unable even to fling its tail spikes. **Stingfang**, a giant ettercap, lurks within the web and waits patiently for its victims to lose their strength in the struggle with the webbing and for new prey on which to feed.

Stingfang (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **ettercap** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Stingfang giant ettercap is Large size.
- It has 62 hit points.
- It deals an extra die on damage rolls.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they safely escort the sulky Byra home, who claims she could have done the job herself.

Clash of Chefs

Background

The owner of the Golden Nectar (Onadbyr location 37.), Omric Laronzo, has long dreamed of a grand cooking contest where he can bring the two most famous chefs of the realm to his kitchen. He has successfully persuaded the rival masters to participate in the event, which will decide who will reign supreme in the culinary arts and win the honor of becoming the private chef to Princess Aphinah. One of the chefs is the eccentric middle-aged human Bundaro Astrizal, owner of the Choosey Otyugh Culinary Treats (Onadbyr location 13.), while the other is the rather silent Ozar the Exquisite, the half-ogre wizard chef of the Weary Ogre (Kingdom of Aglarion location 49.) located at the feet of Leeward Hills. Unfortunately, Omric is quite understaffed at the moment due to a severe infection that has swept over his staff just recently. He is actively looking for recruits to temporarily fill in some crucial roles in this time of great importance.

Environment

The contest is held at the Golden Nectar inn, which is a lavish affair to begin with and even more decorations that usually adorn the walls. The central hall of the inn has been transformed into two separate kitchens on the two sides of the room and an ornate velvet chair and tasting table set with golden tableware. The proprietor Omric Laronzo directs the dozen staff in preparation for the event, while the inn's famous performer Dorian sits in the gazebo and strums her strings in preparation for the contest's musical backdrop. The half-orc bouncer of the establishment, Trym "Fang" Cul'dok, stands at the door with a stern visage and looks over the busy room and the two groups of cooks as they prepare the mise en place.

Scene

Omric Laronzo can make good use of the characters either as security guards, organizers, or as masters of ceremony. He pays 100 gold pieces per person for this one day of work.

The event starts smoothly, many guests arrive to witness how the two masters work with their cooks in the open cooking area. Princess Aphinah (use the **Queen Aphinah** monster entry) is also securely escorted to the event by a squadron of Royal Swords and two Knights of the Crown. The Princess is unimpressed and makes mocking comments on everything obnoxiously, laughing at her own jokes throughout the night.

The first event the characters have to deal with happens during the first break, after the appetizers, but before the soup. One of Bundaro's cooks approaches the characters and offers a bribe of 300 gold pieces if they would mix a pinch of mushroom powder into Ozar's soup. The mushroom powder will change the soup's taste, turning it pungent enough to be inedible when finally presented on the table of the Princess. Should the characters choose to accomplish the task, it requires a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to mix the mushroom powder into Ozar's soup bowl unnoticed. If rejected, the boy walks away as if nothing happened, and even if reported, Bundaro denies any allegations. If the matter is pressed, Budaro decries a range of conspiracy

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theories. Princess Aphinah enjoys the scandal and Bundaro's discomfort, giggling loudly.

"How dare you accuse me of such a stunt! My glowspore mushroom soup is the tastiest in all the Kingdom! And has been since my meemaw handed it down to my father. I need not resort to such cheap tricks. Let the refined tastebuds of the Princess decide the truth!".

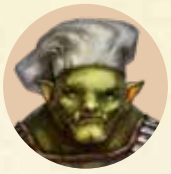
Bundaro Astrizal trying to avoid embarrassment and speed the proceedings.

At this point, Omric intervenes and does his best to calm down Bundaro and keep the event on track. After he apologizes to the Princess and the crowd, it takes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Persuasion)** skill check to keep Omric from firing the character who pressed the topic. When princess Aphinah tastes the soup, she cries out and overreacts her disgust, throws the plate of soup at the chef, then threatens Ozar with treason, which she promptly forgets as she recovers from her feigned condition of sickness to continue with the rest of the delicious course. Nevertheless, her opinion turns sour about Ozar.

"How dare you poison a royal personage so! Disgusting and rotting! Like your head, you bumbling ogre, which should be removed and cooked into soup for your treason! Haha, what fun to see you squirm! The main better be to my taste or I shall ask my father to exile you to your backwoods inn forever!"

Princess Aphinah furiously issuing threats to Ozar and his cooks.

During the preparation of the main dishes, the two head chefs engage each other in a heated argument. Ozar has concerns about the quality of the meat he has received and presents his objection very bluntly to Omric. Soon after, Bundaro also catches wind of the complaint and loudly confronts the other chef, purposefully drawing Princess Aphinah's attention to the case, belittling Ozar, and accusing him with false allegations of cheating. Ozar loses his temper, exactly as Bundaro expected, and they get tangled up in a very personal flurry of offenses, in which they bring up decades of unsettled resentments.



"What is this offal I see for ingredients! Omric, this venison is too gamey for the royal palate. We were promised loins of the highest quality. Your words! This will not do....this will not do at all..."

Ozar complaining about the quality of ingredients.

"Ah, another excuse I hear from the "famous" Chef Ozar! It is no surprise as he is always pointing the blame to his sous. Isn't that right? And what? Next, it will be the fault of the Princess for making the wrong ruling? I am not surprised in the slightest, as one side of his lineage ate raw meat like the savages they were!"

Bundaro Astrizal belittling Ozar and trying to get a rise out of his opponent.

The characters can try to calm them with a successful **DC 17 Charisma (Deception, Persuasion,** or **Intimidate)** or **Wisdom (Insight)** skill check, depending on what approach they choose. A successful check puts the event back on track, and the chefs continue with the main course. On a failed check, the argument

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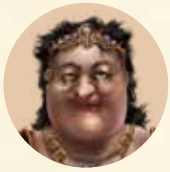
escalates to a point where Ozar's ogre blood takes over, and he punches Bundaro in the face, knocking him out. Princess Aphinah stops her shrill giggling and angrily rises from her chair, demanding both dishes! She points at one of the characters randomly and demands that the character finish preparing Bundaro's meal. Bundaro recovers in about an hour if not brought back to consciousness using magic. In any case, the princess smiles wickedly and waits until the character or their associates finish the dish. This task requires a successful **DC 13 Wisdom** ability check using the available cook's utensils. On a successful check, the princess is pacified, and the event continues as planned. On a failed check, the characters are frowned upon by the Princess, who also starts harboring negative opinions about Bundaro.



"Haha, what delightful entertainment! But how dare he fall unconscious! I want BOTH my dishes! You! Yes you, you fool. You shall cook my meal! If you don't, this tasting is over! Now get to it!"

Princess Aphinah pointing at a character and making her demands.

At the end of the event, Princess Aphinah chooses the chef who didn't offend her. If none of them made blunders, she hires both of them to serve her in turns each week. If both chefs offended her, Princess Aphinah becomes agitated and leaves the venue in a fit, shouting a series of shrill threats and curses as her soldiers escort her out.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if the event ends with Aphinah choosing either or both of the chefs as her private chef.

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Ire of the Ringmaidens

Background

An assassin has been hired by the Ringmaidens but unknown to them, he is a doppelganger member of the Golden Masks. The Ringmaidens want the old lord, Toristio Sil Wahgeler, dead before he releases a will to the king, naming his adult children as his heirs. They know that until this document is handed into the Royal Treasury, the heir in line is Rasilda, the Ringmaiden wife of the lord. Once the lord is saved from death, the characters are invited to the Karramosa Ball. The lord's two sons, Ptarios and Felhoir Sil Wahgeler, are also present at the party and are weighed down by the legal situation, suspecting Rasilda of their father's attempted assassination. However, they haven't voiced their accusations to their father or the authorities without evidence. At the ball, the Ringmaidens try another assassination, and if foiled by the characters, they will seek vengeance upon them.

Environment

This scene can begin anywhere on the streets of Onadbyr at any time of the day.

Scene

The characters find an old half-elf minor noble named Lord Toristio Sil Wahgeler lying against a tree with several stab wounds on his back. The noble is at the verge of death and is desperately moaning for help from the characters as he slowly bleeds out. If healed, he says that he was attacked by a tall, muscular man with a beard, wearing black trousers and leather armor. He also says that his assailant attacked him from an ambush then ran away, thinking him dead after half a dozen stabs.

Lord Toristio is very thankful if healed and helped back to his estate on the eastern side of High District right next to the Gorso Villa. Before saying goodbye, the old man gives each character 100 gold pieces and an invitation to the Karramosa Ball in the form

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of guest tickets. The ball is scheduled to be held in the near future at Rose Garden Park (Onadbyr location 65.), right in front of the Karramosa Villa. It is a lavish garden party with wonderful catering, music, servants, and a distinguished crowd.

The ball starts in the afternoon and goes long into the night. The family makes sure that the event is of the highest standards by preparing and decorating the garden, placing beautiful furniture and art around the promises, building custom shadings and patios, and most notably, providing the guests with magnificent, rare, and expensive fare.

Soon after the characters join the party, Lord Toristio finds them and greets them with enthusiasm. He is a little tipsy already and is escorted by his young and beautiful wife, Lady Rasilda Sil Wahgeler. The noble lady, who married the lord five years ago, is a student of the Queen's Grace Orphanage, and a **Ringmaiden** in secret. She is charming, well-mannered, and direct, but also very diplomatic and confident at the same time.

While engaged in the conversation with Lord Toristio, the characters can spot another noblewoman, and a member of the **Ringmaidens,** Lady Victoria Violet, as she drops a quickly dissolving tiny white ball into the drink of the old lord, with a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. If caught, Lady Victoria Violet acts shocked by the accusations and drinks the poisoned glass of wine to prove her innocence, trusting the magical potion that protects her from poison. If she is pressed, her husband and some guards also join the discussion, which soon draws the attention of many of the guests. Lady Victoria Violet denies everything, even If the characters can somehow prove that she is protecting herself from poison by a magical effect. If needed, the Karramosa call a Red Cloak Lawgiver, but the event continues if the characters can't convincingly unveil Lady Victoria Violet's plan. In any case, her motives remain hidden, as does her involvement with the Ringmaidens.

If the characters meddle in their plot, four other **Ringmaidens** at the party attack them in a conveniently

secluded section of the park, in one of the tents, or on their way back home. The Ringmaidens use deception to get close to the characters and attack them from surprise. Their favored tactic involves one of them feigning being hurt or fainting while the rest of them try to get her on her feet. The Ringmaidens, who also act tipsy and disoriented, strike when the characters approach to provide a hand to help the troubled noble lady to her feet. As soon as they see the characters reaching out with empty hands to lift their "fallen" friend, they attack with their concealed daggers, which they have coated with **generic poison**. They use their noble status and influence if apprehended by the Red Cloak Lawgivers, reasoning that they were drunk after the party and thought that the characters wanted to take advantage of them.

Ringmaiden. Use the **spy** monster entry with the following modification:

- The Ringmaiden deals an extra 2 (1d4) poison damage with every successful hit if the target fails a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they save Lord Toristio from the Ringmaidens, and an additional 700 experience points if they prove the culpability of Victoria Violet.

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The Coatl Feather

The characters are lured into a con by the Golden Masks, which leads them to make the acquaintance of the Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder.

Summons at the Old Grinder

On Lord Cyne Monder's request, the players investigate the case of a missing family and find evidence of a devilish conspiracy.

King's Games

The characters take part in the colorful festivities held in memory of the establishment of the kingdom.

Battle of the Champions

The duel of the best champions of the realm is cut short by the murder of the king at the hands of the former Queen, Elyssa, returned from hell.

Funeral of the King

While the king is laid to rest, the restless soul of the betrayed Prince Krasnar rises and begins a furious massacre.

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Chapter 1

Blood on the Crown

Characters should be level 5 when they start Chapter 1 of Crown of the Oathbreaker. They should have normal starting equipment, plus an additional 600 gold pieces, and one uncommon magic weapon or item.

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The Coatl Feather

Background

Raxiontar (use the **doppelganger** monster entry) and **Hauris** are members of the Golden Masks crime syndicate. Hauris has been posing for many years as Gulfa, the bugbear proprietor of the Triple Nine Gambling Hall, a notorious figure in town. The Golden Mask doppelgangers have decided to pull off one of their oldest cons. The scam involves raising a victim's attention to an enticing business opportunity, letting the victim initiate the business, and selling a worthless item to the dupe for a lot of gold before disappearing into the city.

If Hauris is confronted as Gulfa, it aggressively denies any involvement in the incident. The doppelgangers cut short any discussion if their trick is revealed or if the characters' suspicion grows to a degree where finishing the con becomes unachievable. At this point, they both try to escape into the city, changing their forms and clothes using their shape-changing abilities and their *robe of the wardrobes*.

Ricio Tane, the owner of the Lucky Leap, is a good friend of Lord Cyne Monder. They talk and meet quite often.

Treasure

Each doppelganger wears a *robe of the wardrobe* and carries 15 silver pieces, 22 gold pieces, and a dagger.

THE HOOK

Environment

The crowded main taproom of the Lucky Leap (Onadbyr location 44.) is busy with guests. It is a regular night at the tavern. Use Lucky Leap areas 1-4.

Scene

Hauris takes on the visage of Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder, a recognizable and much-respected member of the Royal Court as Lord Protector of the Crown. He enters the Lucky Leap in a hurry. He curtly nods to his old friend Ricio Tane before approaching one of the private booths to conduct a seemingly important discussion with Raxiontar, who is wearing the form of a humble and innocent-looking young halfling named Raffolk Ginsi. They make sure that everyone sees and hears their negotiations over the price

Coatl Feather

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of a large colorful feather, which they both handle with great care as if it was of a very exquisite and expensive nature. Hauris, to make his appearance more compelling, uses its *Captivating Monologue* class ability during his performance to target the characters as Lord Cyne Monder. It requires a successful **DC 26 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice that the two parties are enacting a well-practiced play.

LORD CYNE MONDER

"I know it is rare, but is it this rare?"

Lord Cyne Monder haggling with Raffolk Ginsi.

RAFFOLK GINSI

"I can go as low as 535 gold pieces, not a copper less. I have seven children to feed and some significant debts to settle."

Raffolk Ginsi to Lord Cyne Monder.

THE BRUTE

Environment

The crowded main taproom of the Lucky Leap tavern.

Scene

The two parties shake hands after settling on a deal, and shortly thereafter, Lord Cyne Monder leaves, nodding again to Ricio, who is busy with his guests at the bar. Hauris leaves the tavern, changes form, and returns to the tavern as his main persona, Gulfa. The bugbear loudly confronts Raffolk, demanding him to pay up on his debt that the halfling took on as credit to play at the Triple Nine. To raise the most attention, he knocks the lantern over on the halfling's table and feeds the flames with hard liquor, making sure that the fire consumes the flammable couatl feather. The halfling screams, asks for more time, and cries loudly and pitifully about the loss of his only source of income, from which he was planning to repay the bugbear. The bestial gambling hall manager doesn't seem to care and threatens the halfling with his life if he doesn't deliver the required 200 gold pieces within a day. It requires a successful **DC 26 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice that the two parties are enacting a well-practiced play.

GULFA

"I'll plukk all'o'yo fedder if yo don't bring me da gold by noon tomorrow!"

Gulfa at Raffolk's burning table.

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The rest of the tavern shies away from the scene, which starts unexpectedly and only takes a minute to settle after Gulfa leaves, as the flames are quickly doused with mugs of beer. Ricio Tane comes to Raffolk's soaked table, has it cleaned by Madrika, one of the barmaids, and invites the halfling for a drink to console him. Raffolk avoids Ricio as much as possible and explains the events to him with only a few diversionary explanations.

If the characters don't approach the halfling themselves to offer their help after witnessing both incidents, he approaches the characters and asks for aid himself. He acts shaken and desperate, telling them about his gambling debt repentantly and that Gulfa will surely maim or kill him if he doesn't deliver 200 gold pieces by noon the next day. He tells the characters that his granny has the same exact couatl feather as part of a shared inheritance, which she might surely sell to them if asked nicely. He explains that these two feathers are one of their greatest family assets and that Granny Pearla would never give it to him on faith, only if enough gold were presented upfront and if she is convinced that his life was in danger. Raffolk admits that he has already asked too many favors from his granny to cover his gambling addiction and she has cut him off. The halfling tells the characters that Lord Cyne Monder was willing to buy the feather of the rare heavenly creature for 535 gold pieces, at about double its value, but he only has 50 gold left to cover the purchase from his granny. He only needs the 200 gold to cover his debt, so if characters could finance the purchase from Granny Pearla, they could keep any profits at the end of the deal. He refuses to be handed any money, but instead asks the characters to accompany him to Granny Pearla's house.

"You look like decent folks. I know my request might sound crazy, but trust me, I have no other choice. Can you help a halfling in trouble, please? I'm in a dire situation, but there's a way out. We can all benefit from this, I promise."

Raffolk Ginsi after the incident.

THE TRANSACTION

Environment

After leaving the Lucky Leap as Gulfa, Hauris relocates to the small flat where Raffolk Ginsi will take the characters and changes form and clothing to become Granny Pearla. If the characters agree to help him out, Raffolk Ginsi takes them to a small flat accessible from one of the side streets in the South District. Granny Pearla doesn't let the characters into the flat, which is a Golden Mask hideout that is rarely used by the criminals.

Scene

When the characters arrive with Raffolk Ginsi, he knocks on the door, which Granny Pearla opens and comes outside. Raffolk Ginsi tells Granny Pearla about his unfortunate case, his debt to Gulfa, and about the characters who are willing to pool some gold for him to buy the other feather from her. She scolds the young halfling and shuts the door in his face. Raffolk looks at the characters wearily, then knocks again. The two doppelgangers enact a longer discussion in which Raffolk Ginsi takes on a guilty expression while Granny Pearla slowly gives in, but demands a fair payment for the rare feather. You can have any of the characters roll **Charisma (Persuasion)** skill checks if they want to interfere, but their rolls don't influence the outcome. She comes up with a price of 250 gold pieces, at which point Raffolk Ginsi offers up his 50 gold pieces and asks the characters to cover the rest. It requires a successful

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DC 26 Wisdom (Insight) skill check to notice that the two parties are enacting a well-practiced play.

Granny Pearla

"You are just as irresponsible as your father was. Now get lost and solve your problems on your own!"

Granny Pearla before shutting the door on Raffolk Ginsi.

"Granny?! Granny! You know you are the only one who can help me. Please don't be so mean."

Raffolk Ginsi knocking on Granny Pearla's door.

If the characters buy the couatl feather from Granny Pearla, Raffolk Ginsi thanks his "grandmother" with a hug and a kiss and tells the characters to follow him to Lord Cyne Monder's villa in the High District. If the characters examine the feather, it requires a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check to identify it as the feather of a large exotic parrot, nowhere near the rarity and value in question.

If the characters don't recognize the feather as a fake, Raffolk Ginsi walks a few blocks with them, then takes a sudden turn at one of the alleys and starts running, trying to lose the characters. It only needs two rounds to change shape and change its clothing using his *robe of the wardrobe* to completely blend into the crowd on one of the busier streets. Use the chase rules to see if the doppelganger can gain advantage on the characters. It tries to fight its way out of any confrontation, but only if facing the threat of death. The doppelganger remains relatively calm if handed over to a Red Cloak, as it knows that it will soon be back on the streets after serving time for the theft and for impersonating an officer.

THE DELIVERY

Environment

Lord Cyne Monder's villa in the High District.

Scene

If the characters take the feather to Lord Cyne Monder's villa (Onadbyr location 89.) or if they visit him to inform him of the trick that involved someone wearing his likeness, they only need to get past a few guards and servants until they can meet the lord. He denies any involvement with the halfling and knows nothing about the feather. He feels sorry for the characters if he finds out that they have been tricked and he thanks them for letting him know about the impersonator. He also invites them for a talk and to have some refreshments at his villa. His best guess is that this con could only have been organized by the Golden Masks, who often use costumes and magic to appear as someone else, according to his best knowledge. He tries to measure the characters by asking questions about their backgrounds and current situation. He is looking for some people for certain services, and he considers the characters as resourceful and skilled individuals, especially if they handled the con-artists successfully. He is also willing to hire them for a job because he wants to help them recover their losses if any.

"Good people, are you sure you saw me? I never had any intentions to buy this feather. This must be a severe misunderstanding."

Lord Cyne Monder if presented with the feather.

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Lucky Leap Tavern

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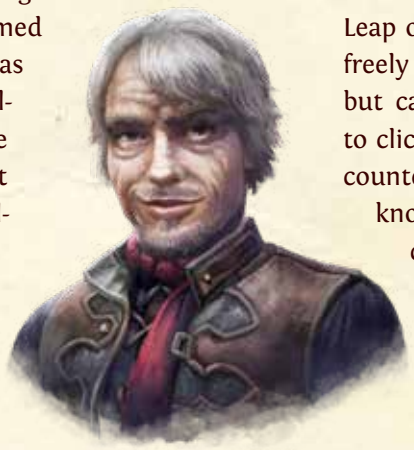
THE LUCKY LEAP

Background

The pub is the hangout of many groups of friends who meet here regularly, giving the place a familial atmosphere. The owner, Ricio Tane, a human in his late fifties, is a well-known figure in the capital and a reformed rogue adventurer who has many tales to tell. He is always ready to motivate the crowd at his establishment with free drinks and well-timed jokes or occasional witty comments on patrons. Ricio's two server assistants, Hala and Madrika, are two locals in their thirties, both seasoned and experienced bartenders who know how to handle overly enthusiastic guests.



Ricio Tane

Environment

The Lucky Leap tavern is a small, musty, and stale-smelling place frequented by mostly the well-to-do locals of the North District. The establishment is a bit dirty, a bit smelly, the chairs squeak, the tables are scratched, but the service is satisfactory and the drinks are of outstanding quality.

Doors. Doors (including the main double door) open inwards and are made of thick, sturdy wood fitted with iron hinges and handles. They feature masterfully crafted locks, which can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check, or can be forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Windows. Windows open inwards and have a wooden frame and a single layer of thick glass. The wings are held together by iron latches, which can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** check, or can be forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Secret Doors. Secret doors are fashioned of the same material as the surface in which they are set (usually stone) and require a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to locate if characters search for them.

Lock-Down Mechanism. Large levers in areas 2, 6, and 12 set the lock-down mechanism of the Lucky Leap on or off. Any of the levers can be pulled down freely at any time, which activates the mechanism, but can be set back only after rotating the handle to click exactly three times clockwise and four times counter-clockwise in quick succession. This code is known only to Ricio Tane. Setting one of the levers changes the setting of all other levers in each of the rooms. When the lock-down mechanism is activated, shutter plates made of thick metal drop down from hidden compartments to cover every door and window accessible from the outside, except for the tavern's numerous secret doors. The shutters snap back to their places with the same ease when the levers are set to the top position. The metal plates have AC 19, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to poison, psychic, piercing, and slashing damage. It requires a successful **DC 22 Dexterity** ability check with thieves' tools to deactivate the mechanism. The metal shutters can be forced open with a successful **DC 22 Strength (Athletics)** skill check and can be held open with the same skill check every round.

1. Taproom

Background

The main taproom of the Lucky Leap is usually crowded, especially at night and on the weekends. The tavern's doorway is part of a game that Ricio came up with to entertain his guests. Anyone who jumps from the doorstep into the tavern with a running start can earn a free drink depending on the distance they cover. A 10-foot jump qualifies for a small glass of beer, a 15-foot jump for a mug of ale, a 20-foot jump earns two mugs, a 25-foot jump, which is very rarely seen, is rewarded with three bottles of red wine. If anyone can hit the 30-foot marker, which has never been

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achieved so far, the leap would earn an entire barrel of fine red wine from Ricio. The crowd always cheers loudly over the attempts of the drunk patrons, who usually land hard on their bottoms.

Environment

The air is heavy with the smell of beer and tobacco smoke mixed with sweat, and the sounds of cheering and laughter can be heard from far down the street, especially on hot summer nights when many of the patrons prefer to socialize outside, in front of the main entrance. The private booths can be separated from the main room with a thick curtain, each comfortably accommodating up to four guests.

2. Bar

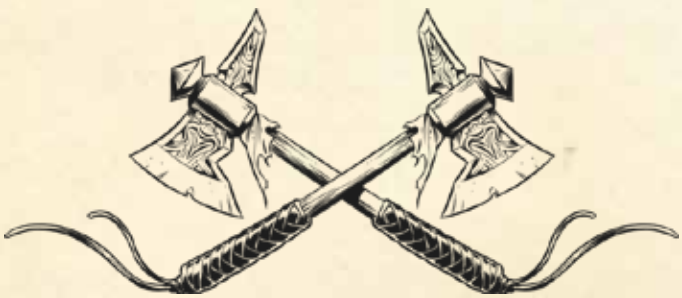
Background

The bar is the busiest part of the tavern, where many of the guests spend their time standing and talking, or ordering drinks and snacks, which are otherwise not delivered to the tables.

Environment

The bar is made of thick wood that has soaked in more liquid than the mast of a ship. A small, 2 feet wide segment of the counter can be lifted to allow access, but no guests are permitted behind the bar. There are many barrels and bottles of ale, beer, liquor, and wine of various qualities stored here.

Large Lever. The large lever built into the wall activates and deactivates the Lucky Leap's lock-down mechanism.



3. Storage

Environment

This area is stacked with the most frequently used household items, like mops, buckets, glasses, and mugs, as well as stocks of many of the most requested beverages. A secret door, concealed as part of a wine rack, leads directly to the streets.

4. Lavatories

Environment

These lockable private lavatories are relatively clean at the beginning of the night and become more unpleasant as the evening progresses. Many short, and supposedly meaningful graffiti decorate the walls and doors of each booth, including the one with the secret door, which opens to a small alley next to the building.

5. Private Living Room

Background

This is Ricio's private living room where he spends most of his free time. He only invites friends and trusted allies to this room, as well as his occasional lovers.

Environment

The fine leather couches and armchairs are worn but very comfortable. His cabinets contain fine liquors and a few books of literature. The paintings on the walls mostly depict landscapes from distant lands and are not of great value. A combat practice dummy with the symbol of the Red Cloaks painted crudely upon its chest stands in the room and has several deep gashes on it.

Treasure

Ricio's selection of fine liquor includes three heavy glass bottles of the finest Xantharosian peach brandy, each worth 30 gold pieces.

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6. Private Bedroom

Background
Ricio doesn't bring anyone to this room or beyond into his private quarters.

Environment
Ricio's bedroom contains a king-size bed, which is loosely covered with sheets, as well as a large elaborately decorated wardrobe with clothes chaotically tucked onto its shelves. Hidden under the bed, fastened to its frame, is a rapier coated with **wyvern poison.**

Large Lever. The large lever built into the wall activates and deactivates the Lucky Leap's lock-down mechanism.

Treasure
Ricio's wardrobe contains five sets of fine clothes and three sets of traveler's clothes. Altogether the clothes have 14 gold pieces, 12 silver pieces, and 23 copper pieces in their pockets.

7. Private Bathroom

Environment
The large wooden tub in the middle of the room and the lavatory are both magical and were gifted to Ricio by his late wife, a flamboyant half-elven wizard named Avrathia Silverstar, who studied at the Arcane Tower. When commanded, the water inside the tub becomes fresh and warm, while the lavatory instantly disperses any fluids it contains.

Treasure
Ricio's dresser holds three vials of rare perfumes, each worth 15 gold pieces, and a silver hand mirror inlaid with small rubies worth 100 gold pieces.

8. Secret Storage

Environment
Ricio stores all of his books, maps, adventuring gear, and tools here, including his vast collection of weapons and armor. The secret door serves mainly as an escape route should anyone follow Ricio into his private chambers.

Treasure
Three *potions of invisibility,* two *potions of greater healing,* and a *universal solvent* are placed in a small potion holder on one of the shelves. A rack holds three long swords, four short swords, three rapiers, and eight daggers, each of a different design. On another rack, there are two short bows, two hand crossbows, and two quivers with 60 arrows and 60 bolts. Two worn-out but still functional pieces of studded leather armor are packed on a shelf next to a plethora of other equipment like a burglar's pack, an explorer's pack, two grappling hooks, two manacles, a hunting trap, three lanterns, a magnifying glass, a tinderbox, two bags of caltrops, and several empty vials.

9. Household Storage

Environment
Mundane household and cleaning supplies like ladders, mops, buckets, and pieces of cloth are stored here.

10. Meeting Rooms

Background
Ricio conducts his illicit businesses in these rooms when meeting clients or when the opportunity presents itself. His favorite way of doing business is arranging the seller and the buyer in the two separate rooms and listening in on their conversations by using the special secret rotating wall panel, under the effects of a *potion of invisibility,* while his two bartenders draw the attention of his business partners upon themselves.

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Environment

These meeting rooms are identically furnished and decorated. A large wooden table stands on a thick carpet in both rooms, surrounded by six wooden chairs. A few jugs of water and glasses are placed on the tables, along with some writing equipment.

Secret Rotating Wall Panel. This mechanism involves a small circular platform with a wall panel in the middle. The wall panel rotates in a semicircle with blinding speed in absolute silence when a small secret button is pushed on either side of the wall. If searched for, it requires a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the button or the rotating movement of the wall panel when it is used. Anyone using the mechanism for the first time has to succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check or become prone when the platform rotates due to its sudden and violent movement.

The Secret Level

Background

The stairs to the basement of the tavern descend an unusually long way. If asked about this, Ricio explains that he can keep his drinks especially cold this way. Next to the stairs, there's a flat section where a special pulley can be pulled up or lowered to the basement to carry heavy loads with ease. In the middle of the stairs, there is a secret door known only to Ricio Tane, leading to the secret level of the tavern.

At the beginning of the adventure, these rooms hold only some of Ricio's personal belongings, as well as the food and equipment necessary for him to survive for a few weeks without leaving the secret level. Later in the adventure, in Chapter 2, these rooms become occupied by the renegade Knights of the Crown and Lord Cyne Monder, to whom Ricio offers shelter. The description below reflects the original state of the level.

11. Fake Secret Room

Background

This room is designed to fool anyone who finds the secret door in the stairway and keep them away from venturing further into the secret level.

Environment

The room is furnished with a small desk with some fake notes on non-existent transactions of illicit goods with made-up clients, some maps, and writing equipment. The room also features a few unlit lanterns, a bedroll, and a chest, which holds some treasure to keep unwanted visitors from exploring further. Picking the lock requires a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check using thieves' tools. The secret door to area 12 is exceptionally well crafted and disguised, requiring a **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice.

Poisoned Spike Trap. The chest is trapped. It requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to deduce the presence of a needle trap, which activates when the chest is opened. When sprung, the trap extends small poisoned needles from all sides of its lid. The needles make a melee attack with a +6 bonus against anyone using their hands to open the lid. The needles deal 1 point of piercing damage and are coated with **wyvern poison.** Anyone subjected to the poison must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or take 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Treasure

The chest contains 350 gold pieces, 3 bars of platinum, three *potions of healing,* and a *potion of invisibility.*

12. Secret Private Hideout

Background

This room is Ricio Tane's secret private hideout. He stores a permanent stock of dried food and equipment on this level in case he should need to vanish for a more extended period.

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Environment

The room is simple and a bit damp. It features a large mattress on the floor, next to a large wooden chest. The large dresser is empty but lifting its bottom plank reveals a secret shaft with a 20-foot wooden ladder descending to area 15. The chest has an explorer's pack and a burglar's pack inside.

Large Lever. The large lever built into the wall activates and deactivates the Lucky Leap's lock-down mechanism.

13. Secret Armory

Background

Ricio likes to be prepared for any eventuality. He has stacked up on equipment, weapons, and armor in case he would ever need to arm and mobilize a small squadron.

Environment

The room features a large rack filled with weapons, a large dresser packed with armor, and some crates with other equipment.

Treasure

The two racks in the room hold ten spears, five hand axes, five short swords, five long swords, a maul, ten light crossbows, two hundred crossbow bolts, six leather armors, two chain shirts, two ring mails, and five metal shields. A few crates hold twenty torches, ten flasks of oil, four tinderboxes, two hundred feet of rope in four bundles, five tents, two bullseye lanterns, and three healing kits.

14. Secret Pantry

Background

Ricio has stacked up on rations in this pantry, enough for two months for himself.

Environment

The room is filled with barrels of ale, water, smoked meat products, sacks of hardtack and other non-perishable food. Three barrels marked with yellow flames on their tops are filled with a highly flammable liquid called **Hell's Water.** Each barrel weighs 150 pounds and holds 100 pints of **Hell's Water.** Identifying the substance requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check.

Hell's Water. Hell's Water works exactly like oil, but it burns at a much higher intensity, dealing 10 fire damage instead of 5. When lit with a fuse on the top of the barrel, it bursts in a 30-foot radius blast in three rounds that deals 55 (10d10) fire damage that can be halved on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw.

15. Stockroom

Background

This cellar holds the main stock of the Lucky Leap. Ricio and the bartenders come here every few days to replenish the stores upstairs or deposit fresh supplies.

Environment

This large cellar room holds the complete stock of the Lucky Leap. Numerous ale and beer barrels of different sizes and bottles of wine and hard liquor are stored here on racks and in several crates. Shelves with table cloths, utensils, and different types of glasses and mugs line the walls. The cellar is also packed with old and new furniture alike, including chairs and tables, and various everyday household items. A small trolley stands at the bottom of the stairs to pull up or lower heavy loads into the cellar on the ramp next to the stairs.

The secret door on the north leads to a small shaft with a ladder that leads to area 12. The secret door on the west is an extractable sliding panel glued to the wall section and fitted into it using a magical *sovereign glue*. Ricio rarely opens this sealed safe, but he uses another magical substance called *universal solvent* to do so when he does. It requires an hour of work to apply the universal solvent drop by drop to the panel's frame. After neutralizing the

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glue, the panel can be pulled out and slid to the side to reveal area 16.

Treasure

There are twenty expensive bottles of rare hard liquor and wine in the cellar worth 20 gold pieces each. The rest of the drinks are common alcoholic beverages of various types and quality, totaling over a hundred gallons altogether.

16. Secret Treasury

Background

This room holds the three most valuable treasures Ricio Tane has collected during his days of adventuring.

Environment

This room features a large wooden desk with some unlit candles and three unusual-looking items laid out on top.

Treasure

The odd-looking smoldering cube is a *chest of nullification* (described in Chapter 2), which Ricio Tane stole some years ago from the anti-magic vaults of the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities. If opened, the anti-magic quality would cease to function on the gruesome idol placed within.

Idol of Thyargylosh. This cursed magical idol depicts a black withered tarrasque. It is of a dark greenish hard substance, oily and cold to the touch. The Idol of Thyargylosh constantly emanates an aura of *blight* in a 50 feet radius, which expands 5 feet every round without end. The emanation passes through any obstacle or substance, eventually consuming the world in negative energy if not stopped. The Idol of Thyargylosh can only be destroyed by being brought to the Plane of Negative Energy, where the undead tarrasque, Thyargylosh, must consume it.

The jewel on the red cushion is a golden tiara worth 500 gold pieces with its front designed as a sun symbol, inlaid with a ruby worth 500 gold pieces. The tiara also functions as a *circlet of blasting,* but instead of fire damage, the *scorching ray* spell deals radiant damage. This jewel is an antique that dates back to the times of the Order of the Eternal Light when it was gifted to some of the most pious clerics of the theocracy.

The sword with the velvety red scabbard is made out of ivory and its blade is inlaid with tiny diamonds. It is a perfect replica of the king's Falcon Blade and is worth 2,200 gold pieces. The art piece does not function as a weapon, breaking in combat on the first hit.

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SUMMONS AT THE OLD GRINDER

THE CROWNWARDEN'S CONCERN

Background

Lord Cyne Monder heard rumors from his friend, Lord Wedras Rumlyn, about suspicious gatherings and whispers about dark rituals reported to him from around the old windmills. Lord Monder has asked the local baron to keep an open eye and let him know about anything he hears, or even to find evidence if he can. Lord Wedras soon discovered that a mysterious group is performing rituals related to witchcraft. The clues pointed to the Royal Stud Farm and indirectly to the Royal Groom, Countess Unper Maritayl, who owns and operates the Royal Stud Farm. The location is an hour's walk from the city, through an area dotted with crumbling windmills and barren fields. The baron reported his findings to Lord Monder with growing enthusiasm and asked him to call for the Red Cloaks. Still, Lord Monder demanded evidence in such a delicate matter involving such a respected noble with an important position. So Lord Wedras Rumlyn once again set out to the area around the Stud Farm for further investigations.

However, the baron has been late in reporting his findings and Lord Monder is growing concerned. The lord fears that something has happened to his friend and feels guilty about acting late because of his misgivings in accusing another noble without evidence. Lord Cyne Monder is hesitant to report to the Red Cloaks or ask his knights for help, but the characters seem to be a good option for keeping the case confidential and the information from spreading.

Environment

Lord Cyne Monder invites the players to his house in the High District. The dwarven paladin welcomes the players in the majestic main hall, which features a high ceiling and comfortable sofas with built-in mug holders.

Scene

Being busy with the security preparations for the King's Game and the Battle of the Champions, and also to cover up his true concerns, **Lord Cyne Monder** requests the characters to secure his beloved horse, Miss Ivory, from his friend, Lord Rumlyn. He tells the characters that he will ride his beloved horse in the ceremonial procession before the king. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** skill

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check can notice that the crownwarden is concerned about more than his horse. He is unwilling to disclose any further information about the baron's mission. Still, if the characters keep pressing the issue, he tells them that they should keep an eye out for suspicious activities in the region.

"They speak about witchcraft. Dark rituals even. But it could be only the imagination of the locals."

Lord Cyne Monder revealing some of his concerns.

BLOOD AND FIRE

Background

Blister was the only member of the Matrons of Malice who escaped imprisonment by the drow of House Ausstyl in the Bleak Mire. She can finally set the hags' plan in motion to cause endless misery in Aglarion. She has tasked the Children of the Coven, her **witchservant cultists,** with the covert mission of activating the Shrouding Gate. This is an ancient portal from Hell located below an old abandoned windmill called the Old Grinder. The cultists are led by Countess Unper Maritayl, who has received dreams sent by the hag coven about her mission and how to activate the Shrouding Gate. She is eager to get rid of the nosy baron who has been hounding her and the other cultists for the past weeks. Blister has bound each of the witchservant cultists with a *geas* spell cast through its *nightmare* ability, commanding them to keep silent regarding their missions, even to each other. The witchservant cultists have kidnapped the noble Rumlyn family from their residence and activated the gate with a *hellish sacrificial dagger*. They have already sacrificed Lord Wedras and his father Zakar Rumlyn to summon Eldon Lobo, a bearded devil monk, and the Raven Knight, an erinyes formed from the soul of the late Queen Elyssa. The devil has been tasked to kill King Waldrann Azennar in the Battle of the Champions.

Environment

The Rumlyn family estate is situated near the Royal Stud Farm (Kingdom of Aglarion location 61.) at the end of a long dusty road surrounded by old oak trees, to the southwest from the capital. The small manor comprises the main villa, with several agricultural buildings and multiple large stables around it. It can be seen from far away that the villa is on fire, the smoke rising high into the sky and the horses in the flaming stables neighing loudly in panic.

Scene

The corpse of a human soldier dressed only in leather armor lies in a pool of blood in front of the Rumlyn estate. It requires a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check to determine that the corpse was slain within the hour with a slashing weapon. The wounds are still slowly dripping with blood. A character assessing the state of the burning building can make another successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to confirm that the fire has likely been lit just recently. Anyone who enters the burning building or stables takes 3 (1d6) points of fire damage every round at the start of its turn. The estate can be saved from burning to the ground only by the work of at least ten individuals spending over three hours extinguishing the flames. Even then, the building is badly damaged and needs to be fully renovated. It requires a minimum of three rounds to get in and out of the stables and to calm the horse. A character must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Handle Animal)** skill check to calm Miss Ivory. On a failed skill check, the task requires an extra round as the horse is thrashing in pain. Miss Ivory is burned to death if not saved within 3 rounds.

Going around the house reveals several barrels by the backdoor leading to the kitchen. A character that succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check notices a scared elderly cook, Jeagan (use the **commoner** monster entry), hiding in one of the overturned barrels. The frightened cook tells the characters in a shaky voice that Countess Unper Maritayl, accompanied by three gruff stablehands and three other creepy figures in dark capes and hoods arrived

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at the house. When invited inside by Lord Rumlyn, they attacked the baron and kidnapped him and his father, the baroness, and their young child. She bursts out crying and sobbingly recounts the conversation she overheard about the kidnapped victims' imminent sacrifice at the Old Grinder, one of the abandoned mills nearby.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points for saving Miss Ivory from a fiery death.

"Oh ye kind folks, blessings to you for saving me life! I'd be sittin' in that barrel o' fish until my bones rotted! Oh, Redeemer bless us! Ye have to help Master Rumlyn and his kin, before those monsters murder them!"

Jeagan the cook after being saved.

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Old Grinder

1 tile = 5 feet

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SOULS FOR THE GATE

Background

The witchservants of the Matrons of Malice have already used two of the available summoning rituals of the Shrouding Gate. The Raven Knight has already flown to Onadbyr, waiting for the moment to strike, while Eldon Lobo stays behind to secure the summoning of the last devil that can be conjured with the gate. The witchservant cultists have never experienced the might of the binding *geas* spell cast upon them by Blister and consider it a blessing of their patron's attention. As a result, they can't be forced to divulge their plans to their enemies. A character must succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion)** skill check to convince them to talk, at which point, their heads crack from the psychic damage dealt by the spell, killing them instantly.

Environment

The Old Grinder (Kingdom of Aglarion location 62.) stands on a small hill, and its ruined state is clearly visible from far away. The windmill's fan is missing large pieces and is torn in multiple places. The building is made of large and sturdy stone blocks, and there are two windows on the two sides of the top level, and a single, sturdy wooden door at the ground level.

Walls. Loose stone blocks extrude from this old and slightly leaning building. Climbing the walls requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Doors. The entrance opens outwards and is made of wood. The lock on it is old and rusty, and can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** skill check if locked.

Windows. Windows open outwards and feature wooden frames with a single layer of thin glass broken in many places. The old and rusty iron latches can be opened with a successful **DC 10 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

1. GROUND FLOOR

Environment

This circular, neglected, and dirty room has a few crates and boxes on the sides and a table and chair in the center, where the millstone used to be. It was originally the central workplace for the millers but has not been used in decades. The crumbling millstone is propped up against the wall and bolstered up on one side with a few wooden blocks, and secured with a wedge on its other end. A rope is stretched above the door and attached to the wall with spikes to secure the millstone from falling on its side even if it rolls. On the south side of the room, a wooden ladder connects to the top floor.

Rolling Millstone. The cultists have installed a trap, which frees the old millstone from its position and crushes anyone in the doorway, rolling into position to block the entrance. The trap is triggered when the wedge holding it in place is removed. A character inside the room who succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check notices the trap. When triggered, the millstone rolls over the door crushing any creature standing on the tile in front of the door on the inside. Targeted creatures must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw or take 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage and become prone, trapped under the millstone. The millstone deals 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage every round to a creature trapped under it. The millstone can be rolled with a successful **DC 17 Strength (Athletics)** skill check if still held by the rope, or it can be moved with a **DC 22 Strength (Athletics)** skill check if it has fallen on its side.

Scene

Three stableboys, Sem, Rebrov, and Tobron (use the **thug** monster entry), loyal henchmen of Countess Unper Maritayl, sit at the table, drinking. If alerted by the cultists in area 2, they hide in the room, ready to activate the trap. They will fight until dropping to half of their maximum hit points, at which point they try to flee. The stableboys have no knowledge or understanding of the motives of the witchservant cultists or their actions below the Old Grinder.

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"I'm telling you, they can do whatever the mistress wants them to do down there. I just feel lucky I don't need to be there."

One of the thugs whispering to the other.

2. TOP FLOOR

Environment

This room houses the rusty and broken machinery that connects the windmill's fans to the first floor. The small circular room is devoid of furniture, with two windows to the outside and a trapdoor with a ladder leading down to area 1.

Scene

Two **witchservant cultists** hide at both windows and keep watch on the outside. Anyone trying to approach the windmill must succeed on a **DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check or be noticed by the witchservant cultists, who shout to alert their allies downstairs and in the basement.

"Someone's coming, call the Countess!"

The witchservant cultists shouting to the thugs downstairs if they spot anyone approaching the Old Grinder.

Treasure

The witchservant cultists each have 16 copper pieces, 9 silver pieces, and 8 gold pieces on their persons.

3. BASEMENT

Background

Eldon Lobo and the Children of the Coven are waiting for the gate to be accessible again for the third and last summoning (see The Shrouding Gate below).

Environment

The walls and the floor of this circular room are made of large stone slabs. The side of the room is lined with rotting, broken chests and sacks that once held grains for production. A glowing magic circle with deep runes carved into the floor dominates the center of the room. Dark red candles are placed all around, many already melted, but some still lit.

The Shrouding Gate. This ancient one-way portal from Hell can only be activated with a specific ritual performed only once per day. When activated, the Shrouding Gate functions as a *gate* spell, and it can be used up to three times before it is rendered useless for an entire year. The ritual involves a specific rhyme in Infernal that acts as a command word, and a living sacrifice of a creature with an Intelligence score of 6 or more. The sacrifice must be performed within the circle with a *hellish sacrificial dagger,* a specific magical weapon forged in Hell. Upon the completion of the ritual, the Shrouded Gate summons a specific devil named during the ritual, or a bearded devil. The devil is unsummoned and banished back to Hell when the requested task is performed or when the devil dies on the Material Plane. In addition, the Shrouded Gate grants the effects of a *nondetection* spell on the summoned devil, which lasts until the devil is unsummoned. The features and the functioning of the Shrouded Gate can be revealed only by a *legend lore* spell.

Scene

When the characters enter the room, they see four **witchservant cultists,** one of them Countess Maritayl, standing by the walls and engaged in

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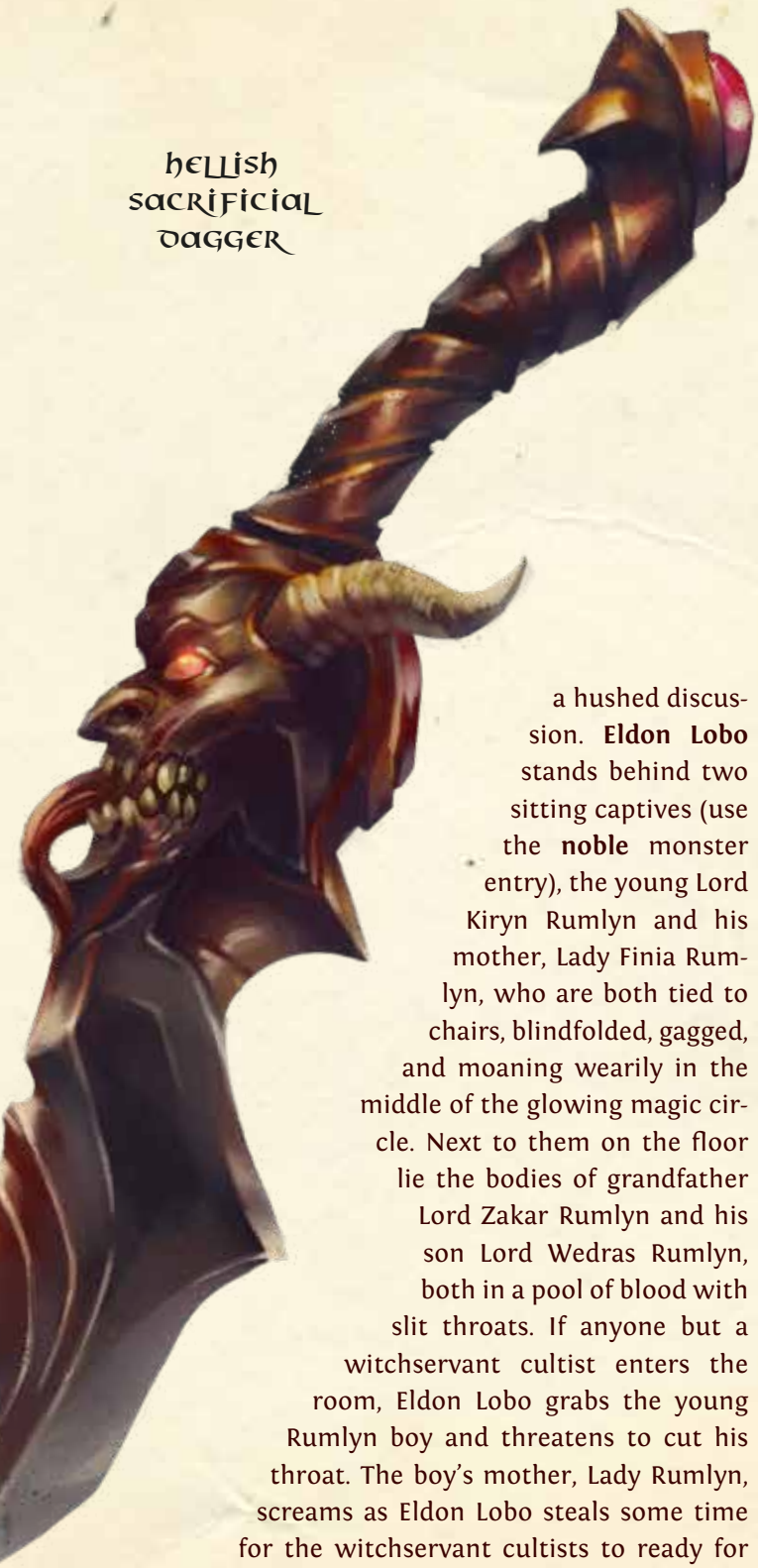

Hellish Sacrificial Dagger

Eldon Lobo

"You will be disciplined for your intrusion, like the Matrons disciplined the fool Lord Rumyln for nosiness. Kill them, kill them all."

Countess Maritayl, calmly standing behind the towering and snarling Eldon Lobo.

a hushed discussion. **Eldon Lobo** stands behind two sitting captives (use the **noble** monster entry), the young Lord Kiryn Rumlyn and his mother, Lady Finia Rumlyn, who are both tied to chairs, blindfolded, gagged, and moaning wearily in the middle of the glowing magic circle. Next to them on the floor lie the bodies of grandfather Lord Zakar Rumlyn and his son Lord Wedras Rumlyn, both in a pool of blood with slit throats. If anyone but a witchservant cultist enters the room, Eldon Lobo grabs the young Rumlyn boy and threatens to cut his throat. The boy's mother, Lady Rumlyn, screams as Eldon Lobo steals some time for the witchservant cultists to ready for combat. If the characters attack, their main agenda is to kill the captives so they can't talk, and then turn on the intruders. The cultists would never compromise their mistresses willingly and are willing to die for their patrons.

If the characters manage to save any of the captives, they find them in a state of severe shock. They have to be removed from the Old Grinder and given time to calm to explain how they were captured and what they know. They tell that they were forced to wear hoods and could only hear the sounds of the two rituals, taking place a day apart, during which the two lords were sacrificed. They recall ritual chanting done in an evil-sounding language and the flapping of large wings after the death throes of Lord Wedras subsided. They are sure that the cultists killed Lord Zakar in the second ritual to summon the bearded devil.

Treasure

Eldon Lobo has a *hellish sacrificial dagger*. The witchservant cultists each have 16 copper pieces, 9 silver pieces, and 8 gold pieces on their persons. Countess Unper Maritayl has 5 silver pieces, 37 gold pieces, 5 platinum bars, a silver necklace worth 100 gold pieces, and a gold ring decorated with small diamonds worth 315 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points for each Rumlyn captive saved.

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King's Games

THE COMPETITIONS

Background

The King's Games was first held by King Vacrilos I, the first ruler of the Azennar dynasty. It originally included only the Battle of the Champions, but over the years, it has grown to become an Onadbyr-wide celebration with many smaller contests available for the broader public. Preparations for this extraordinary day start weeks before, and the whole kingdom, especially the capital, buzzes with anticipation.

Environment

Most towns and villages of the kingdom and especially the capital, where the events take place, are decorated with small colorful flags bearing the symbol of House Azennar. The streets are cleaned for days before the grand day, and people dress up in their most festive outfits when it finally comes. Most of the shops are closed except for the taverns and inns of Onadbyr, which are full of locals and numerous visitors from the countryside, and many from the neighboring country of the Drayl City-States. The streets are crowded with people who wander around the city following the event locations opening up one after another. Most major roads of the city become dotted with small tents and stalls of vendors who sell food, toys, clothes, jewelry, and many other handcrafted products. Posters outline the eight events to come, with small maps of Onadbyr marking their timing and locations. The High Speaker of the Minaret of the Speaker also announces each event half an hour before it starts.

Scene

On the morning of the day of the King's Games, the royal family takes a tour around the city on a beautiful carriage surrounded by their pompous entourage composed of court musicians playing marches, servants and maids throwing petals from large baskets, and most importantly the Knights of the Crown riding their well-groomed warhorses. The procession exits the Royal Palace through King's Bridge, turns onto Short Road, reaches Long Road via Grankar's Chains, and makes its way to the Fists of Azennar at the Nine Arches before returning to the palace through Queen's Bridge.

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King Waldrann Azennar

Queen Lyrencia

Princess Aphinah

The first event starts late in the morning, about an hour after the royal procession, and each new event begins after the previous one has announced its winner. Finally, the last event finishes late in the afternoon when most families head home for a quick meal and to put the little ones to sleep, only to prepare for the grand finale of the day, the Battle of the Champions.

The Royal Palace has appointed a fitting host for each game. There are many contestants at each game, but in most cases, the description mentions only a few of the most noteworthy.

Rules. Contestants are free to use spells during any contest, but only if they can cast it themselves. No outside help can be accepted except for verbal advice. The host of the event acts as a final judge in case of a dispute.

Experience

Award the party 1,800 experience points for each competition won.

BATTLE OF THE TIPSY TUNES

Environment

This game takes place in the late morning on Dragon Plaza (Onadbyr location 111.), in front of the bronze statue of King Daerios Azennar and the foul dragon, which are both decorated with colorful little flags and ribbons. Next to the statue stands a huge open-sided "Big Top" tent made out of separate long strips of brightly colored textiles, surrounded by colorfully painted long benches.

"Welcome to the Battle of the Tipsy Tunes! The 1st prize is a magic scroll of the Instant Tent spell, which was also used to create this tent, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

The large glowing colorful magical text displayed on the top of the tent.

Scene

The first event draws a large crowd to the wide and open Dragon Plaza. All the bench seats are taken, and the crowd extends from the packed terrace of the Green-Eyed Nymph to the Bottomless Well and even into the nearby streets. The master of the ceremony is none other than Master Conductor Fabian Ethlairn of the College of Minstrels, with his instructors, Tallis Deepwood, the Lead Singer of Songs, and Craspartio Olescrito the Lead Strummer of Strings as judges. They invite any prospects they find during the competition to audition at their college.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. Each contestant takes turns performing for up to 5 minutes, measured

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by a large hourglass, in front of the crowd and the judges, and each contestant must participate in three separate rounds to win. These rounds of performances each take a maximum of 30 minutes altogether. In each round, every contestant must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** skill check with an instrument to gain 1 point in the competition. For every 5 points of success above the DC, the contestant gains an extra point. The performer with the most points at the end of the third round wins the competition and is awarded the prize. In case of a tie, extra rounds of performances are held if necessary.

At the start of each round, each contestant must drink a double shot of Spirited Leaf Liquor, a distilled version of the herbal brew prepared by the monks of the Ulden Lowlands. Each double shot calls for a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or the imbiber gains the poisoned condition for 1 hour and also makes Constitution saving throws against the Spirited Leaf Liquor with a disadvantage while being poisoned this way.

"Don't be shy, drink! I know exactly how you spend your private practices anyhow, my boy."

Master Conductor Fabian Ethlairn
to one of his performing students.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Battle of the Tipsy Tunes event.

Zamozza Olafrin, a jumpy male half-elven **Minstrel of the College** (Perform +5, Constitution +1), who dances while playing cheerful fast melodies on his violin.

Gertrudia Balen, a soft-spoken female human **Minstrel of the College** (Perform +5, Constitution +2), who plays guitar and sings heart-rending songs.

Dorian, a female human **Minstrel of the College** (Perform +7, Constitution +1), the star of the Golden Nectar inn, who sings while playing several different instruments in turns.

Lord Durval "Nightingale" Axcadikus, a half-orc minor **noble** (Perform +4, Constitution +3), blessed with a beautiful tenor singing voice.

Critical Failure. If a performer fails two DC 15 Charisma (Performance) skill checks by five or more, the crowd bursts into boos at the second fail and throws rotten vegetables at the performer who also becomes the subject of talk in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *scroll of instant tent* spell and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

THE NIMBLE EAGLE

Environment

This game takes place by the wall of the House of the Soldier (Onadbyr location 63.) on the Long Road. At one end of the road, near the Giant's Boots tavern, is a large colorful archery target mounted on a stand, 10 feet above the ground. A few servants stir about under the target, ready to remove arrows from it, and to cover the target with signs mounted on long poles. The signs depict distinguishable animal silhouettes (duck, chicken, goose, rabbit, dog, and many more) painted in black ink.

Twen Foebane

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"Welcome to the Nimble Eagle! The 1st prize is a Potion of Fire Resistance, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

A large glowing colorful magical text displayed in mid-air above the target.

Scene

The crowd strolls about on the street, seemingly enjoying the thrill of arrows flying above their heads. They cheer loudly when a well-placed shot lands or laugh when someone falls from their stilts. Twen Foebane coordinates the event, the conceited elven master bowmaker of the Sylvan Striker, who announces contestants and results in an unpleasant, almost belittling way.

"It's okay to use magic to craft a bow, but to shoot it..."

Twen Foebane, shaking his head, when he sees a contestant use magic.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. Each contestant has to stand and balance on a stilt and fire three arrows at the target that is 60 feet away. It requires a successful **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check to stay on the stilt for each shot. Those who fail the skill check fall from the stilt and are punished with a 1 point penalty in their score. Before each shot, one of the signs is lifted in front of the target and the contestant must loudly name the animal displayed on it. It requires a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to identify the correct animal sign. Those who fail to name the right animal are punished with a 1 point penalty in their score.

The target is 60 feet away from the position where the contestants fire their bows. Everyone can use their own bow or are given a longbow and arrows to use. A ranged attack roll with a bow or crossbow that hits between AC 10 and AC 14 means that the contestant hits the target on the rim, earning no points for the contestant. It requires a successful ranged attack against AC 15 to score 1 point, hitting AC 20 scores 2 points, and hitting AC 25 means a bullseye and scores 3 points for the contestant. The contestant with the most points at the end of the third shot wins the first prize. Subsequent shots decide a tie until a winner can be announced.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Eyes of the Eagle event.

Mavis Gryduhrr, a confident male human guard captain (use the **bandit captain** monster entry, ranged attack +6, Acrobatics +3, Perception +0) from the Drayl City-State of Zolt, who constantly celebrates himself and speaks in an almost incomprehensible accent.

"Watch this Aglarionians! This is how we do it in Zolt."

Mavis Gryduhrr, before shooting his first arrow.

Vargos Hawkfriend, a reserved member of the Royal Arrows (use the **scout** monster entry, ranged attack +4, Acrobatics +2, Perception +5), a loner, who is teased by the other guards during the competition.

Achy Tusra, a cheerful young halfling, the first mate of the Weaveripper, a Draylish ship from Brinecoast (use the **spy** monster entry, ranged attack +4, Acrobatics +2, Perception +6) who cheats on recognizing the signs with the help of a sorcerer shipmate of hers who tells her the right answer via *message* spells. It requires a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the spellcaster in the crowd cast the spell and point at Achy before every shot. They both flee back to their ship if confronted, where their captain, Bybra Kalahis, tries to protect them from being prosecuted until a Red Cloak is summoned, in which case both culprits have to pay a fine of 6 gold pieces each. .

Wohl Stormseeker, a haughty middle-aged male hobgoblin wizard (use the **mage** monster entry, ranged

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attack +2, Acrobatics +2, Perception +1) who casts *true strike* spells to hit his target.

Critical Failure. A fumbled attack roll on a natural 1 or an attack roll of AC 5 or less has an equal chance of hitting a bystander or doing some damage to the nearby stalls or buildings. The contestant will have to face the judgment of a Red Cloak and also becomes a subject of shameful talk in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *potion of fire resistance* and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

MERFOLK LUMBERJACKS

Environment

This event takes place at Zhankar Plaza (Onadbyr location 50.), where a large farm wagon stands in the middle of the square, painted yellow, green, and white - the colors of the Azennars. Thirty heavy tree logs are placed alongside it. A few barrels sit a bit further away from the wagon, and next to them, a couple of odd-looking glass spheres and tubes are laid out on the ground.

"Welcome to the competition of the Merfolk Lumberjacks! The 1st prize is a Dust of Dryness, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

A large glowing colorful magical text displayed on the side of the wagon.

Scene

A large crowd has gathered to watch this event, cheering for their favorites and loudly commenting on the events. A couple of Royal Swords have been stationed here to act as assistants in resetting the contest area and preparing each contestant for the event. The host of the event is Krestanyr Wint, the no-nonsense harbormaster of the Royal Docks.

"I suggest you all keep your heroism to a minimum. I don't want to ruin this fine day with a funeral."

Harbormaster Krestanyr Wint when addressing the contestants in private.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. There's always a single contestant taking the challenge at one time. A contestant has two glass hemispheres fitted around their head that form a glass helmet. The complete sphere has an elastic leather collar that seals the bottom part at the contestant's neck, and the top of the globe has a hole that can be plugged with a cork. The two parts are held together by a leather belt that attaches to the two sides of the glass, making the sphere watertight. At the start of the contestant's challenge, the globe is quickly filled by the Royal Swords with water from a small barrel. Next, the contestant must lift the logs and place them on the wagon while holding their breath. A contestant can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to 1 + their Constitution modifier (minimum of 30 seconds). Each minute the contestant must make a **DC 5 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to see how many of the logs they can place on the wagon. A contestant lifts one log for every 5 points of success above the DC.

Every minute the contestant must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw to see if they run out of air while making these feats of strength. On a failed saving throw, the contestant has a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier before they start dying. The Royal Swords immediately rush to the contestant's aid and remove the water-filled glass helmet from their head. Contestants can remove the glass helmet any time by unstrapping the leather belt and releasing the water within by separating the two hemispheres.

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The contestant with the most logs on the wagon wins the competition. In case of a tie, the contestants involved must repeat the challenge until a winner can be announced.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Merfolk Lumberjacks event.

Raim Tolescy, a rough-looking middle-aged human adventurer (use the **thug** monster entry, Athletics +2, Constitution +2) who has a few very loud friends in the crowd.

Draskara Ironeye, a female **orc** (Athletics +3, Constitution +3) lumberjack from the Ulden Forest.

Eeshayl, a male **merfolk** (Athletics +0, Constitution +1) who tries to disguise his true identity with a robe and a tight leather mask covering his face. It requires a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice his features. Eeshayl does not need to make suffocation checks and takes his time trying to lift the logs. The crowd is amazed at his ability to hold his breath, but if they find out about his ruse, he gets booed, and after some time, the Royal Swords must stop the crowd from throwing him out of the competition. Check every minute to see if the crowd (Perception +2) notices his trick.

Ystair Karramosa, a powerfully built young male human noble (use the **knight** monster entry, Athletics +3, Constitution +2) who commands his family's troops with an iron hand. Many of his soldiers cheer for him during the competition.

Critical Failure. If any contestant is unable to place even a single log onto the wagon, they become the subject of ridicule in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *dust of dryness* (with one pinch of dust in the packet) and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

THE GREASY POLE

Environment

This event is held at King Vacrilos II Park (Onadbyr location 33.), where many 45 feet long poles have been erected from the ground, each one covered with a thick layer of oil, making them extremely slippery and hard to climb. A bright yellow ribbon twirls in the breeze, tied in a complex knot to an iron loop on the top of each pole.

"Welcome to the Greasy Pole competition! The 1st prize is a Potion of Climbing, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

A large glowing colorful magical text hanging in the air.

Scene

The crowd gathers in a large circle around the competition ground, cheering and laughing as usual. Several Royal Swords are standing close to the poles, acting as observers. The event is hosted by Loria Sewyn, a dark-haired human captain of the Royal Swords with a powerful build and a crowd-teasing manner.

"Please cut the dirty jokes, we are to witness greatness!"

Captain Loria Sewyn, addressing the crowd with her big wink and a smile.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. The contestants have to climb the slippery poles, and the first one to untie the knot on the top wins the competition. In case of a tie, the contestants involved must repeat the challenge.

Each contestant must succeed on three successive **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill checks rolled with disadvantage to reach the top of the pole. On a failed check, the contestant must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check to slip back safely to

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the bottom of the pole to restart from the ground. A contestant who fails the Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill check falls from the pole and takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage per 10 feet of falling.

A contestant who reaches the top of the pole can immediately try to untie the ribbon with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** ability check. Holding on to the top of the pole in subsequent rounds requires a successful **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** skill check in each round. On a success, the contestant can try to untie the ribbon again. On a failed check, the contestant can try to slip down the pole.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Greasy Pole event.

Talindra Mosdew, a muscular young female half-elf adventurer (use the **knight** monster entry, Athletics +3, Dexterity +0) with a wild look in her eyes.

Morullaz Longfang, a half-orc **veteran** (Athletics +5, Dexterity +1) with a disfigured face, who quit the Royal Swords before becoming a captain.

Mavis Gryduhrr, a confident male human guard captain (use the **bandit captain** monster entry, Athletics +4, Dexterity +3) from the Drayl City-State of Zolt.

Diarnatrio Dantrin, a mysterious traveler from an unknown land with jet-black skin and flaming red hair (Athletics +6, Dexterity +2).

Critical Failure. A contestant who falls from the top of the pole and takes bludgeoning damage is a subject of talk in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *potion of climbing* and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

MASTER OF THE WILD

Environment

This event takes place at the Temple of Nature in King Vacrilos II. Park. The temple ground is not decorated for the event except for the natural wonders created by the clerics and the druids. The usual glowing magical letters that welcome visitors and advertise the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities are also missing. An unusual number of dandelions are growing in a patch next to the trunk of the Crooning Willow.

Scene

There are much fewer spectators at this event than at the earlier ones during the day. There are also significantly more children with their parents in the thin crowd, which is more like a gathering of interested people. The quiz game is hosted by the introverted misanthropist and venerable Hularis Asporal, the highest-ranking and elderly priest of the Temple of Nature, who grudgingly accepted the invitation from the Royal Palace.

"I am glad His Majesty asked me to host this event. This way, I can show this city how negligent you all are about the gifts of the Eternal Mother. Now. Let's start and be over with it quickly."

Father Hularis addressing the crowd at the start of the event.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. Contestants are asked to pick a dandelion before each question and to blow on them as quickly as possible to win the right to answer. Each contestant has to make an **Initiative** check and the highest value speaks first. If the contestant fails to answer the question correctly, then the remaining contestants can pick a new dandelion and participate again in a contest of **Initiative** checks. This continues until someone answers correctly or until everyone fails their skill checks. In this case, the old priest presents a new question.

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There is always a show-and-tell question first, followed by a trivia question. The first question involves the cleric showing a piece of fur, plant or animal part, footprint, bitemark, manure, or similar physical object to the contestants and asking what plant or animal it belongs to. To answer correctly, the contestant must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check. The second question is always a trivia question about a plant or animal, which requires a **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check to answer correctly. Questions like this are based on plant or body parts, nutrition, habitat, secret abilities, resistances and vulnerabilities, cures, diseases, or habits. The first contestant to answer three questions correctly wins the event and the prize.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Master of Nature event.

Rikas Tangaremp Junor, an enthusiastic young gnome father (use the **commoner** monster entry, Nature +1 Survival +0), who competes to prove himself to his three sons and wife.

Vargos Hawkfriend, a reserved member of the Royal Arrows (use the **scout** monster entry, Nature +4, Survival +5), a loner, who is still mocked by the other guards constantly during the competition.

Valrik Wallen, a young human male **acolyte** (Nature +2, Survival +2) of the Efficient Master, who trains his knowledge about nature.

Agnasta Rockwood, an old human lady from the Willow Creek Plains (use the **commoner** monster entry, Nature +4, Survival +2), who has much experience in the countryside.

Critical Failure. A contestant who wins the Initiative three times and fails the associated checks every time becomes a subject of talk in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *potion of animal friendship* and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

TRUTH OR BEAN

Environment

This competition is held at the spacious main taproom of the Merchant's Rest tavern (Onadbyr location 7.). Several tables are prepared in the room with chairs or long benches on both sides. Each seat has a deck of playing cards and two bowls with 30 dried beans painted in red in each. The Merchant's Rest is decorated with large colorful banners that depict large beans.

"Welcome to the Truth of Bean competition! The 1st prize is a Potion of Greater Healing, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

A large glowing colorful magical text displayed above the entrance of the tavern.

Scene

A large crowd gathers at the tavern, which is fully packed with contestants and spectators. It becomes difficult to order at the bar or even to move around in the establishment. Describe Truth or Bean to the characters as a card game of chance where the players collect and show several sets of card combinations to win their opponent's beans by calculating their own and their opponents' chances and bluffing and betting against each other's hand strengths. As the event begins, all contestants receive their bowls of 30 colored beans and can shuffle the deck of cards prepared for each pair of competitors once before drawing three cards to their hands and placing six mutually available cards on the table. During the game, players pick up shared cards from the table, pay a bean to the pot to draw a card from the deck, or pay three beans to their enemies to take a card from their opponent's hand before betting on each subset. The event is hosted by Rythis Balric, the charismatic half-elven proprietor of the tavern, who loudly comments on the outcomes of some of the matches.

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RYTHIS BALRIC

"That hand was as weak as my grandmother but was presented as one of the finest of the Silent Kiss. Those 15 beans are well deserved. Let's give this brave cardslinger a big cheer!"

Rythis Balric's comment on a successful bluff.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. Each contestant is seated at a table, which they can't leave until they are reseated or eliminated from the game.

Each contestant must make the following checks during each round against their opponent to defeat them.

- **Intelligence** ability check against opponent's **Intelligence** ability check.
- **Wisdom (Insight)** against opponent's **Charisma (Deception)** skill check.
- **Charisma (Deception)** against opponent's **Wisdom (Insight)** skill check.

A contestant who succeeds on more checks than their opponent wins the round. A tie results in a rematch.

A contestant who loses in a round is eliminated from the game. A contestant who wins four rounds wins the game and first prize.

Contestants. Over twenty contestants are participating in the event. Roll a d20 to randomize opponent levels for each round.

1st round	easy (1-13)	moderate (14-16)	practiced (17-19)	master (20)
2nd round	easy (1-8)	moderate (9-13)	practiced (14-17)	master (18-20)
3rd round	easy (1-3)	moderate (4-10)	practiced (11-15)	master (16-20)

A player who gets to the final table in the fourth round will face a master-level competitor named Rodnirr Steelshield, a grumpy old dwarf with a very slow response time. If more than two characters would win two rounds, then match them against each other to announce a winner.

Use the following ability and skill scores for the opponents against the characters.

AN EASY OPPONENT HAS
Intelligence +1, Insight +1, Deception +1.

A MODERATELY SKILLED OPPONENT HAS
Intelligence +1, Insight +2, Deception +2.

A PRACTICED OPPONENT HAS
Intelligence +2, Insight +3, Deception +3.

A MASTER OF TRUTH OR BEAN HAS
Intelligence +3, Insight +5, Deception +5.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *potion of greater healing* and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

GIANT'S BOARD

Environment

This event is held on an open field near the Buried Tower (Onadbyr location 58.). A large chess-like game board is carved into the hard earth and is set up with enormous pieces of figures carved out of wood, weighing 100 pounds each. The black figures are shaped in the form of dragons, giants, manticores, and similar creatures, while the whites are knights,

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wizards, clerics, rogues, bards, and similar types of heroes from different humanoid races, all bearing the symbol of House Azennar. Next to the board stands a large rotatable hourglass.

"Welcome to the Giant's Board competition! The 1st prize is a Potion of Growth, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

A large glowing colorful magical text hanging in the air.

Scene

There are a decent number of people watching the event, though many of the citizens are already at home preparing to have dinner before the final Battle of the Champions. The event's host is a bearded, strict, but polite human wizard named Laromarius, the Golem Controller of the Arcane Tower.

Laromarius

"I presume everyone is prepared both mentally and physically. I would like to ask the first two contestants to please take their positions on the board. The first match starts in two minutes."

Laromarius holding a small, very detailed magical sundial in his hand while addressing the contestants.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. Contestants are matched into pairs randomly at the beginning of the event by drawing their names from an urn. A match between two contestants is decided by a contest of **Intelligence** ability checks. For each contest won, the contestant must also succeed on a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** ability check to move the desired figures. On a failed Strength check, the contestant drops the figure before moving it where it was planned to be placed. A dropped figure can not be lifted again. On a successful Strength check, the contestant wins 1 point. The contestant who earns three points first wins the match, eliminates the opponent from the competition, and can continue to participate in more matches. A player who eliminates all their opponents wins the event and the first prize. Laromarius stops each match after two hours and declares no winners.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Giant's Board event.

Mavis Gryduhrr, a confident male human guard captain (use the **bandit captain** monster entry, Strength +2, Intelligence +2) from the Drayl City-States of Zolt, who celebrates himself and speaks in an almost incomprehensible accent.

Mezir Thyras, a middle-aged courteous tiefling wizard (use the **mage** monster entry, Strength -1, Intelligence +4) who first casts *telekinesis,* then if needed, he casts *polymorph* to turn into an **ape** to move the figures (Strength +3). The rules allow him to do so, and the best option to ruin his *telekinesis* spell is to play for time. Anyone with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check knows that Mezir can't maintain his *telekinesis* spell for longer than 10 minutes or his *polymorph* spell for longer than 1 hour. A player can decide to delay the match for an hour without losing position by succeeding on one of the Intelligence ability contests made during the game. Mezir is best friends with Okamirou Haristan, the owner of the Diamondback Trout tavern, who enthusiastically cheers him on.

Viko Vadermo, a young muscular **commoner** (Strength +3, Intelligence +0) who is showing off to his beauti-

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ful girlfriend, who stands in the front of the crowd, throwing kisses at him.

Ylakos, a silver-blood dragonborn captain of the Royal Swords (use the **bandit captain** monster entry, Strength +3, Intelligence +2) who wants to prove the superiority of Aglarion over the Draylish captain Mavis Gryduhrr.

Critical Failure. A contestant who fails three Strength ability checks becomes a subject of talk in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *potion of growth* and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

LEAP OF DEATH

Environment

This competition takes place near the Imprints of the Half Goat (Onadbyr location 48.) outside of the city walls by the edge of the extruding cliff formation, some 60 feet high above sea level. A small yellow podium with flagpoles bearing the colorful banners of House Azennar has been placed at the edge of the cliffs. It is high tide, and the rocks below are menacingly turbulent as the incoming waves change the level of the seawater. Sharks are also quite frequent in the waters below.

"Welcome to the Leap of Death competition! The 1st prize is a Potion of Water Breathing, sponsored by the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities."

A large glowing colorful magical text displayed in mid-air above the podium.

Scene

A large crowd gathers for the final and one of the most daring events of the day. Many are lying or sitting by the edge of the cliffs not to risk falling below but to ensure that they see when the contestant lands in the watery depths. The event's host is young Lord Premil Ronul, only son of the illustrious Lord Dyzag Ronul of Ronul's End. The well-built human, a seasoned warrior, has a gentle demeanor and a compulsion to act benevolently by praising every contestant. The young dwarven noble, Lord Odrik Nangrath, the youngest son of Lord Arenbar Nangrath, stands close to Lord Premil and admires his love.

"What a beautiful torso, oh dear Eternal Mother! Please take care of it!"

Lord Premil Ronul to one of the contestants before their jump.

During the event, any time at the DM's discretion or after someone takes damage during the event in the water, a **hunter shark** swims up and attacks anyone in the water. The hunter shark can be spotted from the cliffs with a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The contest continues after the hunter shark is defeated or chased away.

Rules. Anyone can participate in the contest if they pay an entry fee of 3 gold pieces. Each contestant has to jump into the sea from the podium. It requires a successful **DC 5 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to jump far enough from the cliffs to avoid crashing on them. On a successful jump, the contestant gains 1 point. For every 5 points of success above the DC, the contestant jumps further into the sea and gains 1 additional point. On a failed skill check, the contestant lands on the rocks and takes 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage.

During the jump, the contestant can try to add acrobatic elements by succeeding on a **DC 5 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check. On a successful maneuver, the contestant gains 1 point. For every 5 points of success above the DC, the contestant's jump becomes more complex and gains 1 additional point. The contestant with the most points wins the contest.

To reduce the falling damage when landing into the water, a contestant must succeed on a **DC 5 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failed save, the contestant takes 14

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(4d6) bludgeoning damage. For every 5 points of success above the DC, the damage is reduced by 7 (2d6).

On a tie of points, the contestants have to jump again for more points for the host to announce a winner.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Leap of Death event.

Mavis Gryduhrr, a confident male human guard captain (use the **bandit captain** monster entry, Athletics +4, Acrobatics +3, Dexterity save +5) from the Drayl City-State of Zolt, who celebrates himself and speaks in an almost incomprehensible accent.

Borx Helas, a middle-aged female human adventurer (use the **assassin** monster entry, Athletics +0, Acrobatics +6, Dexterity save +6), who uses a *potion of jump* (as *jump* spell) to increase her distance. She gains double the points for her Strength (Athletics) check. Borx tries to hide the fact that she is using the potion, but characters with a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can expose the cheating. If she is called out, she is disqualified.

Blimbo, an athletic halfling (use the **bandit** monster entry, Athletics +0, Acrobatics +2, Dexterity save +2), who is obviously afraid of the jump but wants to win the prize to loot some of the pearls at the pearl farms of Ronul's End.

Lurthilith Belvarax, a female dragonborn barbarian with a black dragon ancestry (use the **berserker** monster entry, Athletics +6, Acrobatics +2, Dexterity save +2), who jumps while raging loudly.

Critical Failure. A contestant who takes damage from the fall becomes a subject of talk in the city for the coming week.

Treasure

The winner of the contest is rewarded with a *potion of water breathing* and might gain advantage on Charisma ability checks in the capital for the next week, depending on the situation.

MALICIOUS TREASURE HUNT

Background

Aphinah enjoys seeing the exertion and the failures she can witness at the game events every year, but she has gotten bored with them. This year, she wanted something special, only for herself. So she has created a series of riddles and challenges for those foolish enough to follow the clues that she has left around the city. She used some of the Royal Swords to plant the clues and forbade them to talk about them. Aphinah moves between spots as the first curious individuals react and watches them from hidden positions, laughing at their daring struggles and greed for treasure.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points for each stage of the treasure hunt completed.

Writing on the Bridge

Environment

A mysterious text appears in the middle of Grankar's Chains (Onadbyr location 55.) bridge on the morning of the King's Games.

"A curious thing lies at the top of the chain, claiming it is truly a hero's game."

Written in Common in black paint done with a broad brush.

Scene

Many people on the bridge are trying to decipher the riddle, and many look upwards to the top of the two arches of the structure, which are 40 feet above the bridge and 60 feet above the river, but only a few have dared to climb up to see if there's any hidden treasure on top of the arches. Climbing one of the two arches is an obviously dangerous task that can be done only through the chains or the sheer wall of the arch.

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Aphinah has ordered a couple of Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) to patrol the area. It requires a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to climb the bridge's arches without being noticed by the soldiers. On a failed skill check, two of the Royal Swords notice the characters and approach them, asking questions about their actions and persons, forcing them to exit the area while threatening legal punishment.

It requires a successful **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb to the top of the arch. On a failed check, the character can choose to make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw to twist their body and try to fall on the bridge instead of the water. On a successful save, the character hits the bridge and takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. On a failed save, the character falls in the water and takes falling damage. To reduce the falling damage when falling into the water, a character must succeed on a **DC 5 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failed save, the contestant takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. For every 5 points of success above the DC, the damage is reduced by 7 (2d6).

On the top of one of the two arches (decide which one randomly for the character who climbed up), another text is painted with a broad brush.

"To find your treasure, you need to do less than you expect, visit the green giant, and to the bugs you must pay your respect."

Aphinah watches the arches from a large bushy area surrounded by a few Knights of the Crown, her personal bodyguards, who protect her when she is out in the city. It requires a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to spot her laughing at anyone falling from the arches of the bridge.

Bugs under the Giant

Environment

The excavations around the Napping Giant (Onadbyr location 74.) are roped off from the streets and no one is allowed to enter the site except for the members of the Chamber of Royal Historians.

Scene

Aphinah has ordered a couple of Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) to patrol the area. It requires a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to get close to the enormous statue without being noticed by the soldiers. On a failed skill check, two of the Royal Swords notice the characters and approach them, asking questions about their actions and persons, forcing them to exit the area while threatening legal punishment.

A few bugs crawl on a large flat rock painted with an X lying next to the statue. When moved, four **swarms of insects** crawl up from under it and attack the characters. Any loud noise that would disturb the currently relatively empty neighborhood draws the Royal Swords to the site within 1d4 rounds.

The bottom of the rock has a new text painted in black with the same broad brush.

"To find your next clue, look under the venerable, tread through his bile most unbearable."

Aphinah watches the site from behind the trees, surrounded by some of the Knights of the Crown. It requires a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to spot her laughing at anyone attacked by the insect swarms.

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Old Man's Bile

Environment

There is an intricately decorated maintenance hole on both ends of Old Man's road, which is bustling with people. The maintenance holes lead down to the sewers through an iron ladder. Foul-smelling waste flows slowly at the height of 3 feet in the tubular tunnels that run for almost 2,000 feet under Old Man's road.

Scene

Aphinah has ordered a couple of Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) to patrol the area. Lifting the maintenance hole in the middle of the busy street attracts two Royal Swords within 1d4 rounds. The soldiers start questioning the characters and hush them away if they catch them. They will casually follow them on the streets from a distance, keeping an eye on them for 2d6 minutes. The Royal Swords will not risk entering the sewers to pursue the characters and only do so if they have been threatened by them.

The waste in the tunnels has a gut-wrenching sickening smell, so strong that anyone within 10 feet of the sewage must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned for 10 minutes and lose concentration on spells. Anyone in contact with the waste for more than 3 rounds risks catching **sewer plague**.

Another one of Aphinah's rhyming clues is painted in large letters on the tunnel wall, spelling it out as it stretches all the way on the side of the sewer section.

"You proved you are persistent,
the treasure is no longer mine,
it awaits you high in the crown,
at the feet of the nine."

Aphinah watches the site from a faraway corner, surrounded by some of the Knights of the Crown. It requires a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to spot her laughing at anyone exiting the sewers through the maintenance holes.

The Treasure Tree

Environment

At the southern end of the Nine Arches (Onadbyr location 125.) bridge, a large oak tree grows that is over two hundred years old. The streets are busy with people around its massive trunk.

Scene

The enormous tree stands 90 feet tall and has sprawling, twisted branches and rough, ridged bark. A character who examines the tree's crown can spot a small wooden potion rack with four vials inside, carefully balanced on one of the wide outlying branches with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. Climbing the tree requires a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The branch where the box sits has been cut almost all the way through, sabotaged by a Royal Sword under Aphinah's command. A character who gets close to the wide branch can notice the fine cut with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The branch breaks off under the weight of more than 10 pounds of pressure. Anyone on the branch when it breaks falls to the ground and takes 24 (7d6) bludgeoning damage, which can be halved with a successful **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw.

The long and heavy branch threatens to hit three bystanders on the ground, who are just passing below the tree. It falls at an Initiative count of 10. Any character who is quicker can try to save the citizens, who would otherwise get killed by the force of the branch if not warned. The Royal Swords arrive at the scene in 1d4 rounds and restrain those who fell from the tree until a Red Cloak comes. The Red Cloak inspects the scene thoroughly, noting that the tree was sabotaged, and at the end, lets everyone go. If the characters tell the Red Cloak about the clues and the treasure hunt, the official takes note of every detail and leaves with a befuddled expression. The Red Cloak visits all of the mentioned sites, and soon, every hint leads through the Royal Swords to the Royal Palace. Finally, the Red Cloak reports the incident. As a result, King Waldrann, who is under the constant effects of the *philters of love* dosed to him

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by Queen Lyrencia, will soon have yet another one of those very forgiving discussions with Aphinah.

The potion rack on the branch shatters along with its contents when the branch falls. The vials in the rack contain perfumes, all with especially strong and distastefully sweet odors.

If anyone has fallen into her devious trap, Aphinah passes the scene in a carriage followed by two Knights of the Crown and snickers to herself at the torment of those present as she passes by.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES

Background

The large crowd and the heavier than usual purses draw criminals out from the shadows onto the streets every year on the day of the King's Games. The Royal Swords are prepared and are patrolling the main roads and larger squares, keeping an eye out for suspicious activities, but the numerous small nameless gangs and more so the daring and organized Uncanny Vagabonds and the Golden Masks have learned how to avoid them. Use the following encounters throughout the King's Games whenever you feel like adding some background events to the King's Games.

Cakes of Coma

Background

This robbery is usually a safe and easy way for the Uncanny Vagabonds to make some quick gold. They sell some poisoned food and follow the victim until it knocks them out, to then rob them of their belongings.

Scene

The Uncanny Vagabonds are swarming in one location, keeping an eye out for each other and the patrolling soldiers, until they have drawn enough attention onto themselves, when they move to another prospective location in the city where many people gather. Nanushka, an elderly woman (use the **bandit** monster entry with the ability to cast *vicious mockery* once per day) who is one of the Vagabonds, is selling small pastries, cakes, and candies from a large basket suspended from her neck. She is looking for customers who flash a fat purse, or anything valuable when buying her goods and who are also possibly alone. She hands a poisoned version of the snacks to these targeted victims, laced with a special poison. Anyone eating such a poisoned snack must succeed on a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw 10 minutes after ingesting the sweet or become poisoned for 1 hour. The poisoned creature falls unconscious. The creature wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

"Sweeeats, candieees, caaakes! Two coppers each! I taught your grandmother how to bake them."

Nanushka shouting over the noise of the crowd to prospective clients.

Two of the more capable Vagabonds, Jaroshk and Srany (use the **assassin** monster entry with the ability to cast *vicious mockery* once per day), follow such victims for an hour and try to rob them when and if they collapse due to the drug. The two criminals can be spotted trailing their victim with a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The vagabonds jump the victims as soon as they fall unconscious, rob them of any visibly valuable belongings, and then run off into the crowd. If caught or cornered, they whistle hard and their reinforcements arrive within 1d4 rounds in the form of three members from their family (use the **thug** monster entry with the ability to cast *true strike* once per day).

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Turtle Balls

Background

This is one of the oldest and simplest hustles of the Uncanny Vagabonds, used to make some easy and fast money in a crowd. It involves a dealer named Ikkos, two planted players named Darlam and Valistro, and a pickpocket named Rados (use the **spy** monster entry for all of them with the ability to cast *vicious mockery* once per day).

The dealer shuffles a soft red ball under three small turtle shells, showing it regularly to the spectators who can bet on any of the shells when the shuffling stops. If the ball is under the shell, then the bettor wins double their bets. The dealer does the shuffling very fast and hides the ball with a pinky finger when showing. The only ones who actually win in the game are their Vagabond allies, who pretend to be players. They comment, bet and sometimes win, doing it all very loudly to attract the bystanders' attention and maybe some dupes who would bet coins.

Scene

The dealer stands behind a makeshift table in the middle of the street, shuffling the shells. A small group of people has gathered in front of him, watching the game, with some bettors who seem very enthusiastic and dedicated to win or curse loudly about their bad luck.

"Three old turtles in a brothel,
they share one ball, but they don't
seem to bother! Which one is it?
Can you guess it! You good Sir, in the
blue tabard, can you pick the one?
Double or nothing! Try your luck!
You look like a lucky fellow."

Ikkos gabbling while rapidly shuffling the shells.

Noticing the trick with the ball requires a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. On a failed check, the player believes to know the ball's location under one of the shells. Noticing Rados, the pickpocket in action also requires a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check from anyone who actively surveys the crowd, but anyone who has made a skill check to notice the trick with the ball has disadvantage on this check. On a failed check, Rados is able to lift a small valuable object like a light weapon, a potion, wand, or scroll, or a purse with no more than 20 coins in it. Rados attempts to pickpocket multiple victims.

All four Vagabonds start to run in the same direction If the trick is revealed or if the pickpocket is spotted if caught or cornered, they whistle hard and their reinforcements arrive within 1d4 rounds in the form of three members from their family (use the **thug** monster entry with the ability to cast *true strike* once per day).

Two Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) arrive in 2d4 rounds if alerted and restrain anyone involved in the incident before one of them leaves to call in a Red Cloak. They pursue and capture anyone who disobeys their orders or tries to flee. A Red Cloak arrives in 2d4+2 minutes with two more soldiers and arrests and charges the criminals (see Laws in the Kingdom of Aglarion section for more details).

The Secret Level

Background

Samsadur, leader of the Golden Masks, has long suspected the existence of the secret level at the Lucky Leap. It is curious to know about the secrets of the crafty and seasoned ex-adventurer who has his hands in many pots. The rakshasa expects to find treasure and information within the tavern, which it knows is well protected. Samsadur plans to have its agent explore the Lucky Leap during the day, while Ricio Tane is busy managing his temporary drink stands scattered all over the city for the day of the King's Games.

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Environment

The Lucky Leap is busy with guests, especially in the late morning before and after the Merfolk Lumberjacks event takes place at Zhankar Plaza. An unusual number of guests try the jumping challenge for the free drinks. The tavern is decorated with yellow, green, and white ribbons in honor of the king and House Azennar.

Scene

One of the characters returning from the lavatories sees a dark figure standing on the stairs that lead to the basement. The humanoid male figure's features are unrecognizable in the dim light. He opens a secret wall section, enters through, and closes the door. Anyone investigating the scene finds the fake secret room (area 11 of the Lucky Leap tavern) and a young human in ordinary clothing standing in the middle of it. The man is Khoglit Agatehands, one of the **deep gnome** infiltrators of the Golden Masks under the effects of his *disguise self* innate spell ability. The svirfneblin immediately tries to flee when discovered, casting *blindness/deafness* at anyone in his way and *blur* to protect himself. If he successfully climbs the stairs and leaves the tavern, his two **deep gnome** brothers, Gritlit and Zorfbit, and their **doppelganger** commanders named Sanjalar, Bratiusto, and Xalomox, who are hiding amongst the customers disguised as ordinary citizens, also soon leave the tavern. The deep gnomes use their *disguise self* innate spell ability, which lasts only for one hour, and their permanent *nondetection* innate spell ability.

If Khoglit is caught or prevented from escaping, Sanjalar jumps over the bar (area 2 of the Lucky Leap tavern), activates the lock-down mechanism, and grabs one of the confused and frightened young maids named Hala, taking her as a hostage by holding a dagger to her neck. The doppelganger demands everyone sit down on the floor and remain silent while one of the deep gnomes, preferably Khoglit, who has already been exposed, searches the Lucky Leap for its secrets. Sanjalar tells the guests that others of his kind are hidden amongst their ranks, ready to strike. The guests (use the **commoner** monster entry) are ordinary people who are slightly intoxicated. Seeing the young barmaid threatened in such a manner angers many of them, especially capable people, who slowly form into a mob to rescue Hala, not seeing the threat it poses to her. The doppelganger is ready to kill Hala with one flick of a wrist. It viciously attacks anyone to defend itself after discovering that it cannot reset the mechanism to escape. A character who wishes to calm the forming mob or take over negotiations can do so with a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. On a failed check, the doppelganger kills Hala and three customers from the mob who deal 10 damage to Sanjalar before backing off. The other doppelgangers don't reveal themselves at this point. Sanjalar takes another hostage and orders the guests again to stay put until they find some evidence of the secret level and can steal some of Ricio's treasure. The other deep gnomes act as guests until their disguise lasts.

"Stay put, you incompetents!
I will tell you when to move.
I didn't come alone. My kin could
be the person right next to you."

Sanjalar threatening the crowd
of guests trapped at the Lucky Leap.

Khoglit or one of the other deep gnomes goes back to the fake secret room (area 11) while their doppelganger leader keeps the crowd of frightened guests at bay. He searches the room and triggers the poison trap on the chest, which instantly kills him. At this

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stage, the doppelganger angrily orders another of the deep gnomes to resume the search quickly. The next gnome recovers the body of his dead brother and the treasure from the fake secret room (area 11), then searches the storage (area 3) and the stockroom (area 15), but finds nothing.

When the deep gnomes find nothing other than the fake secret room, one of the doppelgangers discharges an *eversmoking bottle,* which suddenly fills the taproom with smoke and panics the trapped crowd, which tries to break free at all of the exits of the taproom at once, tumbling over each other in the blinding smoke. The main taproom and the bar become difficult terrain at this point. Sanjalar releases its hostage and polymorphs into a new form using his shapechange ability to blend in with the guests before trying to destroy the metal plate together with its doppelganger subordinates. They attack the main door with their slam attacks, which are ineffective due to the object's damage threshold. Once the metal plates are forced open, the disguised doppelgangers and the deep gnomes exit the tavern together with a number of coughing, frightened guests and try to get away. If the characters question all of the guests to find out who the disguised assailants are, it requires a successful **DC 9 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to identify the deep gnomes, and a **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to unveil Sanjalar or the other doppelgangers.

When bystanders outside the tavern see the metal plates shutting down the exits of the building on all levels, they call for the Royal Swords, who arrive in 1d4 minutes. They are hesitant to interfere and will not force the metal plates open unless they hear anyone screaming from the inside. Ricio Tane is soon alerted by one of his neighbors, and he arrives twenty minutes after the lock-down mechanism is activated. Either after the soldiers detect actual danger, or when Ricio Tane arrives and immediately calls for help, a Red Cloak arrives at the location within 2d4+2 minutes. In the meantime, Ricio Tane enters the tavern via one of his secret doors and opens the lock-down mechanism. If the Royal Swords or the Red Cloak catch any of the deep gnomes or the doppelgangers, they immediately sentence them for the crimes they committed.

Treasure

One of the doppelgangers has an *eversmoking bottle,* and all of them are equipped with a *robe of the wardrobe,* 5 silver pieces and 26 gold pieces, and a dagger. The deep gnomes each have 14 silver pieces and 8 gold pieces.

Fake Robbery

Background

Gambling is not regulated in Aglarion and it becomes a case for a Red Cloak only if the organizer cheats the announced game rules. The Golden Masks have set up a raffle lottery with a guaranteed prize of 100 gold pieces. Anyone can add any amount of gold pieces and each gold coin gets painted with the name of the owner before being added to the pooled bets. The game promises that a coin is drawn randomly outside the Mule Gate before the start of the Battle of the Champions, and whoever has their name on the lucky coin wins the entire pot of gold. The event is also advertised on large posters throughout the main traffic hubs of the city. The drawing is organized by two **doppelgangers** named Mezanux and Verenkilar. The Golden Masks plan to enact a fake robbery before the drawing to steal all the money and then disappear into the Shanties. Yhlsaby, the **lamia** captain of the Gold Masks, stands near the crowd in an unrecognizable human form and helps its doppelganger subordinates with her innate spells.

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Environment

A glass bowl, the size of a large basket, stands on a 5 foot high large wooden platform on the Long Road, near the Fiery Hooves. The two doppelgangers wear the visage of two young women and are standing on the platform next to the bowl in bright, elegant dresses, smiling widely as they handle each coin's bets and signatures. A large wooden board stands next to the bowl, decorated colorfully and describing the game's simple rules. A sizable crowd whirls around the podium, some people just staring, others betting, or discussing chances.

Scene

The streets become less and less crowded as the time for the Battle of the Champions draws near. Those who have added their gold to the bowl remain around the podium, around a hundred people. Quite a few voice their demand for the draw to start as soon as possible, as they don't want to miss the opening ceremony of the main event.

"If I win, I'm going to buy something nice at the Elegant Elephant for my wife. She spends more time in the shop staring at those fancy pieces of fabric than anywhere else these days."

An enthusiastic bettor to his friend while waiting for the draw.

Suddenly a closed carriage with covered windows drawn by two horses races out from a nearby street and crashes into the crowd in front of the podium. Each creature standing in front of the platform must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one as the horses and the carriage hit the crowd. The carriage is driven by a half-orc ruffian named Xalistran (use the **thug** monster entry) who shouts at the crowd to back off, while four muscular figures jump out of the carriage, each wearing splint mail and armed with a longsword and a light crossbow, which they point at the bystanders. These four figures are created by Yhlsaby's (use the **lamia** monster entry) innate *major image* spell, which she casts imperceptibly from a corner of the street. A creature that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an Illusion with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** check. The figures threaten the two doppelgangers (who pose as the young hosts) at sword point and order them to board the carriage together with the bowl. The lamia captain ends the spell as its illusory warriors board the carriage, and walks away from the scene.

The two doppelgangers jump into the carriage even if the illusory nature of the assailants is discovered, heading out of the city through Mule Gate at full speed, crashing into and wiping away some of the Royal Arrows (use the **scout** monster entry) who guard the gates. The carriage moves at a speed of 60 feet per round and travels for several miles, stopping only when the Golden Masks on board make sure that they are not followed.

The scene at the podium soon draws more of the Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry), but the Royal Arrows at the gate react immediately and call for a Red Cloak who arrives in 2d4+2 minutes. The officer quickly organizes a chase party, which follows the tracks but finds only the empty carriage without the horses near a forested area. Xalistran, Mezanux, and Verenkilar use their advantage to ride into the woods with the gold if the characters are unable to stop them, later returning to the Loud and Lusty to deposit their plunder.

Treasure

The glass bowl contains 1032 gold pieces at the moment of the robbery. Each doppelganger wears a *robe of the wardrobe,* and carries 9 silver pieces, 19 gold-pieces, and a dagger.

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Battle of the Champions

IN THE DOG PIT

Background

The Battle of the Champions is the culmination of the King's Games and is held in the Dog Pit (Onadbyr location 103.) arena soon after nightfall. It features bouts of single, hand-to-hand combat between champions over multiple rounds. Even the king takes part as a renowned veteran and the usual champion of the event. Each combatant offers a magical item or valuable possession on their person that they must relinquish to their opponent should they lose their bouts. The main prize is a private audience with the reigning monarch, but since King Waldrann usually takes the trophy, the joke of late and one that encompasses someone's superiority has been "a royal audience of one."

One of the entrants of the event, the Raven Knight, is actually an erinyes formed from the soul of the former Queen Elyssa, just recently summoned from Hell through the Shrouding Gate at the Old Grinder Mill and imbued with a *nondetection* effect that keeps her nature and intentions hidden. The Raven Knight has been commanded by Blister to take part in the battle and kill the King. Her helmet fully covers her visage, and her plate armor and heavy cloak hide her wings. She tries not to speak so as not to be betrayed by the devilish tint of her voice, and only tersely claims to have come from a faraway land to the south, beyond the Drayl City-States. Her task is to wait until matched against her former husband, the King, so she may slay him in retribution for his wrongs and to finally set the Midnight Curse in action. When her task on the Material Plane is completed, her pact compels her to return to Demonbane Isle in Hell (Bleak Mire location 64b. in Chapter 5).

Environment

The walls of the Dog Pit and the stands are illuminated with torches and packed with cheering crowds, while food vendors hawk fried giant frog-legs in the stands. The crowd extends to the areas surrounding the Dog Pit, as the live commentary of the battles is presented by Joffer Pebblefoot, the Pit Master of the arena. His voice is enhanced by magic and can be clearly heard outside the walls of the Dog Pit as well. The air is thick with dust, sweat, and anticipation for the bouts to start. The pit is an oval 150 by 100 feet wide. On one side, a royal's pavilion is set up on the grounds, seating King Waldrann, Queen Lyrencia, and Princess Aphinah, who await the festivities

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flanked by Lord Cyne Monder and six Knights of the Crown. Healers congregate on the broader sides of the arena, ready for any accident that might befall the contestants.

Scene

When the sun sets, Joffer Pebblefoot stands forth and starts to officiate the event, outlining the rules of combat and introducing the Champions as they assemble in front of the royals, raising their weapons in honor to the King and his family. They each also present the prizes they offer, pledged as the entry fee to the event.

"Long live the King! Please calm and welcome our champions of the battle! Let me introduce them and their prized offerings to you one by one!"

Joffer Pebblefoot starting his opening speech, his voice booming over the arena.

Rules. Combat is broken into matches, where each champion will face another in single combat. The names of the combatants are drawn randomly from a velvet bag and matched against each other by Princess Aphinah, who is constantly giggling at her own mockeries thrown at the contestants. A fight lasts until one of the combatants forfeits and the defeated contestant can't join a new match. After each match, champions who qualify in their round are cured of all wounds by clerics delegated by the city's numerous temples. The winner of a match receives the item offered by the loser at the start of the tournament. Outside assistance is prohibited, as are effects that damage anyone in the stands. In these cases, the recipient of outside assistance or whoever damages the crowd is immediately disqualified and is handed over to the Red Cloaks.

Contestants. Use these contestants for the Battle of the Champions event and pair any of them, except for King Waldrann and the Raven Knight, with a character on a random basis or by selecting them. You can also pair characters to fight each other. Match opponents in multiple rounds until only one character remains, but make sure to start out with an even number of contestants, even if you have to remove some of the premade NPC contestants to achieve this. That character has won the semifinals. The other pair battling to get into the final match will be King Waldrann Azennar and the Raven Knight.

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Gratus Ultio

Gratus Ultio is one of the most loyal and honest of Lord Cyne Monder's Knights of the Crown. He is of angelic descent, clearly visible in his slightly glowing yellow eyes. He is a shrewd individual, distrusting of everyone who is not known to him. Gratus pledges his *+1 silvered shortsword,* a family heirloom.

Gratus Ultio is a **Knight of the Crown** with the following modifications:

- Gratius is *lawful good*.
- He has darkvision to 60 feet.
- He has resistance to necrotic and radiant damage.
- He is able to cast *light* once per day.

"I greet you, worthy opponent. Let us not forget that this is purely a contest."

Gratus Ultio's first words before combat.

Havelpov Wolf-fang

Havelpov Wolf-fang, an orc barbarian from the lands beyond Vordan in the north, was chosen by his tribe as the strongest and mightiest to take part in the Battle of the Champions in distant Onadbyr. He is a seasoned warrior, scarred by many battles, and wears a wolf pelt around his massive shoulders. Despite his ferocious appearance, Havelpov is fun-loving and boisterous, singing his own praises and those of his tribe loudly for all to hear. The orc is quite drunk during the event (see The Mask's Edge event below). Havelpov Wolf-fang pledges his *barbed net of entanglement*.

Havelpov Wolf-fang is a **berserker** with the following modifications:

- Havelpov is *chaotic neutral*.
- He has darkvision to 60 feet.
- He has the poisoned condition.
- ***Aggressive.*** As a bonus action, Havelpov can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.
- He fights with a lance instead of a greataxe.
- He is equipped with a *barbed net of entanglement*.

"You want my net? I will make you wear it! Bhhaaaa!"

Havelpov Wolf-fang charging.

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KAGRIAN IRONSINEW

Kagrian Ironsinew is a gruff dwarven weaponsmith who was formerly a renowned adventurer and warrior, now running the Bearded Warrior weapons shop in Onadbyr. He uses the Battle of the Champions as an annual advertisement for his shop and has no illusions about winning. He wears an old and worn splint mail and an ancient helm decorated with a few gems. Kagrian is most interested in creating a spectacle and showing off his flail, which is truly a masterfully crafted item, to attract customers to his shop. He is not overly concerned about his armor that has been sabotaged by the Golden Masks (see The Mask's Edge event below). Kagrian Ironsinew pledges his helm, which is actually a *helm of brilliance* from the time of the the Order of Eternal Light with three opals and two rubies remaining in its mountings.

Kagrian Ironsinew is a **veteran** with the following modifications:

- Kagrian is *neutral*.
- He has darkvision to 60 feet.
- He has advantage on saving throws against poison.
- He has resistance against poison damage.
- He has a -4 penalty to his AC due to his sabotaged armor.
- He fights with a *+1 flail* instead of a longsword, which he wields in two hands. He has +6 to hit and deals 9 (1d10 + 4) damage.
- He is equipped with a *helm of brilliance* with three opals and two rubies.

"See this flail? It has been quenched with special mineral oils. Visit my shop if you want to own something of similar craftsmanship."

Kagrian Ironsinew addressing the crowd rather than his opponent before battle.

VRAGI

Vragi is a traveling monk from the Shandar Mountains, where he has been mastering the ways of the Stonefist to make his body as hard as granite. He has a clean-shaven head, and his body is decorated in tattoos, giving his skin a stony texture. Vragi is a laconic person, often single-minded and impatient but can be temperamental at times. He is also generous, sharing his meager earthly possessions if need be. Vragi pledges his *+1 adamantine quarterstaff*.

Vragi is a **stonefist devotee** with the following modifications:

- Vragi is *neutral good*.
- He fights with a *+1 adamantine quarterstaff*. He has +7 to hit and deals 7 (1d6 + 4) damage.

"It takes time to carve a mountain."

Vragi commenting on his opponent after deflecting a strike.

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Cay Tali Valberg

Cay Tali Valberg is a half-copper dragon sorcerer-spellthief from the Isles of Xantharos, who has been living in Aglarion and making a living as a very creative part-time adventurer and burglar. He is reserved and kind, finding particular delight in silly riddles. Cay uses his golden lion figurine to gain advantage against opponents in melee combat. Cay is also cheating, using his *Steal Spell* ability to draw spells from an allied spellcaster in the first row of the arena (see the Spell Smugglers event below). Cay Tali Valberg pledges a single golden lion *figurine of wondrous power*.

Cay Tali Valberg is a **spellthief adept** with the following modifications:

- Cay is *neutral*.
- He has blindsight up to 10 feet and darkvision up to 60 feet.
- ***Breath Weapon (Recharge 5-6).*** Cay Tali Valberg exhales acid in a 20-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a **DC 11 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- He is equipped with a *figurine of wondrous power* (a single golden lion).

"Say hello to my kitty. She bites."

Cay Tali Valberg smiling while activating his golden lion figurine.

The Raven Knight (use the **erinyes** monster entry) is a mysterious female figure clad in plate armor fashioned in the likeness of a raven, with feathery embellishments and iron wings folded onto its back under a heavy cloak. The Raven Knight offers her magical flaming sword (which really is a *nine lives stealer* longsword engulfed in flames by her *Hellish Weapon* ability).

After all the pledges have been made, King Waldrann Azennar, King of Aglarion, stands and readies his signature *spriggan shield* and *falcon blade,* striking an imposing figure in his lavishly decorated armor. Next, the king offers up his *ring of prestidigitation* inlaid with a diamond worth 1000 gold pieces.

"We declare the Battle of the Champions commenced! We thank you for your offerings, made with brave and noble spirit. May the best combatant triumph again...
- (the crowd laughs and cheers) -
and the entertainment be rousing!"

King Waldrann Azennar's pronouncement signaling the start of the Battle of the Champions.

Raven Knight

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OUTSIDE THE RING

Background

Since probably not all the characters will be taking part in the Battle of the Champions, some events taking place in the stands could impact the tournament's outcome.

Severe Wounds

Background

Healers are in short supply, and as the battles progress, the wounds pile on. Characters who don't take part in the battles can lend a hand in the rounds of healing after each round if they have access to healing spells or have proficiency in the Medicine skill. Some wounds will be serious and immediate emergency care is often needed to avoid fatal injuries or long-term damage.

Scene

One of the contestants suffers a mighty blow to the head and falls unconscious. The victim can be brought back with a **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check or curative magic. However, noticing that the victim suffers from a concussion requires another successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check. The concussion can be cured with a *lesser restoration* spell or long-term care. If characters are successful in aiding the victim, they can gain an important ally.

One of the contestants suffers a deep gash on their face, and though healing magic will cure the wound, the scar that might remain would disfigure the injured contestant for life. On a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check, a character can mend the skin in a skillful way that it doesn't leave a scar after healing magic is applied, or natural healing cures the wound.

One of the contestants suffers a deep cut through one of their eyes, and though healing magic will cure the wounds, the eye must be saved to avoid permanent blindness. On a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check, a character can carefully tend to the wound and save the contestant's eyesight.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points for each successful treatment.

Spell Smugglers

Background

Cay Tali Valberg leaves nothing to chance, especially regarding his own safety or winning valuable magic items. The tricky half-dragon has arranged a front-row seat for one of his long-time friends and adventuring companions named Galtaro Moonstone. Galtaro is a seasoned human **mage** who agreed to seamlessly transfer spells to Cay by allowing him to use his steal spell ability on him.

Scene

During the battle, if Cay runs low on spells or if he finds himself in a situation where a certain spell might come in handy, he navigates to the side of the battleground and touches his friend unobtrusively to use his *Steal Spell* ability. He can choose from Galtaro's list of known spells, which are the following: *color spray, false life, hideous laughter, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep*. Noticing the outside help requires a **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. Cay Tali Valberg is eliminated from the tournament if his trick is reported to the authorities.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they uncover Cay Tali Valberg's trick.

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The Mask's Edge

Background

Hauris, the doppelganger Golden Mask lieutenant, is handling the organization's gambling enterprise during the event in the form of Gulfa the bugbear. Naturally, the odds have been heavily influenced by the schemes of the Golden Masks.

Environment

Two Golden Mask street soldiers accompany Gulfa as muscle (use the **thug** monster entry) and two Golden Mask operatives (use the **spy** monster entry) who act as lookouts and secure the perimeter. They stand at the top of the stairs of the Dog Pit in the middle of a circle of people, taking and handing out notes on bets made.

Scene

Gulfa (use the **doppelganger** monster entry) will take bets on the final outcome of the tournament before it begins and before each round for the upcoming round, with a minimum bet of 20 gold pieces for the final winner and 5 gold pieces for each match. His odds are 1 to 5 for the final champion and 1 to 1.5 for each match, except for a match that involves the King, on which he will not accept bets.

"Chekk da runnarz! One to four on da champ, ovah and undah. Da books are open!"

Gulfa gathering punters in the crowd.

Hauris, posing as Gulfa, has befriended Havelpov Wolf-fang and has been drinking with the barbarian before the battles. The gang has spiked the orc's drink and he is now poisoned as a result. The Golden Masks make sure that Havelpov stays clear of healers and will discourage any interference into his state. A character who can get past Hauris and his gang, or one that faces the barbarian in a battle can notice his inebriated state with a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** or **Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check. The barbarian will be grateful for the assistance and new drinking companions after the games.

The Golden Masks have also sabotaged Kagrian Ironsinew's splint armor, stealthily cutting a crucial shoulder strap while distracting the weaponsmith with interested buyers for his wares. He takes a -4 penalty to AC as a result. Kagrian has no means to mend the armor on the spot without his tools. A character who makes a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** check can spot the cut links of the armor and hear the grumblings of the dwarf, who is preparing his catchphrases about the Bearded Warrior weapons shop. If a character mends his armor, Kagrian will be grateful, offering a one-time 20% discount in his shop for the assistance.

Meddling in either scheme will immediately draw the ire of the Golden Masks. They will try to intimidate characters with threats of unforeseen consequences in their future endeavors and general well-being. This is expertly done by Hauris, using its innate *Read Thoughts* ability, mind-affecting spells, and the muscle that swarm any meddler. The gang will not draw blood in the stands but will start to gather intelligence on the characters, with a plan to ambush them and even to infiltrate their ranks at some point with chosen identities.

Experience

Award the party 450 experience points for each contestant assisted.

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QUEEN'S RETRIBUTION

THE QUEEN'S RETRIBUTION

Background

After only one character remains in the tournament after their third match, the other qualifier match of the semifinals starts between the Raven Knight and King Waldrann Azennar.

Scene

At the beginning of the bout, King Waldrann uses his *spriggan shield* to grow to large size and occasionally seems to shift in space as his *falcon blade* is activated. The Raven Knight's longsword bursts into flames and it attacks from below, primarily targeting the King's feet and lower abdomen. Feel free to describe the battle as an even one between the two mighty warriors, and while it seems that King Waldrann will be triumphant, his blows cannot seem to pierce the Raven Knight's exceptional defenses. In the end, the Raven Knight parries a crucial hit and wounds the King's leg, causing him to fall to the ground, her sword raised to the King's heart. At this point, the King smiles and forfeits.

"Well done! It has been long since anyone has bested us. Especially one of such intricate... skills. Claim your prize noble lady knight, as it is rightfully yours! I greatly anticipate our private audience. Show your face and be celebrated!"

King Waldrann Azennar as he lies at the feet of the Raven Knight.

The Raven Knight looms over the prone king, as she throws back her helmet and releases a catch on her armor that frees her wings from under the iron embellishments. All can see the former queen in her devilish form. The erinyes makes a declaration in a dolorious tone.

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"Waldrann, you are a kinslayer and traitor to your house! Not even death can avenge your deeds. I claim your soul as punishment. It is in Hell where we shall meet again!"

The Raven Knight before striking down King Waldrann Azennar.

The Raven Knight pierces the King's heart with a mighty thrust and her longsword flares with dark energies. The devil wails triumphantly and then vanishes in a swirling vortex as it is transported back to Hell, its contract fulfilled.

A wave of silence washes over the crowd, then suddenly panic and cries erupt from everywhere. Lord Cyne Monder and his knights, healers, friends, and family rush to the fallen king. Princess Aphinah and Queen Lyrecia stand almost still in the crowd of abrupt chaos. All healing magic of the desperate clerics fails, as no healing magic can restore the king's soul that has been stolen by the erinyes' *nine lives stealer*. The king is dead, and no winner is announced for the Battle of the Champions this year.

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Funeral of the King

Background

The entire city of Onadbyr is in a state of mourning after the tragic death of King Waldrann Azennar. Following an entire week of public mourning, the King's casket is led around the city in a ceremonial procession, led by an honor guard composed of the Knights of the Crown and the members of the royal household while the populace takes to the streets in somber tribute. The burial ceremony is planned for the hour of sunset in the Royal Mausoleum under the Royal Palace, which is open to the public during this woeful time.

If the characters were instrumental in saving Lord Cyne Monder's friends and the reporting of the events at the Old Grinder, or if they were noteworthy or even the winners by elimination at the Battle of the Champions, Lord Monder asks the characters to accompany the procession to the Royal Mausoleum. The private audience with the King would be a final farewell at his tomb.

Environment

Flags are flying at half-mast all over the capital and the majority of the populace wears black garb to show solidarity in grief with the royal family. A funeral procession carries the body of King Waldrann Azennar through the city, accompanied by his knights, led by Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder, who all slowly ride their horses with expressions of penitence on their faces. They return to the Royal Palace and stop at a wide stairway that descends to the Royal Mausoleum (Royal Palace area 3.) through a pair of double stone doors to a vast, constantly expanded underground chamber. This is where the monarchs of Aglarion and their families have been laid to rest since the founding of the Kingdom during the Melkar Dynasty over 650 years ago. The chamber's vaulting is 20 feet high, illuminated by torches that have been lit for the occasion. The mausoleum features alcoves where 15-foot dense iron and thick stone statues of the departed monarchs and their family members stand in various poses, at their feet sarcophagi with their mortal remains. King Waldrann's statue and sarcophagus have been commissioned by the king well in advance, showing the king in a glorious stance with his spriggan shield and the falcon blade in hand. On the right of the king's statue stands the silvered statue of Queen Elyssa. On its left an iron statue of the king's firstborn son and young Knight of the Crown, Krasnar holding his signature glaive, both with their sarcophagi at their feet.

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Scene

The funeral procession enters the mausoleum through the wide gates, and as the body of King Waldrann Azennar is about to be deposited in his sarcophagus along with his signature armaments, the temperature in the room suddenly drops, the flames of the torches seem to dim and the double gates of the Royal Mausoleum bang shut with a tremendous clamor. Opening the doors requires a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

The gigantic glaive in the hand of Krasnar's iron statue starts to glow with an eerie green light as a ghostly emanation in the shape of the glaive separates from the statue and flies menacingly, cutting anyone whose path it crosses, and lashing out at those that try to flee from its reach. Panic erupts among the crowd as people try to evade the ghostly glaive and to flee towards the locked doors that bar their exit from the crypts, which they cannot open. Lord Cyne Monder and four Knights of the Crown immediately form a protective ring around Queen Lyrencia and Princess Aphinah.

The **ghostly glaive** is a manifestation of Krasnar's tortured soul fragment that was bound in the iron statue by the Matrons of Malice when the statue was raised in the prince's memory many years ago. Krasnar's lingering soul-fragment is now angered by the arrival of his father's body in the chamber, awakening and manifesting his spirit to spread the fury of his tortured soul to anyone in its path. The ghostly glaive attacks anyone who uses divine spells or radiant energy to damage it or attacks the iron glaive itself on Krasnar's statue.

While the ghostly glaive is manifested, a sad melody fills the air, functioning as a *melancholic melody* spell.

"Murdereeeer! Your line will end here and your deed will be avenged!"

Krasnar's voice booming in the chamber in an otherworldly and spine-chilling tone.

Ghostly Glaive (CR 4, 1,100 XP). The ghostly glaive functions as a *spiritual weapon* spell of large size that can attack two adjacent creatures with one melee spell attack. It has a +10 to hit and deals 16 (2d10 + 5) force damage. The ghostly glaive has 42 hit points, can only be damaged by radiant damage, and can also make attacks of opportunity. It cannot be dispelled, however, *Turn Undead* can be used against it. The ghostly glaive makes a Wisdom saving throw with a +4 bonus. The ghostly glaive also dissipates if the iron glaive in the hands of Krasnar's statue is destroyed. The iron glaive has AC 19, 38 hit points, and a damage threshold of 5. The statue's body itself cannot be seriously wounded, as it is made of dense iron. The statue houses Krasnar's phylactery with half his soul inside, which will have a crucial role later in the adventure.

Once the ghostly glaive is defeated, the *melancholic melody* spell also ends and the force holding the door shut dissipates. The crowd flees from the Royal Mausoleum. It remains closed until a closer inspection is conducted by a group of local clerics, who eventually find no further evidence of any lingering haunts. Finally, King Waldrann Azennar's body is laid to rest in a shortened ceremony attended only by Queen Lyrencia, Princess Aphinah, and four Knights of the Crown, who carry the king's body.

Lord Cyne Monder falls deep into his thoughts and looks very careworn. He thanks the characters for their help in defeating the manifestation and leaves with a mumbled apology.

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Cursed Coronation

After Queen Aphinah is crowned and the Midnight Curse descends upon Aglarion, the characters must escape the throne room of the palace, which becomes the place of a purge against the holy among the crowd.

Plans of the Traitors

The fugitive knights and the characters find safe haven on the secret level of the Luck Leap, where they plan a heist for the crown of Aglarion, requiring multiple daring solutions.

Tomb of the Constructor

The characters travel to the secret tomb of Master Arlen the Constructor, seeking the master key. However, they are only second at the location, where Eshkilrantossiazz the green dragon also seeks the treasures within.

Emporium of Marvelous Rarities

The characters will attempt a daring counter-heist into the magic shop of Master Bertio Ranberd to empty the chest of magic nullification of the foul idol within, in the antimagic chamber connected to the vaults of the shop.

Hunt for the Royal Architect

The characters follow the trail of Narder Tyk, the royal architect, to the Monster Menagerie. However, the park has been transformed by the Midnight Curse into a dangerous place where the beasts have escaped their cages.

A Leap into Fire

Upon returning to the Lucky Leap, the characters find the inn burning and under attack by werehellhound knights. They must brave the flames to find a clue left by the slain Lord Cyne Monder.

The Hidden Vault of House Monder

The answers to the past lie in the secret vault of House Monder, through trapped chambers and the Golden Masks, who are the first to the scene.

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Chapter 2

The Midnight Curse

Characters should be level 6 when they start Chapter 2 of Crown of the Oathbreaker.

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CURSED CORONATION

KNIGHTS IN DISTRESS

Background

Lord Cyne Monder feels personally responsible for failing to protect the king, and he is conflicted, as are most of his knights. They seek guidance in prayer to their gods to soothe their feelings of guilt over their failure and strengthen their devotion to protect the monarch, regardless of how things turn out. They are aware of Princess Aphinah's deranged behavior and lust for causing suffering, which seriously troubles most of them. The knights are also wary about the manifestation of Krasnar's restless soul, which foreshadows some dark and unknown trouble in the background that they would need to uncover and resolve. A rumor also spreads amongst them about the possibility of the new queen disbanding the ancient knighthood. Some of the knights debate whether the true object of their oath is the crown, the monarch, or the kingdom itself. After the king's haunted funeral, the dwarven lord asks the characters to his house.

Environment

The villa of House Monder (Onadbyr location 89.).

Scene

The Crownwarden's home is patrolled by Knights of the Crown, which is unusual. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can notice the anxiety of the knights. When met, the troubled-looking lord invites the characters to the coronation ceremony of Princess Aphinah, hoping that they can assist if something goes astray. He doesn't hide his feelings and his dire concerns about the coronation and the kingdom's future. Lord Cyne Monder tries to convince the characters to work with him on uncovering the mysterious cult, which they have witnessed already at first hand. He also admits that he is concerned about what's to come and that he may need the characters' skills. The old paladin also offers 500 gold pieces to each of the characters up front and an invitation letter to the coronation ceremony if they join his efforts to uncover the mystery surrounding the death of King Waldrann Azennar.

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"We see a concerning period of history unfolding before our eyes. I want you to witness it, be part of it, and if needed, act upon it."

Lord Cyne Monder speaking with a heavy heart.

ALL HAIL THE QUEEN

Background

The Matrons of Malice have laid the foundations of their malicious plan long ago, and the time to set it in motion has arrived. The midnight hag coven has slowly built up their ambitious scheme, whose results will engulf a whole nation in suffering and will corrupt the land. They first tortured and stole the soul of Queen Elyssa, while each hag seduced King Waldrann and birthed three identical Princess Aphinahs to him. They then tricked the king into a hag pact and resurrected his son, who was murdered by his father and abandoned to the Bleak Mire. All these events underpinned their vile curse. As the pinnacle of their plans, Blister has had King Waldrann Azennar assassinated by Queen Elyssa in her erinyes form and is about to crown Princess Aphinah to trigger the Midnight Curse the hags had laid on the *crown of Aglarion* many years ago. Because Krasnar is technically still alive, Aphinah is not the rightful heir to the throne, and as a result, the pact will be broken, and the curse triggered. With Splinter and Tyke held captive by the aberration-venerating drow House Ausstyl, Blister, the only remaining active midnight hag of the coven, is bitter in her losses and is even more determined to unleash the Midnight Curse upon Aglarion and to take over the realm.

Environment

White marble covers the large throne room of the Royal Palace, whose 40-foot high ceiling and tall walls are inlaid with enormous windows that allow plenty of light to illuminate it in brightness during the day. The gates of the hall have massive iron wings, both decorated with the imposing images of Knights of the Crown in full regalia. Galleries with marble banisters run on both sides at the height of 10 feet, accessible from wide marble stairs. The hall ends in a large elevated stage accessible through a pair of narrow stairways on both sides. In the middle of the stage stands a large, intricately carved wooden throne painted in gold. Large silver candelabras are positioned throughout the room to provide light and heat generated by their enormous flaming braziers when lit. Large banners bearing the sigil of House Azennar hang in many places, covering the walls and giving the hall a warmer atmosphere. Servants from a few tables along the walls serve refreshments and snacks, handing out small silver plates and silver utensils with them.

Iron Gate. The gate is a large (20 by 20 feet) fortified iron gate that has AC 19, 80 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It is barred from the outside with an iron pole and can't be picked, but it can be forced open with a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

Many loyal followers of the crown have gathered for the coronation of the soon-to-become Queen Aphinah, the only known living heir to the late king. The crowd consists primarily of local nobles, recognized merchants, royal advisors, the members of the Court of Voices, priests of different temples, the three generals of the Royal Army, and other prominences and celebrities of the kingdom, as well as Laromarius, who represents the Arcane Tower. Some foreign, mostly Draylish representatives, are also present at the ceremony. In addition, all of the anointed Knights of the Crown are present, lining the walls, standing by the entry gate, and on the stage beside the throne, where Princess Aphinah sits, waiting to be crowned. Next to Princess Aphinah stands Blister in the form of Queen Lyrencia, extending one of her arms, ordering the crowd to silence themselves, and smiling as

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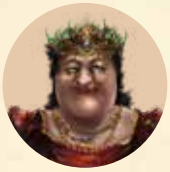
the group settles and the iron gate of the coronation room is closed.

As soon as they do, she begins the ceremony, first with a gracious speech evoking the royal heritage of House Azennar and the noble lineage of her daughter, who smiles on the throne wickedly. She continues with a lengthy description of the rights and privileges of a royal ruler. Finally, she declares bestowing these rights to Princess Aphinah, crowning her the Queen of Aglarion. As she places the crown on her head, the royal headpiece changes appearance, growing bony claw-like appendages and thorns. Dark magical runes appear on its surface and a ring of downward angled fangs extrude from it. The Midnight Curse has come full circle, and the pent-up powers of the vile ritual are unleashed over the Kingdom of Aglarion.

Suddenly thunder booms from outside and through the windows and a gathering of strange, thick purple clouds can be seen on the previously clear skies. Then, a bolt of lightning strikes outside the halls, as Queen Aphinah stands up laughing hysterically as her mother, still in the guise of the now Dowager Queen Lyrencia, seamlessly casts a *wall of force* spell on the front of the stage, using her innate spellcasting ability.

With the sounds of a heavy rainstorm building up outside, Queen Aphinah steps to the front of the stage. In a harsh and theatrical voice, she announces herself the new queen, demanding obedience and loyalty from all of her subjects. She then starts shouting her new laws, which makes the crowd first unsettled, then panicked.



"And no ponytails! I hate them! Cut them off together with the head."

Queen Aphinah announcing one of her new laws.

When she finishes her mad proclamations, she calls forth the Children of the Coven, who drop their visages granted by their *hag's form* ability and reveal themselves within the crowd, clad in robes and holding daggers. She introduces them as her spies who will reveal every secret that her enemies hide.

"The Children of the Coven are my eyes and ears, who will tell on you if you misbehave! They have already told me nasty tales about many of you! "

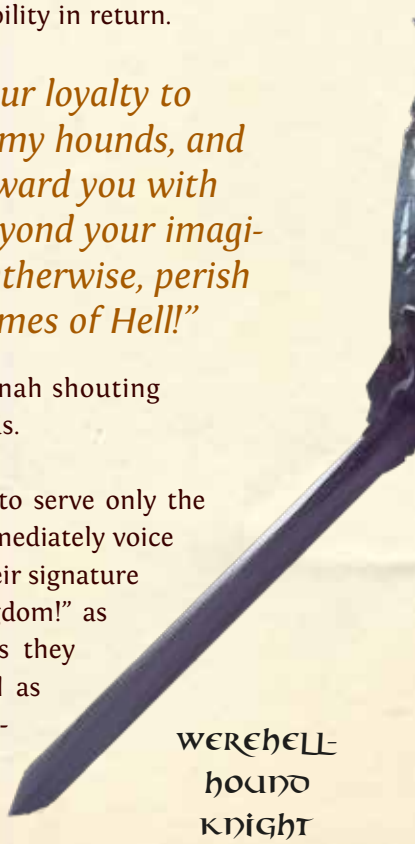
Aphinah introducing the witchservant cultists to the shocked crowd.

Finally, she points at Lord Cyne Monder, standing in the front of the crowd and shouting over the agitated sounds of the public. She hysterically demands the lord and all of the Knights of the Crown to repledge their allegiance to her while mockingly offering them a gift of invulnerability in return.

"Voice your loyalty to me now, my hounds, and I shall reward you with power beyond your imagination! Otherwise, perish in the flames of Hell!"

Queen Aphinah shouting her demands.

Most of the knights, raised to serve only the crown and the kingdom, immediately voice their pledges by shouting their signature motto, "For crown and kingdom!" as they bend the knee. But, as they do, their voices turn bestial as they transform into **werehellhound knights,** afflicted by the power of the curse. The rest of the hesitant knights watch the transformation of their brothers and sisters in horror and reach for their swords.



Werehellhound knight

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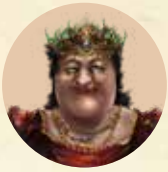
THE PURGE OF THE HOLY

Background

Blister knows that the two most significant forces that can oppose their plans are the Knights of the Crown and the clerics of the various temples who wield divine magic. They can remove their curses, including the lycanthropy of the werehellhounds, and they can ease the suffering of the people the hag wishes to rule and to torture slowly.

Scene

Queen Aphinah orders her werehellhound knights to kill all of the divine spellcasters, including the renegade Knights of the Crown and Lord Cyne Monder.



"Kill the pious snakes! I will not tolerate their gods any longer! Kill the priests and the knights!"

Queen Aphinah orders her minions to exterminate the faithful.

Absolute chaos erupts in the room in front of the stage and on the balconies as the panicked crowd wants to escape the terrifying beasts that have just been created. A small group of werehellhound knights blocks the iron gates of the hall, breathing fire on those who approach until their kin slaughter the paladin knights, priests, and anyone who opposes them. The non-combatants in the crowd first pile up in front of the gates, blocked by the fiery breath weapons of the werehellhound knights, then retreat to the stage and balconies, some of them crashing through the window, escaping to the courtyard 20 feet below. They are left alone by the werehellhound knights who pursue their targets - the priests and the paladins.

The renegade Knights of the Crown initially confront the werehellhound knights who vastly outnumber them. Lord Cyne Monder soon realizes that they will not be able to save the kingdom tomorrow if they die today. He orders his knights to protect the clerics and to retreat by focusing on the werehellhound knights at the gates. The renegade Knights of the Crown advance slowly while also shielding the priests of various religions from the onslaught, who occasionally heal and bolster them with their spells.

Only a few of those who possess martial or magical training oppose the werehellhound knights. Laromarius, the Golem Controller mage of the Arcane Tower, hastily casts *dimension door* and leaves the scene. Most of the low-level priests who are present at the ceremony flee for cover under the shields of the Knights of the Crown. The most notable figures who openly confront the **werehellhound knights** and the **witchservant agents** are the following. Use them in any of the events below to aid the characters.

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- General Brennur Starsmith (use the **gladiator** monster entry), one of the three generals of the Royal Army.
- Ry Kaly (use the **priest** monster entry), the young and ambitious cleric of the Redeemer, god of life.
- Sorastil Palantine (use the **priest** monster entry), a righteous cleric of the Relentless, god of strength.
- Father Kalozark Solamyr (use the **priest** monster entry), the aging tiefling cleric of the Temple of Light and Darkness.

The rest of the martially or magically trained NPCs in the coronation hall don't interfere with the will of the new queen. Instead, they protect themselves and try to stay out of the reach of the werehellhound knights.

Queen Aphinah observes the chaos from the front of the stage for a while, pressing against her mother's *wall of force*. She soon gets bored and leaves the scene through the back doors or through a *dimension door* spell cast by Dowager Queen Lyrancia if necessary. Some witchservant agents and werehellhound knights remain on the stage.

THE FIGHT FOR THE GATE

Background

A group of Knights of the Crown fights their way to the gates, protecting the priests and their acolytes with their shields and holy powers. It takes them 10 rounds to slowly navigate to the gates under the onslaught of Queen Aphinah's minions, where they continue the fight on two fronts with the werehellhound knights. (see the Between Two Fronts event below).

Environment

The crowd moves in unexpected waves that crush and reposition those within. Some of the candelabras fall over and form burning barricades, fueling the chaos within the hall. The banquet tables are either broken into pieces or lie turned over and surrounded by a slippery mix of food and beverages. The silver plates and utensils, including some knives (treat them as silver daggers), lie scattered all over the floor near these tables.

Panicked Crowd. The hall and the balconies on the side become difficult terrain and no creature can take the Dash action within the crowd. All creatures in the crowd have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks due to the loud noises and the constant shifting of the crowd. A spellcaster concentrating on a spell must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw every round or lose the spell. At the beginning of each round, roll a d20 on the following encounter table to determine the random events that happen to characters inside the crowd.

1-4	No special event.
5-8	A violent thrust of the crowd pushes the character. The character must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or fall prone, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage every round while prone from the trampling feet of the crowd. The character can make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw at the beginning of their round to stand up.
9-10	The crowd suddenly thickens around the character. The character must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or become restrained until the start of their next round and has disadvantage on attacks and Dexterity saving throws.
11-12	The crowd opens up slightly, leaving space to move. The area is not considered difficult terrain for the character until the start of their next round.
13-14	The unexpected movement from a nearby creature suddenly hits the character's hand. The character must make a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check or drop any item held.

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15-16	The character is hit by a random object, wide strike, or rogue ammunition from a weapon, taking 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing, slashing, or bludgeoning damage.
17	The character receives a *cure wounds* spell from a nearby priest and regains 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points.
18	A hostile creature that the character can target in the crowd is violently pushed aside. The creature takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and becomes prone. It stands up at the start of its next round.
19	Suddenly, a nearby creature gets in front of the character, their body blocking the first successful melee or ranged attack that would hit the character in this round, negating all of its damage.
20	Roll twice on the encounter table and apply both events rerolling a roll of 4 or lower.

Scene

Several smaller events occur around the characters as they drift within the crowd. Each event listed below allows the characters to save priests and knights from certain death and also helps in the final clash at the gate. The characters should encounter these events in the first few rounds of the 5 rounds that are required for the priests and the Knights of the Crown to reach the gate through the hall.

"Forward, true knights of a pure crown! The future of our kingdom depends on your survival! Fight until your last breaths!"

Lord Cyne Monder encouraging his knights.

The group of slowly advancing rebels doesn't fully halt to assist in the events outlined below (except for the event Between Two Fronts), but as they progress, the knights and the priests do everything they can to aid their ranks and allies. At the end of each round, the retreating group of knights and priests can perform one of the following actions on a creature within 5 feet:

- Change the target's AC to 20 for one round.
- Cast a *cure wounds* spell that removes 11 (2d8 + 2) damage.
- Cast a *lesser restoration* spell.
- Cast a *magic weapon* spell.
- Cast a *dispel magic* spell.

In addition, Lord Cyne Monder can perform each of the following actions once:

- Cast a *revivify* spell.
- Cast a *remove curse* spell, which permanently removes the lycanthropy from an afflicted werehellhound.

A NOBLE IN TROUBLE

Scene

Lady Zainda Domiren, an elderly noblewoman wearing heavy makeup and an even heavier selection of jewelry, shouts in pain and curses profanities from under one of the enormous candelabras that has fallen on top of her and broke her feet. Fire starts to spread over her long dress, and she is furiously trying to escape her dire situation but to no avail.

"You lazy bastards of a whore, help me! I'll burn alive! I'm too famous and rich to die like this!"

Lady Zainda Domiren shouting to her sons for help.

Her middle-aged, chubby, unmotivated, and currently quite confused sons - Zajeer, Malo, and Korzen - watch her from a distance. They push the crowd away as much as they can while holding onto the leash of three of Lady Zainda's favorite poodles

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that bark or whine madly as the crowd kicks them around. The brothers steer clear of the fight around them, struggling to reach their mother. However, the noblewoman is clearly doomed if not helped in the following few moments. A character that succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check realizes that her sons are faking their inability to assist her and are looking at each other suspiciously, obviously seeking affirmation in their hesitation from each other.

A character who hurries to aid Lady Zainda can make a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check every round to remove the large candelabra from her body. Unfortunately, the trashing noblewoman can survive for only three rounds in the flames while pressed under the heavy object's weight. After three rounds, she passes out and eventually dies, at which point her sons accuse anyone who tried to help with murdering their mother.

If the characters save Lady Zainda, she kisses them, leaving her deep red lip marks on her rescuer's cheeks, and gifts them with her necklace before retreating to a safer corner of the hall while chiding her sons.

Treasure

Lady Zainda's necklace is a golden chain with tiny beads of pearls mounted into it, worth 350 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can save Lady Zainda Domiren's life.

FANGS OF HELLFIRE

Scene

Two **werehellhound knights** are viciously attacking a single **Knight of the Crown** named Mason Darkhunter and his protectee, **Father Golvin,** the young half-blue dragon head cleric of the Temple of Knowledge from the Isles of Xantharos. The knight and the priest have been separated from the group led by Lord Cyne Monder and are cornered by the two lycanthropes. Father Golvin stands behind the knight and tries to aid him with his spells. The Knight of the Crown is at half of his maximum hit points.

Father Golvin. Use the **priest** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Father Golvin has blindsight with a radius of 10 feet and darkvision with a radius of 60 feet.
- He has resistance to lightning damage.
- ***Breath Weapon (Recharge 5-6).*** Father Golvin can exhale lightning in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- He has two 1st level, one 2nd level, and one 3rd level spell slots remaining.

MASON DARKHUNTER

"Resist the curse, my brothers!
Remember your prayers!
Remember your oath!"

Mason Darkhunter facing the werehellhound knights.

Treasure

Each werehellhound knight has 8 silver pieces and 5 gold pieces.

GREEDY RETRIBUTIONS

Background

Lord Dyrin Karramosa and his family are among the most esteemed nobles of Onadbyr. His lineage has long

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been one of the wealthiest in the kingdom, and the secret of their gem deposits has always been a subject of talk during the gatherings of the blue bloodied of the capital.

Scene

Using the chaos and hoping to avoid prosecution under the new leadership, a group of envious minor nobles and a few of their friends, accompanied by their servants, have taken on the opportunity to eliminate Lord Dyrin Karramosa and his two sons (use the **noble** monster entry). The **mob of frenzied nobles** has surrounded the lord and is about to lynch him. A character who wishes to interfere and disperse the lynch mob of nobles must succeed on a **DC 20 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion)** skill check. On a failed check the mob attacks the noble and the characters as well. On a successful check, the bloodthirsty group of nobles slowly scatters into the chaotic crowd that surrounds them.

"You think you're above us? Where are your mines? Your lineage ends here!"

The mob of frenzied nobles
threatening Lord Karramosa.

Treasure

The mob of frenzied nobles altogether have 392 silver pieces and 557 gold pieces on their persons, but it requires five rounds to collect all of the treasure from their bodies.

BETWEEN TWO FRONTS

Scene

The number of **werehellhound knights** blocking the main gate of the coronation hall depends on the timing of the characters' approach to them. There are two werehellhound knights present for each character in the party if the characters arrive at the gate before the 5 rounds pass for the group of knights led by Lord Cyne Monder to fight their way there. This is to discourage the characters from trying to break out on their own. When the group of knights and priests arrive to fight the werecreatures on the sixth round, the number of werehellhound knights that each character must defeat is reduced to one per two characters in the party. This is to reflect that the other lycanthropes are engaged in battle with the allied group.

It is not necessary to map out the battle at the gate with all of the Knights of the Crown, the priests, Lord Cyne Monder, the notable assisting NPCs, and the characters with the werehellhound knights surrounding them on both sides. Instead, it is easier to assume that the characters need to defeat the necessary number of werehellhound knights as if engaged in direct combat with them. However, it is still required to roll for random encounters in the crowd every round for each character separately to represent the ongoing commotion around them.

"Breach the gate, my brave sons! The future of the Kingdom depends on it!"

Lord Cyne Monder
encouraging his knights.

When the characters defeat a sufficient number of werehellhound knights, the way is free to approach the gate to strike at it with their melee weapons. It can be damaged by any other valid ranged means of attack before this point. When the characters crash the gates, the crowd rushes to safety, forming a massive force that pushes anyone in the front. A character within 15 feet of the gate must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to stay on foot as the crowd relentlessly pushes at them from behind. On a successful ability check, the character can navigate their way with the crowd and escape the coronation hall. On a failed check, the character falls prone and is trampled by the crowd, suffering 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage until regaining footing, which requires another successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill check that can be attempted every round.

Treasure

Each werehellhound knight has 8 silver pieces and 5 gold pieces.

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Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can escape through the gates of the coronation hall.

ESCAPE TO THE LEAP

Background

Lord Cyne Monder knows of the secret maze of tunnels leading in and out of the courtyard of the Royal Palace. He always considered them a risk, but King Waldrann insisted on having them created under great secrecy by Nyder Tyk, his chief architect.

Environment

The steep 10-foot tall tunnel that begins at the Tomb of the First King (Onadbyr location 66.) runs some 200 feet and spreads out into a maze with several secret exits near both sides of the river, connecting into the sewer system under the Short Road and Long Road.

Secret Exit. These hidden, irregularly shaped panels appear as part of the brick wall of the tomb and require a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to locate if the character is searching for them.

Scene

As the characters exit the coronation hall, they flee into the open courtyard together with the crowd, rushing towards the open gates of the Royal Palace. They immediately face the effects of the Choking Rain (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse). Another large crowd has assembled in the courtyard - people who were not invited to the ceremonial hall and many soldiers of the Royal Army stationed outside. They are all scared and confused and become even more shocked when they see the screaming crowd pour out of the Royal Palace, covered in blood and gore, with transformed werehellhound knights chasing after their brothers and their trusted priests. With the werehellhound knights pushing through the crowd behind them, Lord Cyne Monder assembles his surviving knights, who number only a dozen, and signals the characters to follow him into the Tomb of the First King.

"I know a secret way out. Come with us and our shields will be your bastion."
Lord Cyne Monder offering his protection to the characters.

After entering the abandoned chamber, he orders the doors to be closed, letting everyone in until the werehellhounds catch up. Then, he opens the secret entrance to an 8 foot high and 5 foot wide, roughly hewn tunnel that leads deep underground. Still running, he navigates the way through endless junctions for a few minutes before exiting into the sewer tunnels under Long Road, near the Giant's Boots tavern (Onadbyr location 81.). The priests break off from the group and leave in the tunnels or return to the surface to aid their fellow clergymen scattered throughout the capital.

The waste in the tunnels has a gut-wrenching sickening smell, so strong that anyone within 10 feet of the sewage must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned for 10 minutes and lose concentration on spells. Anyone in contact with the waste for more than 3 rounds risks catching **sewer plague.** As the group follows the sewers to Grankar's Chains, they come across a large, curiously cunning swarm of rats that has just gained *Vile Intellect (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse)* and consider themselves as a single **rat pack.** They came to understand that equipment is important, and now they want to steal as many items off of the group as possible without attacking the characters. They climb into pockets, open backpacks, and even remove jewelry from hands, fingers, or necks if needed. They don't deal any damage to creatures in their threatened area and disperse if damaged. A character inside the threatened area of the rat pack must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw or lose one random item not worn on their bodies as clothing or armor or not held in their hands.

Rat Pack. Use the **swarm of rats** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The rat pack has 49 hit points.
- It threatens a 20-foot diameter area.

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Lord Cyne Monder leads the group to the surface through a maintenance hole and hastily crosses Grankar's Chain, leading the renegades by the Old Wall behind the Soap and Cream bathhouse, where they soon reach the Lucky Leap. The group hides in some bushes in the alleys when a bolt of **hex lightning** hits one of the characters chosen randomly, (see the Weather section in Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) as if it wanted to reveal them. After the stricken character is healed, Lord Cyne Monder knocks on the closed door, and soon Ricio Tane appears with a troubled expression. He takes a glance at the group, then turns around and hurries everyone inside.

"I should have bet on seeing you tonight. Come quick!"

Ricio Tane welcoming Lord Cyne Monder and his refugees.

Once inside, Ricio Tane activates the lock-down mechanism of the Lucky Leap and escorts the group to his secret level, where he provides them with a safe hideout.

If the characters have decided not to follow Lord Cyne Monder's group to the Lucky Leap, they are contacted the next day by Ricio Tane, who relays the lord's invitation to the tavern in hopes of the character's help to save the kingdom.

"Lord Monder and I have a plan. And a solid plan is what we all need the most now."

Ricio Tane convincing the characters to join his cause.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they reach the Lucky Leap.

Plans of the Traitors

OATHBOUND TRUTHS

Background

Lord Cyne Monder was part of the expedition led by Kind Waldrann that entered the Feyrealm to rescue Queen Lyrencia long ago. He has only hazy, dream-like recollections of the journey, which he has been trying to piece together bits by bits for the past decade or more. However, he clearly remembers that he swore an oath to the king not to tell anyone about what had happened in the Feyrealm.

Environment

Area 12, the Secret Private Hideout of the Secret Level in the Lucky Leap is now covered with bedrolls and the private equipment of the Knights of the Crown, who fled together with Lord Cyne Monder.

Scene

Ricio Tane, Lord Cyne Monder, ten **Knights of the Crown,** and any other NPCs who fled with them gather in area 12 of the Secret Level to assess the situation and discuss their next move. Everyone listens in silence as Lord Cyne Monder explains his theory

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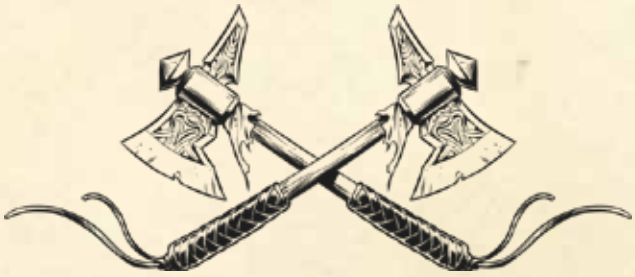
about the satyr lord's deal with King Waldrann and that he suspects King Dasmag's power behind the curse. Next, Lord Cyne Monder presents the following information.

- He states that what he tells is the publicly known version of the story as told by King Waldrann many times at his court. He also adds that he and Master Eydan vowed not to speak about the events that took place in the Feyrealm in more detail than that.
- Fifteen years ago, the satyr-lord King Dasmag kidnapped Queen Lyrencia.
- King Waldrann organized a rescue mission that included his firstborn son Prince Krasnar, a high-ranking priest of the Temple of Knowledge named Father Lestor, the former Archmage of the Arcane Tower named Master Eydan, and himself.
- He doesn't remember how they crossed to the Feyrealm or returned from there, but he recalls a strange tree with eyes.
- He explains that he remembers everything as if it was only a vivid dream, but he has been recollecting the fading memories over the years.
- On the Feyrealm, King Waldrann defeated King Dasmag in a duel. The satyr lord was fascinated by King Waldrann's demeanor and combat prowess and returned Queen Lyrencia.
- The two haughty kings sympathized with each other and celebrated their newfound allegiance with a feast at the satyr lord's court. King Dasmag blessed the *crown of Aglarion* with a blessing of plenty to make up for the trouble he caused.
- On their way back, Prince Krasnar and Father Lestor were swallowed by a quicksand-like area of the swamp and died. A character that succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check discerns from Lord Cyne Monder's interpretation that the lord paladin knows that this piece of information is not true.



"I pledge on my honor and on all that is holy. I have suspicions about what has befallen our beloved kingdom, but I have vowed not to speak of it in more detail than as told by his majesty."

Lord Cyne Monder explains himself to the characters.

Lord Cyne Monder vowed not to speak of the following information:

- King Waldrann struck a secret deal with the defeated satyr lord, which concerns the crown, and he supposes that this has affected the realm. He doesn't know the details of the bargain as it was discussed privately by the two drunk kings during the feast.
- On their way home, Prince Krasnar demanded confirmation of his rightful status as heir, and a fight took place between him and King Waldrann. The king eventually killed his raging and indignant son.
- King Waldrann made his company swear an oath to never speak about the details of their journey, but Father Lestor refused, and as a result, the king declared him an exile and forbade him to return to the Material Plane.

A character can learn the above information from Lord Cyne Monder only if they magically compel him to tell what he knows or successfully read his thoughts. If confronted about this, the lord says that he can't confirm their truth due to his vow and again asks the characters to trust him.

Lord Cyne Monder suspects Queen Aphinah's and Dowager Queen Lyrencia's involvement in the events and even their possible cooperation with King Dasmag. He was also unaware that they have magical abilities and is very suspicious about them for their pretenses. He knew Queen Lyrencia as a kind, patient, and reserved person and was shocked to see the cold and evil look on her face as the curse spread. The lord disdains Queen Aphinah, who he has simply

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found to be a spoiled, sometimes vicious child, but he is not sure about that either anymore.

When questioned about the inheritence of the crown, Lord Cyne Monder is most certain that a regent will have to be appointed until an heir is found or until a new lineage ascends to the throne. The old paladin is one of the few who knows about Gren, the bastard son of King Waldrann Azennar, but he wants convincing proof of the young Uncanny Vagabond's right to rule. He only refers to this option vaguely, not naming Gren specifically.

PLANNING A HEIST

Scene

Lord Cyne Monder presents his plan that involves the stealing of the *crown of Aglarion*. He intends to cleanse the visibly mutated crown, to which he has given his oath to protect and which symbolizes the integrity of the kingdom. He trusts his divine powers and being able to remove curses. If he fails, he plans to visit Master Eydan, who has not left the Arcane Tower since their return from the Feyrealm and has also given up the status of archmage to his best student, Master Zaophas. In the worst case, Lord Cyne Monder is even ready to destroy the cursed crown. The lord asks the characters and his knights to trust him with his insight and decisions. Ricio Tane immediately adds some thoughts to the task at hand, and after a lengthy discussion, they come up with a detailed plan to accomplish the seemingly impossible task.

"We must seize the crown and cleanse it. And if we can't, then we must return to the satyr lord's realm and make it do the task. We can't let our people suffer from such a vile, unnatural curse. So we must act immediately!"

Lord Cyne Monder explaining his general plan.

Lord Cyne Monder asks the characters to help with the heist's preparations and collect the necessary tools for such an endeavor. He reasons that it would be foolish for himself or the Knights of the Crown to join the quests as they are easily recognized and not trained for such infiltration missions. He tells them that he and his knights will lay low until the components are secured and will take part in the raid on the palace themselves along with the characters, a glorious cleansing of the Palace.

A KEY TO EVERY DOOR

Scene

As someone who serves to protect the royal family, Lord Cyne Monder knows that entering Queen Aphinah's chambers is a daring task due to the many sealed doors and guards who protect the Royal Quarters of the Palace. Lacking any magical means, he suggests a quick raid to recover the crown. Still, Ricio Tane interrupts and says that he knows about the *master key,* a magical key of great power that can open any lock of any complexity, be it mundane or magical. He explains that the magic key was in possession of one of his old "adventuring" partners, Davrillo Prancarr. The master burglar, as Ricio refers to him, has found and entered the resting place of Master Arlen the Constructor, the first archmage of the kingdom. Davrillo told him about the location of the Tomb of the Constructor north-east of Onadbyr by the coast, and his plans to rob it. Still, Ricio Tane refused to partake in the tomb raiding as he was then busy opening the Lucky Leap and getting ready for his "retirement." The master burglar never returned from the tomb, and Ricio Tane never dared to go after his friend - a risky task obviously out of his and his friend's league.

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"Davrillo always had wild plans, and I joined only for the most reasonable ones. It is probably as dangerous now as it was before, but I don't think that we have any other choice now, especially with such associates."

Ricio Tane goading the characters with a wise expression.

THE ANTI-MAGIC CHEST

Scene

Once the above is settled, Ricio Tane tells about the properties of the *chest of magic nullification*. This magic item is in his possession, stored away in the basement vault of the Lucky Leap. He reasons that the anti-magic chest might even suppress the cursed magics on the crown and stop it from functioning, potentially ending the Midnight Curse. And it would definitely be useful to hide the *crown of Aglarion* from magical tracking once it is procured.

"It might block its powers, and we could easily end this madness with it. There's only one small problem..."

Ricio Tane elaborating on his logic.

CHEST OF MAGIC NULLIFICATION

Ricio Tane tells the characters that the *chest of magic nullification* is unfortunately not ready for use. It already contains another vile magical artifact of a cataclysmic nature, which he only found out about after opening the box. He says that he found a strange idol made of a dark green stone inside the magical box. It depicted a strange beast on two legs with a proportionally huge horned head, an oversized maw, and a long barbed tail. He continues by saying that the idol emanated an aura that caused his body to instantly dehydrate as if the totem evaporated all moisture around it. As a result, he suffered immense pain as his skin ripped open like dry paper being torn. He colorfully describes his struggle for his life and that even the trees in front of his house withered immediately when the aura of the idol continued to spread. He immediately closed the lid of the box, never to open it again.

"...and every part of my insides was wracked with pain as if they were torn in every direction by invisible hands. It was the worst experience I ever had... Anyway, we need to sort this out before being able to use it."

Ricio Tane gesturing wildly while explaining his ordeal.

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Ricio Tane slowly and sorrowfully admits that it was his wife who stole the chest from the vaults of the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities almost a decade ago. The retired rogue tells the complete story as described in the section The Price of Underestimation. He describes the location as a large magic shop and private wizard school with the most secure vault in the city. As part of her plan, his deceased wife Avrathia Silverstar, a wizard who studied at the Arcane Tower, was able to sneak into the vault after spending over a year in Master Bertio Ranberd's school and shop. Ricio Tane explains that she stole the *chest of magic nullification* from an anti-magic vault deep below the shop. The anti-magic vault would be the only place to open the chest and safely remove the idol. Ricio knows how to enter but warns that avoiding the magical alarms and traps and dodging the capable sentinel wizards and their professor, Master Bertio Randberd, will not be an easy task.

See area 16 of the Lucky Leap tavern in Chapter 1 for more information on the *Idol of Thyargylosh* and the section What Ricio Tane Knows for more information on the secrets of the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities.

"Narder Tyk lives right next to Dawn of the Ages, an antique shop in the North District. He is a regular at the Leap. I walked him home quite a few times over the years."

Ricio Tane speaking with an all-knowing expression.

TUNNEL OF LOVE

Scene

Lord Cyne Monder explains that he knows that King Waldrann had a secret tunnel system built that leads directly into the heart of the Royal Quarters, bypassing the rest of the Royal Court. He knows that the king used this tunnel to exit and enter the Royal Palace unnoticed to attend his secret liaisons. His only problem is that the lord doesn't know exactly where the entrance or exit is inside and outside the palace. He knows that it was built by Master Arlen and Narder Tyk, the Royal Architect, is the only person who can reveal the secret of the tunnel to them. He suggests finding him as soon as possible before the Queen's forces get to him first.

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Tomb of the Constructor

Background

Davrillo Prancarr was a master thief and friend of Ricio Tane who entered the Tomb of the Constructor (Kingdom of Aglarion location 2.) alone many years ago. The tomb was created by the legendary first archmage of the Kingdom of Aglarion, Master Arlen the Constructor, over 500 years ago. He built the structure to serve as a depository of his knowledge and body once his time came. The venerable archmage planned to spend some years sequestered at the tomb until his death, dictating his memoir and all of his knowledge to his multifunctional construction golems, the daedal wrights. So he tasked the daedal wrights to create an ever-expanding library, vertically carved into the bedrock where they could deposit his thoughts engraved onto clay tablets.

Davrillo Prancarr uncovered the secret location of the tomb from an old manuscript written by Queen Myrel Melkar, the firstborn daughter of King Razmyrel Melkar. The young queen, also a wizard of great power, was tutored by Master Arlen, and it was her duty to accompany the archmage to his tomb before Master Arlen sealed it. Davrillo Prancarr expected the secret sepulcher would be safe to explore and brimming with the archmage's treasure. Armed with the *master key,* he was confident and expecting a quick and easy delve. However, he miscalculated and found only his death inside the Tomb of the Constructor.

Environment

Time has shown its effect on the hundreds of years since the tomb was sealed. The once majestic tiles, which are massive blocks to support the weight of Master Arlen's constructs, have chipped in some places, and fine dust has settled over everything, settling from the excavation site of the infinite library. Soft, magical illumination emanates from the ceiling, providing enough light to see everything in the dim light. All chambers have a height of 30 feet.

Doors. The large wooden double doors (10 by 10 feet) are fortified with iron plates and open by automatically withdrawing into the ceiling if a creature approaches within 5 feet of them. The doors close when no creatures are within 5 feet of them. The doors have AC 17, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They can be sabotaged to stay open or closed using thieves' tools with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Private Sanctum. The Tomb of the Constructor is under the permanent effect of a *private sanctum* spell, blocking planar travel, teleportation, and divination spells.

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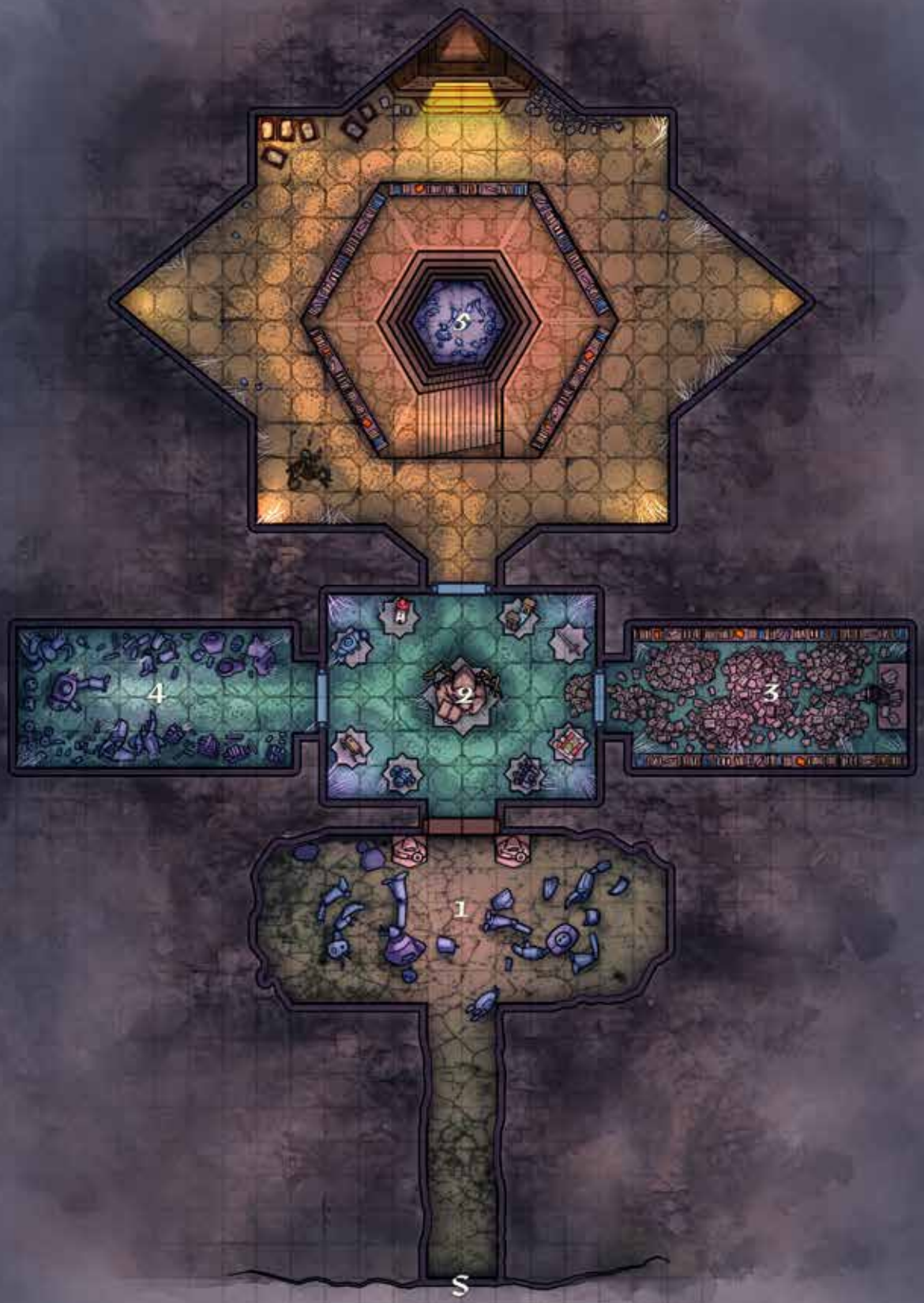
TOMB OF THE CONSTRUCTOR



1 TILE = 5 FEET

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1. SECRET PASSAGE

Background

Eshkilrantossiazz, a young green dragon offspring of Ossiazzxontyr, has recovered the location of the secret tomb by communing with its dead ancestor's soul at an old sunken temple called the Ethereal Cloister. At this covered walkway, the border between the outer planes and the Material Plane is so thin that one can hear the souls of the dead. The green dragon gleaned forgotten lore from its deceased ancestor that led it to the conclusion that it could find an even vaster depository of knowledge at the tomb of the archmage to continue its arcane studies.

Environment

The illusory wall segment that hides the opening to a small natural cave seamlessly blends into the natural rocky environment. The cave inside is littered with demolished golem parts in front of the main gate of the tomb, which features a massive lock mechanism.

Tomb Gate. Master Arlen created the gate of the tomb so that it doesn't require a key and can be opened only by a highly intelligent creature. The large wooden gate (10 by 10 feet) is heavily fortified with magic and has AC 19, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 20, it has damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The locks on the gate are part of a complex puzzle mechanism that can be solved with a successful **DC 22 Intelligence** ability check. On a successful ability check, the gate is opened. On a failed attempt or when an attack hits it, the gate releases a 30-foot cone of energy that deals either acid, cold, fire, force, or lightning damage, determined randomly each time. Any creature in the area must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw or take 28 (8d6) damage of the randomly determined type on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The tomb gate can be opened using thieves' tools with a successful **DC 25 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

Hungry for power and treasures, Eshkilrantossiazz (use the **young green dragon** monster entry with 108 hit remaining hit points) was unable to crush the gate and has been struggling with the complex puzzle lock for the past few weeks. It has been relentlessly trying to solve the puzzle, enduring the pain caused by the bursts of energy at each failed attempts. Its draconic patience is slowly wearing thin, and it would even cooperate with the characters if it meant gaining entry into the tomb. It is a cunning, charismatic creature that tries to take advantage of any situation without giving up too much. It keeps its word if an agreement is made but will set forth harsh and one-sided conditions.

Eshkilrantossiazz demands access to all the information in the tomb and half of any treasure they find together with the characters. The young green dragon does not take unnecessary risks, will not endanger itself, and will also not help or interfere with anything that it has not agreed to previously with the characters. Instead, he tries to use the characters as tools to serve its own interests.

2. COMMEMORATION HALL

Environment

A 20-foot gigantic stone statue of the young Master Arlen stands in the middle of the hall, holding an open book in one hand. Models of Master Arlen's most fantastic inventions and constructions are displayed on small pedestals by the walls, labeled with small name tags:

- Azure Bridge, a bridge made of a single blue crystal.
- Falcon Blade, the magical sword of the monarch.
- Royal Palace, as seen in Onadbyr.
- Colossus, a golem made up of small intricate parts.
- Fists of Azennar, a tower with heavy siege engines on its top.
- Dynadog, a strange mechanical hound.
- Daedal Wright, a multifunction construction golem.
- Arcane Tower, the figurative model of the building.

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Ghost of Master Arlen

The door to area 3 has numerous clay tablets lying in front of it, which seem to have fallen out of the scriptorium when the door opened. The ceiling of the hall is covered with the permanent illusion of a large terrain map of Aglarion from the times of Master Arlen. The map slightly animates as soft breezes move the trees of the forests, rivers slowly flow, and ripples run through bodies of water.

Scene

The book in the hand of Master Arlen's statue has a secret text written on its open pages that is only visible to those who can see the invisible. The text conveys the basic concepts of constructing any object and relates this theory to the divine essence of the Efficient Master, the god of competence. A character that can read the text itself gains the **boon of construction.**

Boon of Construction. As an action, you can cast the *fabricate* spell without using a spell slot or any components. You can't use this boon again until you finish a long rest.

The illusory ceiling map shows the publicly known map of Aglarion that also includes the location of the Ziggurat of the New Moon (Kingdom of Aglarion location 64.), a strange ziggurat on the cliffs of the Sea Horse Cove. However, those familiar with the area know that there is no such building on the peninsula.

When anyone opens the door to area 3, a pile of inscribed clay tablets tumbles out of the scriptorium. A creature at the door must succeed on a **DC 11 Dexterity** saving throw or fall prone under the crashing wave of clay tablets.

3. Scriptorium

Background

Master Arlen spent most of his time in the scriptorium, writing notes and dictating the sum of his knowledge in meticulous detail to his daedal wright golems. The day when he got too weak to speak, he collapsed on the table over his unfinished notes and passed away. However, his soul could not rest and rose as a ghost to continue what he could not finish in his life. The ghost of Master Arlen has been continuously dictating all of its memories and thoughts to its golems, and it has not stopped since.

Environment

Tall piles of clay tablets with writing inscribed on their surface cover the floor of this room, some of them almost touching the ceiling of the room. Old tomes and scrolls fill the shelves on the sides of the room, all of them covered with a thick layer of fine dust. A robed skeleton lies slumped over a writing desk that stands at the end of the room.

Scene

The room is difficult terrain due to the piles of clay tablets in the room. The skeleton is that of Master Arlen, whose ghost hovers nearby, dictating its infinite knowledge to a **daedal wright.** It speaks rapidly and goes into unnecessary details on all topics, spending hours describing tangents in the utmost complexity. The golem is busy inscribing what it hears on a clay tablet, then places the fully inscribed tablet on one of the nearby piles, stopping only to draw a new one and then to continue the inscriptions. It does not react to the characters when they approach it but attacks them if attacked. The daedal wright abandons combat if reduced to half of its hit points and goes to area 4.

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DAEDAL WRIGHT

The **ghost of Master Arlen** is imperturbable and continues to dictate without pause until the characters initiate physical contact with it. At this point, it gets furious for being interrupted and uses its *Horrifying Visage* ability on them before resuming dictation.

"Don't interrupt! The Master is at work!"

Master Arlen raging out at the characters while using its horrifying visage ability.

If the characters continue to interfere, the ghost of Master Arlen possesses one of the closest characters and continues dictating through the possessed character without stopping. If attacked, it orders the daedal wright to attack the characters and fights until destroyed before starting to rejuvenate.

Ghost of Master Arlen. Use the **ghost** monster entry for the ghost of Master Arlen with the following modifications:

- The ghost of Master Arlen has an Intelligence score of 24 and the following skills: Arcana +13, History +13, Nature +7, Religion +7.
- If the ghost of Master Arlen is destroyed, it gains a new body in 1d10 hours, regaining all its hit points and resuming dictation.

Treasure

A *feather of detection*, the wing feather of a real couatl named Cygnus, lies on the writing desk with some ink on its tip, long dried up. The skeleton has a strange blue crystal embedded into its forehead.

4. ASSEMBLY ROOM

Environment

Dismembered mechanical body parts of various golems, tools, wires, springs, bolts, and screws fill this room.

Scene

When a damaged construct enters the room, magical hands appear and repair it with blinding speed. A damaged construct regains 10 hit points every round while being repaired by the magical effect of the room.

Treasure

One of the golem heads has two large quartz crystals for eyes worth 125 gold pieces each.

5. SPIRAL LIBRARY

Environment

The skeleton of a long-dead human lies near the door at the feet of a hulking, multi-armed construct. It is well equipped and dressed in leather armor. A huge oven stands opposite the door. Its blazing fire dances vividly without any apparent source of fuel for the flames. Clean and inscribed clay tablets are piled on one side of it, while baskets of raw and unhardened clay sit on its other side. A railless staircase descends in a downward spiral in the center of the room, forming a broad, hexagonal shaft with many levels. Each level is crafted into a 5-foot wide walkway and shelves that hold a seemingly infinite number of clay tablets. The shaft currently has 24 levels, and it is 240 feet deep, covered with shelves manufactured from the earth of which it was dug. At its bottom, the destroyed bodies of two daedal wrights lie in pieces on the ground before an immense natural tunnel that runs deep into the darkness. Their metal parts chewed off.

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Scene

The skeleton is the body of the long-dead Davrillo Prancarr. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check can deduce that the thief was smashed and drilled to pieces by the **daedal writght** standing next to it. The malfunctioned construct activates and attacks any living creature that enters the room.

The deadal wrights use the oven to fire the clean clay tablets. Master Arlen has bound a **fire elemental** into the oven for eternity. The elemental can't exit the oven.

The library's very first few dozen clay tablets contain an index for the rest of the information to follow down through the library, referenced by Master Arlen's age. The shelves end abruptly at the bottom of the column as if the golems stopped excavating further. The tablets, inscribed with tiny letters, contain every detail of Master Arlen's life, studies, deductions, and theories on all topics mundane and magical. A character can spend one hour reading the indexation tablets and can spend another 24 hours to recover detailed information about the life of Master Arlen until the age of 79, somewhere into the reign of Queen Myrel. Such characters can read the history of Aglarion as found in the Kingdom of Aglarion section from Master Arlen's birth up to this point and gain advantage on all Intelligence (Arcana and History) skill checks and on all Intelligence skill checks related to construction, constructs, engineering, and architecture. The library also contains information on all wizard spells found in the Player's Handbook, allowing wizard characters to learn any of these spells if they are able to cast them.

Master Key

An ironglutter dug the tunnel at the bottom of the library. This special remorhaz feeds on metal (use the **remorhaz** monster entry with the ability to detect metal within 300 feet). The ironglutter hides 240 feet inside its tunnel and will come to the location at full speed (moving 60 feet per round) if it detects metal objects at the bottom of the shaft weighing 3 pounds or more. As it approaches with a thunderous noise, the earth rumbles, suggesting its immense size before it can actually be seen. If the characters flee upwards from the ironglutter, it burrows into the ground, still detecting the metal they carry and explodes out of the floor 60 feet behind them. Create a situation where the characters try to outrun the ironglutter, which will be distracted to feed at area 4 and will stop at the illusory rock formation at area 1 before returning to its tunnel. If the characters face the ironglutter in combat, the ghost of Master Arlen comes to their aid along with its remaining daedal wright, but then they both return to area 3.

Treasure

Davrillo Prancarr's skeleton has 9 copper pieces, 12 silver pieces, 81 gold pieces, 4 platinum bars, a ruby worth 250 gold pieces in a pouch. His other belongings are a burglar's pack, a *potion of invisibility,* a *potion of flying,* a *potion of speed,* a *+1 short sword,* and the *master key* in one of its small belt pockets.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they recover the *master key* from the Tomb of the Constructor and escape the irongutter.

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Emporium of Marvelous Rarities

Background

The Emporium of Marvelous Rarities (Onadbyr location 14.) is a one-of-a-kind magic shop with a wide range of stock unparalleled anywhere in Aglarion or even in the neighboring kingdoms. The shop also functions as a private school for a selected few humble and servile pupils, of which there are always six in attendance. As Master Bertio Ranberd calls them, the arcane sentinels, receive extensive training in the arcane arts, with a major focus on abjuration magic, in return for their services to the shop. The current pupils of the master are Drinnur Baelguard, a confident human with a bad temper, Thegorin Civereus, a rather shy gnome with a bushy eyebrow, Egeor Azin, a skeptical human who has lost his left arm, Dunphius the White, a calculating elf with no sense of humor, Enixea Swiftwings, an introverted human who has a large scar across her face, and Aphaen Larixus, a brusque tiefling with a third eye tattooed on his forehead.

The arcane sentinels all live in the building. They can leave it only under the permission of Master Bertio Ranberd, which is rarely given, especially after the curse descends on Aglarion. Their daily tasks include training, magical cleaning, security maintenance, creating minor magic items such as potions and scrolls for sale, and guard duties. The master keeps a very close eye on his subordinates. He keeps security tight, for example ordering regular shipments of food and resource materials to the shop from a few selected trustworthy sources, which are regularly examined and screened for security reasons.

There are usually more people staring at the windows and the shelves inside the store than actually buying its goods. The wizards don't mind the gawking crowd, which creates a premium reputation and draws more serious and well-to-do shoppers to the establishment. However, after the coronation of Queen Aphinah and the outbreak of the Midnight Curse, the shop has lost almost all of its previous buzz. The staring crowd is gone, but the front desk sees a few more serious clients who are desperate to equip themselves with magic against the harmful effects that have befallen the kingdom. As a result, the shop's stocks are almost entirely depleted as the demand is high and resources are fewer in these unpredictable, dangerous times.

Environment

Large animated glowing letters hover above the high display windows and the shop's main entrance, advertising its name and the current discounts available

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for selected items. Several curious items are displayed in the window at different heights, their names, functions, and prices displayed with the same glowing and continuously shifting magical letters. The rest of the house's windows are usually closed and covered with heavy curtains from the inside. The two large statues of wizards that illuminate the windows and the main entrance function only when the shop is open for business. Numerous magical lights of various intensities illuminate the rooms and corridors of the building, including the dungeon vault level. All rooms have a height of 10 feet except for area 20.

Doors. Doors (including the main double door) open inwards and are made of thick, sturdy wood fitted with iron hinges and handles. They feature masterfully crafted locks secured with *arcane lock* spells, which can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 25 Dexterity** check or forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. In addition, the main double door has an extra invisible iron grate on the inside that has AC 19, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Windows. Windows open inwards and have wooden frames and a single layer of thick glass. The wings are held together by iron latches and secured with *arcane lock* spells, which can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 25 Dexterity** check or forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. In addition, invisible iron bars are embedded in the wooden frames in front of the glass panels on the inside, forming a fixed barrier that has AC 19, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Private Sanctum. The Emporium of Marvelous Rarities is under the permanent effect of a *private sanctum* spell, blocking planar travel, teleportation, and divination spells, and prevents creatures from peeping or listening through its windows. Attempts to dispel this effect are made with disadvantage due to Master Bertio Ranberd's *Tenacious Abjurations* class feature.

Guards and Wards (DC 16). The Emporium of Marvelous Rarities is under the permanent effect of a *guards and wards* spell whose effects are spread throughout specific areas. Attempts to dispel this effect are made with disadvantage due to Master Bertio Ranberd's *Tenacious Abjurations* class feature.

Alarms. A special *alarm* spell, made permanent by Master Bertio Ranberd, is active at all times on every window, on the main entrance of the shop when the store is closed, on the door to the corridor behind the desk in area 1, all of the doors in area 14, and the outer vault door in area 17. The audible alarm sounds like a pulsating shriek that does not stop until switched off by the caster of the spell. The alarm also sends a mental signal to the arcane sentinels and Master Bertio Ranberd. The arcane sentinels and Master Bertio Ranberd are all designated not to set off the *alarm* spells. The arcane sentinels and Master Bertio Ranberd come to assess the situation if an alarm goes off. The audible part of the *alarm* also attracts the Red Cloaks, who arrive within 2d4+2 minutes. The *detect magic* spell reveals the *alarm* spell on an item or area.

Corridors and Stairs. As part of the *guards and wards* spell placed on the entire building, all corridors and stairs connecting rooms or levels, except for the corridor between areas 2 and 3, are filled with a magic fog. The arcane sentinels and Master Bertio Ranberd see through the fog and are unaffected by its effects. Any other creature moving in the fog must make a d20 roll. On a roll of 1-10, the creature goes in the opposite direction it originally intended to, without knowing that they move in the wrong direction. Webs also fill all the stairs are from top to bottom. The webs function as the *web* spell. These strands regrow in 10 minutes if they are burned or torn away.

Vault Lock Mechanism. The complex lock mechanism on the two vault doors is controlled by four switches spread around the building. The inner and the outer vault doors can be opened using a separate unique key for each door only after all four switches are activated within ten minutes. These switches are of various forms throughout the building and don't

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signal their active status if activated. Each switch counts as a lock for the purposes of the *knock* spell. The switches can be found in the following areas.

- A mosaic tile on the wall next to the lavatory must be pressed in area 3.
- An otherwise seemingly non-functional valve must be rotated counterclockwise in area 11.
- The arms of the clock on a painting must be set to noon exactly in area 13.
- A sconce on the back wall must be rotated in area 16.

Make sure you familiarize yourself with the rules for Traps on page 120 of the Dungeon Master's Guide before running this section of the adventure.

THE MYTHIC MASTER

Background

Master Bertio Ranberd is a calculating merchant wizard who knew how to develop a business and protect it. He has always been a lone wolf and has built his fortune gradually, with good connections to the Royal Palace and most of Drayl's prominences. His most significant discovery was a reference to the location of the vessel crystal of Zaphaos, the dark planetar of hopelessness and general of the Dark Star, under Cloud Peak. The wizard spared no resources on magic formulas and magical items to locate the crystal through divination spells and traveling through the ethereal plane. However, when he finally landed in the exact desired space, he realized that he made a grave mistake. His etherealness immediately ended together with all his magical powers in the anti-magic radiance of the divine vessel, a crystal of the immortals, that also emanated an overwhelmingly crushing pain into his mind. To his utmost terror and in his helplessness, he was greeted by the dark couatl, Zaxlyppoteh. The immortal caretaker of the dark solar offered salvation to the dying wizard in return for his services. Master Bertio Ranberd, struggling for his life, accepted the terms. The dark couatl allowed him to attune to the crystal to avoid its effects, slowly inserting a small fragment of it into the wizard's forehead while keeping him alive with curative magic during the attunement. The fragment allowed the wizard to use his magic within the radiance of the crystal, and it also defends him from its mind-wrecking psychic assault.

In return for this gift, the dark celestial demanded information and power to separate light and darkness once again by summoning its former master. The two made a deal: Master Bertio Ranberd must dedicate his life to the Darkness Within, serving it to his best capabilities with his knowledge and the treasures he hoards. Zaxlyppoteh convinced the wizard of the divine might of the Darkness Within and has started indoctrinating him to its faith, nurturing his godly powers and watching him grow in his arcane talents. The evil couatl gifted the wizard with a tiny fraction of divine creation itself, a *divine spark,* a magic item that could breathe life into a single construct or dead person when used. Master Bertio Ranberd was lured in by the grand promises of power and made the eventual return of his newfound master to the Material Plane his primary goal. He is actively searching for more remnants of the dark solar's power and seeks magical knowledge and items that could further this goal.

THE PRICE OF UNDERESTIMATION

Background

Avrathia Silverstar was a beautiful, flamboyant, and extravagant half-elven wizard who immediately stole the heart of Ricio Tane when she first entered the Lucky Leap with a glorious, magically propelled jump some twenty years ago. The two became inseparable, married, and got involved in many questionable missions over the years until they laid an eye on Master Bertio Ranberd's magical treasures. They planned to have Avrathia Silverstar infiltrate the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities as a student, learn its secrets, and make sure to execute a smooth robbery together when they were ready. The couple arranged for one of Master Bertio Ranberd's sentinel wizards to quit the school, and Avrathia Silverstar applied for the job and the tuition that came with it. She easily passed the application process, hiding her vast knowledge of magic, which was

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almost at the level of Master Bertio Ranberd. Avrathia Silverstar spent over a year at the school, working at the shop and protecting its valuables as instructed. During her time at the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities, she uncovered and reverse-engineered the unlocking mechanism of the secret vault system and learned its mundane and magical properties.

Avrathia Silverstar's withheld arcane knowledge and totally fooled Master Bertio Ranberd, showing significant progress in her studies to impress the master and get closer to his secrets. Master Bertio Ranberd thought he had found rare potential in the half-elf and invested much of his time into her training. They spent many hours in private studies, and Master Bertio Ranberd soon fell in love with the young wizardess. He considered making her his right hand and telling her about his deal with the agent of the Dark Star so they could achieve his goals hand-in-hand and harvest the benefits together. However, before he was ready to initiate her, Avrathia Silverstar made her move.

Armed with the knowledge she acquired at the school, Avrathia Silverstar entered the vault on a rare day when Master Bertio Ranberd was away from the shop. She didn't wait or call for Ricio because she knew it would be easier alone, as she was excluded from many of the warding spells. She wanted to seize the opportunity that arose with the sudden absence of the master and to surprise Ricio Tane with her success. She fooled some of the sentinel wizards to change their daily routine and appointed herself to guard the vault. She then set the vault's locking mechanism to open it and entered with the copy of the vault keys, which she had made earlier when she had temporary access to them during one of her private sessions with her master. She took what item she could make movable with her *dispel magic* spells and eventually found the teleportation circle, of which she had no knowledge. Her curiosity outweighed her cautiousness. She crossed through the magic portal and arrived in an underground cavern, where she encountered Zaxlyppoteh in the form of Master Bertio Ranberd, standing in front of a crystal of the immortals. The presence of her master, who she thought to be away, the crushing psychic energies that emanated from the crystal, and its anti-magic aura that negated all her magic powers forced her to retreat through the teleportation circle, which for some reason still functioned in the anti-magic cave. Her intrusion raised more questions than answers, but she knew for sure that she had been caught in the act. Avrathia had enough presence of mind to quickly remove an item from one of the closest containers - the *chest of magic nullification* - before winking out of the cave through the teleportation circle. She immediately fled the house and stopped only for a brief goodbye at the Lucky Leap. The rattled Avrathia told Ricio that she has failed and that she does not want to draw the ire of the wizard on her love. She gave him the chest she stole along with some notes that described the security measures of the building, including the combination that opens the vault doors, before kissing him and running off into the dark streets. Ricio Tane reached to stop her, but she cast a spell and was gone as fast as she had entered his life so many years earlier. It was the last time he saw her.

It only took a few days for Zaxlyppoteh and Master Bertio Ranberd to circumvent Avrathia Silverstar's divination wards and locate her. Master Bertio Ranberd felt cheated, his secrets exposed, and he wished for Avrathia Silverstar's death. He found her on a rainy day at the shores of Yellowkeep in the Drayl City-States where he promptly disintegrated the half-elf wizard. The archmage was still unsatisfied with feelings of emptiness at the loss of his desired partner, apprentice, and love. Master Bertio Ranberd became obsessed with recreating Avrathia Silverstar, the only woman who could ever melt his heart. He longed for a partner who would bear her visage but one whom he would control to do his bidding after giving it sentience with the *divine spark*. Ever since then, the wizard has been secretly killing women who resemble his unrequited love and has constructed a flesh golem from the collected body parts. When he leaves his shop, he only does so to find victims without raising the attention of the Red Cloaks.

After a few days, Ricio Tane also started looking for his missing wife, but he never found her. With time, his depression and confusion deepened, and

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eventually, he gave up on his life as an adventurer and his dangerous thieving activities, which caused him more harm than good. For a short time, he even closed down the Lucky Leap, but after a few years of self-inflicted suffering, his torment slowly turned into grief, and he began to recover. Finally, Ricio reopened the Lucky Leap and decided to wait for the right moment to strike at Master Bertio Ranberd, whom he always suspected of murdering his wife. A moment which he thinks has finally arrived.

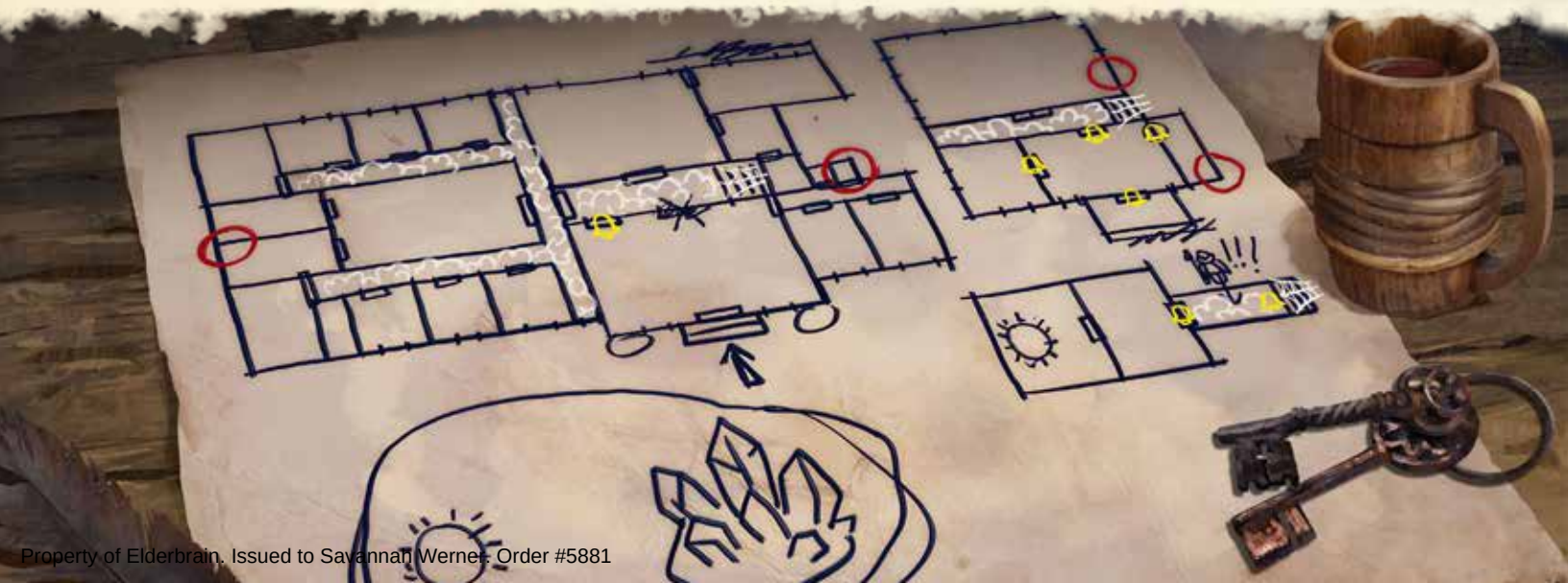
COLOGNE OF DISPELLING

WHAT RICIO TANE KNOWS

Ricio Tane knows the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities inside and out. He has been preparing for the same mission. He is more than eager to undertake it now, knowing all the secrets and security protocols uncovered by his wife and with the aid of such formidable allies. He wants to capture the wizard and question him about his wife. He longs for certainty about her fate, but he is indecisive on what action he will take next. A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can sense Ricio Tane's vehement hatred when speaking about Master Bertio Ranberd.

Ricio Tane is aware of the *alarm* spells, the *private sanctum* on the entire building, the magical effects on the corridors and stairs from *guards and wards* spell, and the *immobilize* spells on all items of value. He can offer his *cologne of dispelling* with six charges, which was given to him by his late wife. He also has some knowledge of the daily routines of the arcane sentinels and Master Bertio Ranberd. He knows the exact location of the switches that need to be activated to open the main gate of the vault.

He shows his wife's hastily drawn map that marks the switches and any threats of which she was aware. Ricio Tane also presents a copy of the two vault keys, which were also given to him by his wife on that fateful night. His wife also told Ricio Tane about the cavern vault, its anti-magic properties, and the mind-crushing powers that emanated from the enormous crystal that dominated the cave. His confused half-elven love told Ricio before she left that Master Bertio Ranberd's magic somehow functioned inside the painful anti-magic area and that it must have something to do with the crystal embedded in his forehead.



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GROUND LEVEL

Background

This level of the building includes the storefront of the business and houses the arcane sentinels who can freely move around on it. Visitors are admitted only to area 1, while selected clients are invited to area 2 and can freely use the lavatories in area 3. Many of the most menial tasks around the house are accomplished by *prestidigitation* and the frequent use of *unseen servant spells*.

1. STOREFRONT

Background

The magic items displayed in the store and shown in the display windows facing the street are only permanent illusions created by Master Bertio Ranberd using a *major image* spell. They are updated frequently to follow the changes in the inventory.

Environment

A heavily stocked shop greets the visitors. Vials, tubes, little bags and containers, gems and crystals, necklaces and rings, wands, weapons, and armor of all sorts are placed neatly on packed shelves. Each item is faintly glowing and has a magical descriptive writing in front of it, which can be seen even despite the bright reddish illumination provided by the flames in the mouths of the two illusory red dragon heads above.

Scene

Nowadays, there are usually only d3-1 customers (use the **noble** monster entry) in the store, either taking their time to decide what to spend their money on or quickly making a purchase and rushing off. The long, packed main desk always has one of the helpful but reserved **arcane sentinels** behind it, currently Drinnur Baelguard. Drinnur Baelguard has been instructed to answer questions briefly until the customer shows genuine interest and sufficient funds. The sellers hand over the actual items to customers only upon payment. In such cases, the front-desk arcane sentinel casts a *message* spell to call forth another apprentice to collect the item or, in cases of higher value purchases, to fetch Master Bertio Ranberd. The master also takes requests on items that are not available in his shop. He and his arcane sentinels can create most common and uncommon potions and scrolls within a few days, and the master accepts requests for scrolls of up to 5th spell level. He can also secure any rare item for twice the amount of the item's original value. Master Bertio Ranberd can attempt to locate and retrieve a single rare magic item once every month if he rolls a 3 or lower on a d20.

DRINNUR BAELGUARD

"Welcome to the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities. Your wish is our business. So how may I serve you today?"

Drinnur Baelguard welcoming customers.

The shop has the following magic items currently in stock. The number in the parentheses shows the number of available items.

COMMON (COSTS 50 GOLD PIECES):

- Potion: *potion of healing* (17), *potion of climbing* (5).
- Scroll: Each cantrip (3) and each 1st level (3) spell that is available for wizards and appears in the Player's Handbook.

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Emporium of Marvelous Rarities

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UNCOMMON (COSTS 500 GOLD PIECES):

- Armor: *+1 metal shield* (2).
- Potion: Each uncommon potion (1) that appears in the Player's Handbook.
- Scroll: Each 2nd level (1) and 3rd level (1) spell that is available for wizards and appears in the Player's Handbook.
- Ring: *ring of jumping* (1), *ring of swimming* (1), *ring of warmth* (1).
- Rod: *immovable rod* (1).
- Wand: *wand of magic detection* (1), *wand of magic missiles* (1).
- Weapon: *+1 dagger* (2), *+1 longsword* (1), *+1 shortbow* (1).
- Wondrous Item: *bracers of archery* (1), *cloak of protection* (1), *figurine of wondrous power (1), silver raven* (1), *goggles of night* (1), *slippers of spider climbing* (1), *wind fan* (1).

RARE (COSTS 5000 GOLD PIECES):

- Armor: *+1 chain mail* (1), *+1 studded leather* (1).
- Potion: *potion of diminution* (1), *potion of fire giant strength* (1), *potion of superior healing* (2).
- Ring: *ring of feather falling* (1).
- Wand: *wand of lightning bolts* (1).
- Weapon: *+2 sickle* (1), *dragon slayer* (1).
- Wondrous Item: *boots of levitation* (1), *bracers of defense* (1), *daern's instant fortress* (1), *ioun stone, awareness* (1).

If alerted to any suspicious activity, Drinnur Baelguard sends a *message* spell to alert at least two other arcane sentinels or even Master Bertio Ranberd if needed.

Treasure

Each arcane sentinel has a scroll of *see invisibility* and a key to their private rooms.

2. Meeting Rooms

Background

These meeting rooms are freely accessible by anyone who is escorted here by the arcane sentinels. The sentinels use them for more prolonged negotiations, which are usually also attended by Master Bertio Ranberd.

Environment

This simple room is equipped only with some functional furnishings like a large table, six comfortable cushioned chairs, a few glasses, and a water jug.

3. Lavatories

Background

The lavatories can only be used by visitors if they have been invited to the meeting rooms for a discussion.

Environment

These elegantly furnished and well-kept private lavatories each feature a porcelain bowl resembling a bloated fish. The porcelain bowls empty and clean themselves magically and replace the used water with a fresh batch that can even be used to wash hands.

Scene

The left side lavatory has a small tile on the wall that can be pushed to deactivate one of the four locks of the vault lock mechanism. The tile is absolutely indistinguishable from the rest of the tiles except for its ability to be pressed. It requires a **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to find the tile only by looking at it, but a quick stroke at the wall immediately reveals it to be pressable.

4. Apprentices' Lounge

Background

Arcane sentinels spend some of their free time here reading and discussing magical theories. Master Bertio Ranberd rarely enters this room.

Environment

Wide curtains cover the tall windows on one side of this room, furnished with comfortable leather sofas and armchairs around low tables. The walls are

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lined with shelves from floor to ceiling, packed with a variety of books. The books include novels, volumes of famous poets, and tomes on history, nature, and religion. Several bottles of wine, brandy, and liquor fill a small serving cupboard. The hearth is well kept with a small amount of wood always burning within.

Scene

One of the **arcane sentinels** currently occupying the room is the tiefling Aphaen Larixus, who spends his free time sitting on the large sofa by the wall, reading a poetic tome titled "All The Air We Cannot Breathe, The Complete Works of Zurpas Olyntrios." He shuts the book when he sees intruders and casts a *message* spell to alert Master Bertio Ranberd of intruders. Unless the characters are convincing enough, he quickly decides to hold them off until reinforcements arrive.

"Now, I will show you true arcane power. You are messing with the wrong wizard."

Aphaen Larixus, holding off the characters.

5. APPRENTICES' KITCHEN

Background

This small kitchen is used by the arcane sentinels only to prepare food for themselves and their master.

Environment

The large iron oven is built into the middle of a wall section with a wash bin and a small desk on its sides. The shelves by the door hold mostly cooking and serving utensils, ceramic bowls, and large metal plates.

6. APPRENTICES' DINING ROOM

Background

This dining area is used mainly by the arcane sentinels, but Master Bertio Ranberd sometimes joins his students for some meals.

Environment

A large wooden dining table dominates the center of the room, surrounded by simple wooden chairs. The cupboard by the wall holds a set of simple ceramic plates, glasses, water jugs, and boxes of utensils.

7. COLD STORAGE

Environment

The air is cold in this small pantry, where the shelves are stacked with a fine selection of fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, dried pastries, spices, and other foodstuffs.

8. APPRENTICES' BEDROOMS

Background

Each arcane sentinel has a private bedroom, which they can lock with a key that they always carry on their persons.

Environment

The decorations of these rooms reflect the personal tastes of the arcane sentinel who resides in them. All of the rooms contain a single wooden bed, a writing desk and a chair, and a large wardrobe full of the arcane sentinel's clothes. The wardrobes have a lockable metal container mounted in their lower right corner, which can be opened with the same key that unlocks the entry door to the room. The lockers in each room contain the spellbook of the arcane sentinel who occupies it. The spellbooks contain the following spells:

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- 1st level: *alarm, detect magic, identify, mage armor, magic missile, unseen servant, protection from evil and good, shield*
- 2nd level: *acid arrow, arcane lock, darkness, detect thoughts, hold person, scorching ray*

Scene

Two sentinel wizards are always asleep in one of the rooms. Currently, two **arcane sentinels** - Thegorin Civereus and Egeor Azin - are spending their sleeping time in any of the two rooms.

"Who? What?!"

Thegorin Civereus waking up to intruders.

Treasure

Each built-in metal container in the wardrobe contains the personal treasure of each arcane sentinel, namely 26 copper pieces, 12 silver pieces, 78 gold pieces, a *potion of healing,* and three scrolls of any 1st level and two scrolls of any 2nd level wizard spell.

9. Lecture Hall

Background

Master Bertio Ranberd holds daily lectures for his arcane sentinel pupils in this lecture hall.

Environment

The lecture hall is equipped with study chairs featuring small writing tablets, a display skeleton of a half-orc for lectures related to anatomy, and a rotating visualization of the multiverse. The large blackboard has the complete description of an *arcane lock* spell inscribed upon it. The spell is so clearly explained that anyone who can copy spells to their spellbook can do so in three hours instead of four hours, and at no cost of spell components as would otherwise be required.

Scene

Enixea Swiftwings, one of the **arcane sentinels,** has been tasked to clean the lecture hall. She has cast an *unseen servant* spell and is about to use a *mage hand* spell on a sponge to clean the blackboard from a safe distance when the characters enter the hall. She reacts in a frightened manner to any unwanted visitors and tries to flee to be able to cast a *message* spell to alert Master Bertio Ranberd and the other arcane sentinels.

"Ohh, please, don't hurt me! I'm nobody. Really. I just started to work here."

Enixea Swiftwings fleeing the characters.

10. Component Storage

Background

This storage holds mundane, less costly magical spell components meticulously kept track of in a large ledger placed on one of the shelves.

Environment

Shelves packed with vials, pouches, and boxes of various sizes cover the entire wall on one side of the room. All of them are neatly labeled and contain alchemical supplies and spell components for all 1st and 2nd level wizard spells that require material components.

Treasure

The shelves contain four vials of acid, four vials of alchemist's fire, one vial of antitoxin, and three vials of basic poison. The total value of the spell components in the room is 500 gold pieces. The components weigh 40 pounds in total.

11. Alchemical Laboratory

Background

Master Bertio Ranberd holds alchemy classes in this room for his apprentices, who are not allowed to use the laboratory without him present.

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Environment

The large laboratory equipment on the table allows up to four people to use it simultaneously. The fragile equipment is composed of glass distillation loops, pans, heaters with candles, spherical containers connected with tubes, and some release valves, one of which is affixed to the table and activates the vault lock mechanism when turned. This small special valve seemingly does nothing when turned.

Treasure

Characters can disassemble the laboratory equipment into four separate alchemist's supplies, two hourglasses, and a magnifying glass.

12. Apprentices' Baths

Environment

These communal bath and lavatory areas have tiled flooring and a few dirty towels strewn about for later cleaning.

TOP LEVEL

Background

This level of the building houses the private chambers of Master Bertio Ranberd. Arcane sentinels only visit their master here under special instructions or when delivering food or other requested items to him.

13. Private Library and Lounge

Background

Master Bertio Ranberd hosts very few visitors, but when he rarely invites someone to his private quarters, he hosts them in this lavish lounge.

Environment

The master's extensive private library is organized on two heavy wooden bookcases by topic and date of publication. The room is lavishly furnished to host smaller groups of guests as well. Laid out in the middle of the room in front of the hearth is the pelt of an exotic two-headed lion with a magenta hue that originates from an unknown southern land. Two paintings decorate the sides of the room between the smaller side windows. One of the paintings depicts the town of Gorso with its once standing clocktower, while the other shows an elaborate battle scene between the armies of Aglarion and the Vordani mountain tribes.

Scene

Master Bertio Ranberd can be found in this room, smoking a cigar and carefully handling an ancient tome that contains religious texts on the teachings of the Light and Darkness using a *mage hand* spell. He reacts with caution to any intrusion, immediately abandoning the house with a *dimension door* spell to alert the Red Cloaks instead of fighting intruders.

Master Bertio Ranberd

"You have certainly made at least one terrible decision today."

Master Bertio Ranberd addressing intruders before casting *dimension door*.

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Master Bertio Ranberd's private library contains old volumes on history, alchemy, arcane arts, planar theories, and many new books on various religious topics, with an exceptionally extensive selection focusing on the god of Light and Darkness. The library has Master Bertio Ranberd's spellbook, which contains the following spells:

- 1st level: *alarm, detect magic, gentle repose, identify, illusory script, mage armor, magic missile, unseen servant, protection from evil and good, shield*
- 2nd level: *acid arrow, alter self, arcane lock, darkness, detect thoughts, enlarge/reduce, hold person, scorching ray*
- 3rd level: *counterspell, dispel magic, glyph of warding, magic circle, major image, nondetection, protection from energy, remove curse*
- 4th level: *banishment, black tentacles, locate creature, private sanctum, resilient sphere, stoneskin*
- 5th level: *arcane hand, cone of cold, legend lore, planar binding, scrying, teleportation circle*
- 6th level: *contingency, disintegrate, globe of invulnerability, guards and wards*

A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check notices that the tiny arms of the clock on the painting of Gorso clocktower can be turned in any direction. Setting the arms of the clock to noon activates one of the locks of the vault lock mechanism.

Treasure

Lying around on one of the bookcases is a used *tome of clear thought,* labeled the "Deduction and Induction" that lost its magic potential a few years ago when Master Bertio Ranberd read it. Another curious small ancient booklet, made out of hardened leather, is entitled the "Portents of Darkness," written by an anonymous cleric of the Darkness Within. The booklet describes in detail the ritual necessary to evoke a limited divination similar to an *augury* spell. If a creature spends one hour to complete the complex ritual outlined in the booklet and also provides the required 25 gold pieces worth of material components, it can cast the *augury* spell.

14. Private Bedroom and Terrace

Background

This room is visited only by Master Bertio Ranberd. None of his students or guests have ever set foot inside this room or the rooms beyond.

Environment

An enormous poster bed covered with neatly pressed sheets and a duvet sits against one of the walls. A large oak wardrobe with several doors stands next to the entry door and holds most of Master Bertio Ranberd's clothes. A small writing desk sits in front of one of the windows with a comfortable chair, with ink, paper, and other writing equipment on its surface. The balcony doors are set with large glass panels, and the two stone heads on the railings are fashioned to resemble red dragons.

Secret Door. A character who searches the wall can notice the secret door panel with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Scene

Master Bertio Ranberd has cast a *glyph of warding* spell on the floor in front of the entry door and another in front of the balcony doors. A creature other than Master Bertio Ranberd who steps on or moves above the glyphs activates them. Attempts to dispel the glyphs are made with a disadvantage due to Master Bertio Ranberd's *Tenacious Abjurations* class feature.

A creature that activates the glyph in front of the door that connects to the hallway must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom** saving throw or become the subject of a *dominate person* spell. On a failed save, Master Bertio Ranberd first questions the dominated crea-

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ture about their intentions, plans, and background, then decides to either send them to the other glyph in front of the balcony doors or to use them in any other way.

A creature that activates the glyph in front of the balcony doors must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom** saving throw or become the subject of a *suggestion* spell be compelled to leave the shop and go to the Halls of the Lawgiver (Onadbyr location 60.) to turn themselves in and to confess all of their crimes to a Red Cloak. The Red Cloak will take the character back to the shop and question Master Bertio Ranberd about the strange confession, who will gladly explain the workings of his spell, thus proving the guilt of the character who will be charged according to their crimes.

MANUAL OF THE ARCHMAGE

A character actively searching for traps can locate the glyphs with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

Treasure

An *alchemy jug* stands next to the bed, but it only produces beer, freshwater, and wine. A *manual of the archmage* sits on a nightstand next to the bed. The wardrobe contains ten sets of fine clothes. The drawer in the writing desk contains a small pouch with ten tiny diamonds, each worth 25 gold pieces.

15. PRIVATE BATH

Environment

A ceramic bathtub sits in the middle of the room in front of a mirrored dresser, and the pelt of a giant dire fox covers the floor.

Scene

The bathtub and the lavatory magically clean themselves and replenish their water with a fresh reserve anytime a creature finishes their use.

16. SECRET GOLEM WORKSHOP

Background

This secret room used to be Master Bertio Ranberd's private laboratory. He turned it into a golem workshop after receiving the *divine spark* from Zaxlyppoteh, allowing him to breathe life or sentience into any object or dead creature. The wizard captured and mutilated several young women in the capital who all became victims of his mad plan to recreate Avrathia Silverstar, the only woman who ever touched his cold heart. Master Bertio Ranberd was not happy about merely using an illusion spell for this purpose. He wanted to touch the woman whom he had disintegrated into fine dust in his rage. So the wizard decided to use a *golem manual* to raise the fabricated body and then give it sentience using the *divine spark*. He keeps the new Avra, as he calls the flesh golem, in this room and keeps perfecting her visage with new components and body parts when he finds something he thinks is more fitting.

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The master wizard also instructs Avra regularly in the arcane arts and since it has become able to cast the *alter self* spell, they spend a few hours together in the bedroom, exploring each other's bodies.

Environment

This small room contains a large table with some blood and a few magically preserved female body parts laid out on its surface. Papers, writing equipment, and a beautifully decorated book lie on the table near a chair that stands at the far end of the room.

Scene

Avra, the sentient flesh golem, sits quietly in the chair, closing her spellbook when the characters enter. She smiles and asks them about themselves and their intentions in a relaxed, kind, but reserved tone.

AVRA

Avra. Use the **flesh golem** monster template with the following modifications:

- Avra has an Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma score of 14 and can speak, read and write, although only with clunky letters.
- Avra is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Avra has the following wizard spells prepared:
  - Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, mending, shocking grasp*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
  - 2nd level (2 slots): *alter self, enlarge/reduce*

Avra is a bit shy and has a kind, naive, honest and curious personality similar to that of a child. It doesn't know more than that "she" was given life by Master Bertio Ranberd, who takes good care of it. The flesh golem likes Master Bertio Ranberd, who perfects its form, strokes its hair, or washes its body gently while they talk about all kinds of mundane and magical topics. The wizard is totally in love with Avra and has honestly told it about his story with Avrathia and why he created it. Avra doesn't mind but is eager to leave the only room it knows, if allowed. Avra would be happy to find out more about the outside world, master magical skills, and find a purpose in life. The spellbook on the table was written by Avra, containing only its memorized spells.

"I'm intrigued by your presence and your story. Please, do tell me more."

Avra addressing the characters.

If and when Ricio Tane meets Avra, he breaks down. He is both shocked and is curious about the flesh golem, which resembles his lost wife so perfectly. Once he gets to know Avra better, he starts feeling close to it, offering his home and his aid. Avra gladly accepts, but while Avra finds the ex-adventurer interesting, it does not return Ricio Tane's feelings. Ricio keeps the flesh golem interested for a while, but it will leave his home eventually if other, more compelling opportunities would arise, especially if it would help to advance its arcane skills.

A sconce at the end of the room can be easily rotated, having no visible or audible effect, but it does unlock one of the locks of the vault mechanism.

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DUNGEON VAULT

Background

This level houses the vaults of the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities and protects the treasures of Master Bertio Ranberd. Only the wizard and his arcane sentinels are allowed to enter the corridor, but Master Bertio Ranberd does not allow the arcane sentinels to access the outer or inner vaults alone. As he is the only one with the keys to both doors, which he always carries on his person, and he personally retrieves any item from his vaults when any are sold in his shop.

All magical items and treasure in areas 18, 19, and 20 have a special *alarm* spell placed upon them and are held in place with *immobilize* spells made permanent.

17. SENTINEL GUARD POST

Background

The arcane sentinels take four hour shifts at this guard post, one of them present at all times.

Environment

The narrow stairway leads down to a narrow corridor that has two alcoves on its sides. A gleaming armor stands in one of the alcoves, its empty arm pieces and gloves resting on the crossguard of a remarkably crafted greatsword in front of it. A simple chair stands in the other alcove. A massive iron vault door closes off the corridor.

Vault Door. The vault doors in areas 17 and 18 are exceptionally thick metal constructions. Both vault doors open only if the four locks scattered around the house have been activated within 10 minutes and if a separate key for each vault door is used to unlock their central, fifth lock. They have AC 19, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 15, and have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They can be picked using thieves' tools with a successful **DC 35 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 35 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

Dunphius the White, one of the **arcane sentinels,** sits on the small chair and studies his arcane notes. Other than Master Bertio Ranberd or the arcane sentinels, any creature who enters the corridor must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom** saving throw or become the subject of a *suggestion* spell generated by the *guards and wards* spell placed on the entire building. On a failed save, the creature is compelled to leave the shop and go to the Halls of the Lawgiver to turn themselves in and confess all of their crimes to a Red Cloak. The Red Cloak will take the character back to the shop and question Master Bertio Ranberd about the strange confession, who will gladly explain the workings of his spell, thus proving the guilt of the character who will be charged according to their crimes.

"I'm engaging the master in direct correspondence right now!"

Dunphius the White reacting to intruders.

An *alarm* and a *glyph of warding* are placed in front of the stair landing at the beginning of the corridor. A creature who activates the glyph is targeted by a *resilient sphere* spell that lasts for 1 minute and blocks the passage in the corridor. The target creature must succeed on a **DC 18 Dexterity** saving throw or be enclosed by the globe of force. A character actively searching for traps can locate the glyph with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. Attempts to dispel the glyph are made with a disadvantage due to Master Bertio Ranberd's *tenacious abjurations* class feature.

The armor in the alcove is an **animated armor** that stands in front of any intruders and attacks any hostile creatures or if the arcane sentinels or Master Bertio Ranberd order it to do so. The animated armor has magical plates and a magical greatsword and has the following modifications:

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- The animated armor has AC 19.
- The animated armor has +5 to hit, reach 5ft., and deals 10 (2d6 + 3) points of bludgeoning damage on a hit.

If any intruders enter the room, Dunphius the White lets the animated armor advance as he stands behind it in the corridor, using the alcove for cover if the characters pass the obstacle of the *resilient sphere*. Next, the arcane sentinel starts sending *message* spells, first to Master Bertio Ranberd then to at least one or two other arcane sentinels to alert them before engaging in combat.

Treasure

The animated armor is made of a +1 plate armor and uses a +1 greatsword.

18. Outer Vault

Background

Master Bertio Ranberd stores common magic items and valuable books in this vault.

Environment

Large bookcases cover the sides and the center of this vault, each of their shelves packed with scrolls, potions, and books, all carefully labeled.

Scene

A *glyph of warding* spell has been cast by Master Bertio Ranberd on the floor in front of the vault door. A creature other than Master Bertio Ranberd who steps on or moves above the glyphs activates it and is targeted by the grasping hand effect of an *arcane hand* spell that has 62 hit points and lasts for 1 minute. A character actively searching for traps can locate the glyph with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. Attempts to dispel the glyph are made with a disadvantage due to Master Bertio Ranberd's *Tenacious Abjurations* class feature.

Treasure

All common items that are in stock (see area 1) and any other treasure found in this room can be removed from the vault only after removing or overcoming the *immobilize* spell that has been cast on them by Master Bertio Ranberd. Besides the magic items, the outer vault also contains twenty antique books, each of which can be sold to the right buyer for 200 gold pieces.

19. Inner Vault

Background

Master Bertio Ranberd stores uncommon and rare magic items, valuable books, and antiques in this vault.

Environment

A single large stone table stands in the middle of the room, covered with various magical items, all carefully labeled. A shimmering magic circle occupies the back of the room.

Scene

A *glyph of warding* spell was cast by Master Bertio Ranberd on the floor in front of the vault door. A creature other than Master Bertio Ranberd who steps on or moves above the glyphs activates it and releases a *cloudkill* spell that fills both the inner and the outer vault, has a **DC 18 Constitution** save, and lasts for 10 minutes. A character actively searching for traps can locate the glyph with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. Attempts to dispel the glyph are made with a disadvantage due to Master Bertio Ranberd's *Tenacious Abjurations* class feature.

The magic circle is a teleportation circle that leads to area 20.

Treasure

All uncommon and rare items that are on stock (see area 1) can be removed from their place only after overcoming the *immobilize* spell that has been cast on them by Master Bertio Ranberd.

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20. The Crystal of Immortals

Background

This area is located under the center of Cloud Peak mountain. The crystal formation in the 20-foot high cave is **Zaphaos' Crystal of the Immortals**, a magical vessel used by the dark angels to descend from their domain when their forces invaded the Material Plane. This particular crystal of the immortals was formerly occupied by the fallen planetar, Zaphaos, the manifestation of hopelessness. Its protector, Zaxlyppoteh, a dark couatl, has spent thousands of years here since the day it arrived, along with its dark celestial master. The latter visited it only rarely while ruling over the mortals of the Material Plane. The couatl has been protecting the crystal ever since, even after the fall of the Dark Star. It saw an opportunity in Master Bertio Ranberd when the wizard found its lair. It has aided the wizard in his endeavors from the moment Master Bertio Ranberd dedicated himself to the evil divine power. Master Bertio Ranberd has been delivering some of the most powerful magical tools to Zaxlyppoteh in hopes that they can one day help summon and bolster the Dark Star and its vast army of dark angels. They work together to uncover information about the locations of legendary items that can help them open magical gates for the dark solar and its dark planetars to enter the Material Plane once again.

Environment

This damp, cold natural cave is dominated by the presence of a huge, green, and multifaceted crystal formation that vibrates irregularly with energy. The glowing crystal's green light illuminates the entire cave. Six large iron chests stand lined up in two rows in front of a small writing desk with neatly arranged documents and some writing equipment placed on it. A large magic circle glows on the floor at the left end of the cave.

Zaphaos' Crystal of the Immortals. The dark planetars and the Dark Star used these crystals to descend upon the Material Plane. This particular crystal radiates a power of raw immortal energy that disables all mortal magic and crushes the psyche of any mortal creature in its vicinity. It draws its power from magic items of rare or above value, slowly draining their charges and magical energies. The crystal of the immortals is impervious to physical or magical attacks and radiates an aura similar to the effects of an *antimagic field* spell in a 2000 feet radius. Any creature that is not an evil celestial within the aura must also make a **DC 23 Intelligence** saving throw every round. The creature takes 36 (8d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature can attune to the crystal of

the immortals by pressing its forehead against the crystal, while a small fragment of it inserts itself into its forehead. Attuning to the crystal of immortals takes one minute of continuous concentration. An attuned character becomes immune to the psychic damage caused by the crystal of the immortals. It can also cast spells normally within its antimagic field, causing the spells cast by the character to function normally. An evil celestial creature regains 18 (4d8) hit points every round within the aura, and it is immune to its antimagic effect, allowing its spells to function normally.

Scene

Zaxlyppoteh (use the **couatl** monster entry, change alignment to *lawful evil*) is usually in the form of Master Bertio Ranberd and only assumes its original form if attacked. The dark couatl uses *detect thoughts* on the characters as they struggle with the psychic crush of the crystal of the immortals. It speaks to them only if it recovers some useful information from their thoughts, if they can withstand the psy-

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chic damage for more than three rounds, or if they attack it. The divine caretaker speaks to the characters in an ancient dialect of Common and if it sees potential, it tries to convince the characters to join its sacred quest for the return of the Dark Star. Otherwise, it tells the characters to leave before it kills them. It fights only to defend itself or the crystal, which it believes to be the primary component for summoning the Dark Star once again.

"Thy m'rtal souls shall anon beest dissolv'd by the residue of the seraph's might. Leaveth anon and nev'r returneth."

Zaxlyppoteh addressing the characters in an archaic dialect.

The documents on the small desk were written by Zaxlyppoteh as instructions for Master Bertio Ranberd on how to find his next target, a specific, legendary magic item - a *cubic gate*. They are merely pieces of a yet incomplete puzzle that the dark couatl is building by using its *scrying* spell based on information recovered by Master Bertio Ranberd. A character who tries to understand the notes and makes a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check notices that some of the notes refer to an ancient adversary that the dark couatl knew it could not scry on but still wanted to locate by repeatedly scrying on others who ventured near its supposed location, somewhere in the Arden Forest.

Treasure

Four of the six large iron chests hold one powerful magical item. One holds 23,628 gold pieces, while the sixth stands empty. The effects of Master Bertio Ranberd's *immobilize* spells are permanently active on each of these items:

- An ancient *candle of invocation* made from tallow harvested from sacrifices that had been dedicated to the lawful evil solar the Dark Star.
- A *sphere of annihilation* that doesn't manifest until removed from the antimagic field. The chest that holds it appears empty.
- A *crystal ball of telepathy*.
- The actual large *vorpal greatsword* of Zaphaos, believed to have been lost.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they successfully deposit the Idol of Thyargylosh in area 20, and for Master Bertio Ranberd and each arcane sentinel bypassed as if they have defeated them in combat.

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HUNT FOR THE ROYAL ARCHITECT

CLUES AT NARDER TYK'S

Background

Narder Tyk, the Royal Architect, is one of the Uncanny Vagabonds who have rebelled against the new Queen. Narder Tyk knew of the secret feeding chambers within the Monster Menagerie and led his family to the location when the Midnight Curse manifested. The Monster Menagerie was immediately closed by the authorities and abandoned to the elements, to the delight of Queen Aphinah.

Environment

Lord Cyne Monder informs the characters that Narder Tyk's apartment is located in a two-story apartment building in the South District. It is noticeably well-maintained compared to the surrounding structures due to Narder's personal involvement in all communal refurbishing projects.

Doors. The door to Narder Tyk's apartment is made of wood and features a simple lock, which can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** check, or can be forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The door has AC 15, 16 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, it has damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Scene

When the characters knock on the Narder Tyk's door, no one answers. Two doors down the hall, a nosy elderly neighbor peeks into the corridor to observe the characters then retreats into her apartment. If characters force the door open, the noise alerts the lady, who calls the authorities.

If characters gain entry into Narder Tyk's home and succeed on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check, they can notice dried feces on the ground near the front door, left from the soles of Narder's boots. The nature of the manure can be determined with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check, which reveals that its source was a large herbivorous creature that eats fern leaves.

There is a hidden compartment in the closet that can be noticed with a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. Inside, characters can find a small packet containing a strange, scentless, yellow dust.

Treasure

The hidden compartment contains a packet of *dust of odorlessness,* with 2 doses remaining.

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MONSTER MENAGERIE

Background

As a result of the Midnight Curse and the magical storms that have raged over the kingdom, the Monster Menagerie has transformed from a once peaceful family attraction into a place of savagery. Many of the monstrosities and beasts on display have acquired new abilities from the fey powers of the curse and have broken out of their cages, claiming the territory as their own. The caretakers at the menagerie have barricaded themselves into the Feeding House (see area 11).

At Queen Aphinah's orders, a contingent of the Royal Army - 12 soldiers accompanied by 4 Children of the Coven witchservants - has been sent to the menagerie, but they have not returned from their exploratory patrols. The Queen has ordered the menagerie be chained shut and only passively contained. She is not concerned in the slightest about the calamity or chaos that the location might spawn in the city if left unattended.

Without much oversight from the new authorities, the hidden feeding chambers below the rocky enclosures have been taken over by the Uncanny Vagabonds, their leader and patriarch Taris, and their favorite son Gren. The Uncanny Vagabonds dislike the new rule of Queen Aphinah and are hiding in the secret feeding chambers.

The head caretaker of the menagerie, the elderly Seldonius Soothis, has been held prisoner by Old Gnarly, the awakened giant crocodile, in a cage hanging above the central pond. However, Seldonius' son Taron, who is also a caretaker at the menagerie, has managed to escape and is involved in negotiations with Old Gnarly, bringing it soldiers and vagabonds whom he captured with his advanced hunting traps spread throughout the park as meat to appease the giant crocodile and hopefully free his father.

Environment

The Monster Menagerie is a vast garden enclosing several city blocks of Onadbyr, surrounded by a 10-foot tall, wrought-iron fence. The whole area of the Monster Menagerie is considered forest terrain. Climbing the fence requires a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The park features a large pond, a greenhouse, an aviary, a large pen, several iron cages, and a rocky area. It is steeper on the north-eastern side and the rocky outcrops on the western and northwestern sides. The park is thick with vegetation - bushes, trees, and beds of flowers - even unnaturally so due to the blooming effects of the Midnight Curse. Benches line the dirt paths, and signs stand outside the enclosed areas, offering short descriptions and a silhouette of the monsters within the enclosures.

As a result of the unnaturally heavy rains in the recent days, the waters of the lake in area 6a have swelled, reaching up to the bottom of the stands onto area 6b and also overflowing on its eastern side over the bridge and into the cages into areas 8 and 9.

Taron's Advanced Hunting Traps. The area of the Monster Menagerie is littered with advanced hunting traps (where marked on the map) set by Taron to capture and kill anyone who ventures into the park - be it soldiers sent by the Queen, Uncanny Vagabonds who emerge from their hideout, or adventurers who brave the menagerie. The hunting traps are well hidden, requiring a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice beneath the underbrush. Taron has affixed the traps to the ground with heavy

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spikes driven into the ground. A creature that steps on the plates at the center of the traps must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or take 10 (4d4) piercing damage from the two saw-like teeth and be restrained. Freeing a creature from the trap requires a successful **DC 13 Strength** ability check. On a failed check, Taron's trap deals 2 (1d4) piercing damage to the trapped creature.

Taron's Alarm. Taron maintains an *alarm* spell on the path from the entrance to the greenhouse that alerts him with a mental alarm if anyone ventures on the path.

1a. Main Gate

Environment

The form of a triceratops fashioned onto the street's cobblestones marks the entrance to the Monster Menagerie. Twin ticket sales booths, both 10 feet tall, stand on both sides of a massive arched double gate that has been chained shut and is under lock. On the inside of the gate, folded rail guards guide the visitors inside. The ticket booths are identical, each featuring closed wooden window-shutters to the streets, a counter on the inside, and a chair. The counter of each booth features a till, as well as ticket stubs.

Main Gate. The large iron gate (10 by 10 feet) is locked by heavy chains with a large padlock. The chains and padlock each have AC 19, 27 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The heavy padlock can be picked with thieves' tools with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Treasure

The tills each contain 294 copper pieces, 16 silver pieces, and 3 gold pieces - some change that has been abandoned in the mayhem and panic that ensued due to the curse.

1b. Loading Area

Environment

A loading gate leads to the cobbled loading area and inner courtyard of the menagerie. This gate has also been chained and locked. Two wagons sit abandoned in the loading area, with bales of hay and sacks of grain that have been soaked through by the rains and have started to mold and rot.

A tall sculpted fountain rises in the middle of the inner courtyard, showing two griffons leaping towards the sky with outstretched wings. The pool of the fountain is almost overflowing and overgrown with algae.

Transport Gate. The large iron gate (10 by 10 feet) is locked by heavy chains with a large padlock. The chains and padlock each have AC 19, 27 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The heavy padlock can be picked with thieves' tools with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

The mold on the grains has mutated into a dangerous **witch mold**. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice the strange yellow and purple mold growing inside the sacks. If any character disturbs the sacks on the wagons, the witch mold releases spores in a 10-foot radius.

Witch Mold. A creature that comes within 10 feet of witch mold or starts its turn within 10 feet of the mold must succeed on a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes blinded for 24 hours. Exposure to sunlight instantly destroys witch mold.

2. Gift Shop

Environment

The gift shop of the Monster Menagerie has a range

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of goods for sale that are fun keepsakes after a visit to the park. The shop's door to the street is also chained and locked, requiring a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** check using thieves' tools to pick the lock on the chain and an additional **DC 15 Dexterity** check using thieves' tools to pick the lock on the door. The building is 15 feet tall.

Stuffed toys in the shape of various creatures like crocodiles, triceratopses, owlbears, and griffons sit on the shelf behind a counter. A stuffed peacock perches near the door that can be identified with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check as a rare variant of a cockatrice, a peacockatrice. Posters and illustrated books on the various beasts in the menagerie lie on shelves and a central table. The counter features a tillbox and a glass counter that displays tokens, mugs, bookmarks, and various other small souvenirs.

Treasure

The till contains 23 copper pieces, 43 silver pieces, and 15 gold pieces, abandoned in the mayhem and panic that ensued due to the Midnight Curse.

One of the books on the shelves is an album entitled "Tome of Monsters: The Savage Side of Mother Eternal", about many exotic creatures found in the menagerie. Referencing the tome for 10 minutes grants the reader advantage on Intelligence (Nature) skill checks to identify beasts and monstrosities.

3. Lavatories

Environment

The building houses three separate partitioned lavatories and washbasins that have not been cleaned for a while. The building is 15 feet tall.

4. Greenhouse

Background

The greenhouse of the menagerie used to give a home to rare and exotic flower-bearing plants of a dazzling variety and of all colors, tended to by the caretakers of the Monster Menagerie. Due to the blooming effects of the curse, the vegetation here has grown especially rampant and has coalesced into a shambling mound. The plant creature attacked and slew half of the company sent by Queen Aphinah.

Environment

The greenhouse is a domed, glass structure with a diameter of 40 feet and a height of 20 feet. A wooden foundation that is 6 feet high supports the glass dome, obstructing view into the interior of the building from the outside. The door of the building stands ajar, and the crushed remains of six Royal Swords and a robed witchservant cultist litter the ground in front of the entrance, some of their bodies ripped apart and strange black flowers growing on their corpses.

Having grown to double its size as a result of the curse, a peony tree has burst through the glass dome of the structure. Rainwater has seeped into the building through the crack, collecting in puddles on the ground, and has mutated the plants here to grow thorny spikes. The cursed waters have also given rise to a colorful array of mushrooms that have sprung from the verdant ground in many places, as well as the corpses inside the building, obstructing the narrow walkways that used to criss-cross the location.

"Get transported to distant lands by the bloom of amazing colors and scents!"

The sign outside the Greenhouse.

Scene

As the characters enter the greenhouse, they find themselves surrounded by dense foliage. The entire area is considered difficult terrain due to the plant growth and vines on the ground. If any character investigates the corpses, they inadvertently trigger the flowers to release their pollen and be exposed to the effects of the poisonous **carrion flowers** growing on the bodies.

Carrion Flowers. The carrion flower grows on the carcasses of dead creatures and distills the necrotic energies in the corpses into its pollen. Anyone exposed to the pollen in a 10-foot radius must make a

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successful **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw or gain the poisoned condition and suffer 1d4 necrotic damage at the start of their turn as long as they are poisoned by the carrion flower. At the end of each of its turns, a creature poisoned by the carrion flower can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the poisoned condition ends on the creature.

The cursed rains have also given rise to a **shambling mound** that has coalesced from the vegetation. It hides in the thick foliage and attacks once characters venture into the greenhouse.

Treasure

The corpse of the witchservant cultist has 7 silver pieces and 6 gold pieces in a small purse. The six Royal Army soldiers don't have any valuables except for their equipment - spears, long swords, chain shirts, and badly damaged uniformed cloaks.

5. Aviary

Background

The aviary used to house a myriad of different bird species of the most exotic kinds - birds of paradise, hummingbirds, songbirds, and other bright-plumed varieties of flighted creatures - as well as a prized flock of peacockatrices gifted to King Waldrann many years ago by a Drayl emissary from the City-State of Zammastra.

Most of the birds had flown from the structure when a bolt of lightning damaged the iron grills of the cage and the covering netting, creating a hole at the top of the dome. The lighting also pierced the smaller inner cage of the peacockatrices, freeing them to extend their habitat to the entire area of the aviary. The peacockatrices have also acquired special powers due to the Midnight Curse, the colors on their plumage are animated and constantly swirl with hypnotic patterns.

Environment

The aviary is an enormous domed birdcage covered with a thin netting. The structure has a diameter of 40 feet and a height of 20 feet. On the northern side of the larger cage and one side of the smaller inner cage, a bolt of lightning has melted and shattered the iron grills and covering netting. Many smaller trees grow in the cage, with numerous bird nests in their branches. The trees and vegetation have also bloomed and grown to fill the area, obstructing the view to the inside of the structure. Carcasses of tiny to small birds lie scattered around the ground.

"Marvel at the beautiful plumage and listen to the soothing songs of the minstrels of the air!"

The sign outside the Aviary.

Scene

Four **peacockatrices** are hidden by the thick foliage of the aviary. Characters must succeed on a **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the swirling colors of the creatures' plumes behind the plant cover. The peacockatrices inhabit the aviary and will attack any intruder who ventures into the structure.

Peacockatrice. The peacockatrices have acquired a unique ability as a result of the curse, their plumage swirling with wild colors hypnotically. Use the **cockatrice** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Hypnotic Plumes.*** Any creature within 30 feet of the peacockatrice who sees the swirling plumage must make a successful **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed. While charmed by this effect, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. The affected creature can make a new save at the start of its turn to end the effect, and the effect also ends for an affected creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the hypnotic plumes for the next 24 hours.

6a. Old Gnarly' Pond

Background

The large central pond was home to dozens of smaller crocodiles and a notoriously vicious giant crocodile

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named Old Gnarly, captured in the Ulden Swamps and brought to the capital over two decades ago.

As a result of the Midnight Curse, Old Gnarly has awakened and has become sentient, first attacking and slaying the caretakers in the area when the Midnight Curse manifested and then eradicating all other crocodiles in its pond. However, the head caretaker of the menagerie, Seldonius Soothis, managed to jump into the feeding cage hanging above the water, and he is kept alive but prisoner by Old Gnarly for feeding it choice meats in the past.

Old Gnarly has also broken through the triceratops pen and has slain Queen Bonnyspikes, the female triceratops, before being driven back to the water by King Blackhorn after a vicious battle. Seldonius has since treated the crocodile's wounds from the gore attacks of the triceratops in exchange for his life.

Environment

Old Gnarly's Pond is a large pond surrounded by 6-foot tall iron columns forming a fence. Climbing the columns requires a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The elevation of the ground around the fence used to be 20 feet above the water level, but as the waters have swelled from the almost constant heavy rains, the shore is only 5 feet above the water, except for its rocky northern side. This used to be dry ground and the favorite sunbathing area of the lizards. The pond has also overflown, especially on its western side, covering the bridgehead stairs on the south side and the areas between the amphitheater in area 6b and the Guess the Mimic cage in area 8, where the water is about a foot deep.

The mangled carcasses of numerous crocodiles and a menagerie caretaker float on the bloody water.

"Meet the largest crocodile that ever lived, the terror of the Ulden Swamps, Old Gnarly the ever-hungry!"

The sign outside Old Gnarly's Pond.

Scene

Old Gnarly hides under the water cover and hunts its territory in silence and stealth, stalking anyone who ventures near the bridge's southern side or the amphitheater. The large body of the giant lizard can be spotted with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Old Gnarly waits for the characters to approach the bottom of the stands or the caretaker's platform from its ambush position below water cover, or if it is detected. At this point, it rises from the water and moves to the bottom level of the amphitheater, demanding meat from the characters to feed its insatiable hunger. Feigning subservience and tricking Old Gnarly into thinking that meat is on the way requires a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Deception)** skill check. However, this will only buy some time before the giant crocodile grows suspicious and attacks the characters.

"Are you my feed, or did you bring meat?!"

Old Gnarly roaring as it rises from the depth of the pool.

Old Gnarly. Use the **giant crocodile** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Old Gnarly is *chaotic evil*.
- It has an Intelligence score of 10.
- It can speak Common.

6b. Feeding Theater

Background

The twice-daily feeding shows always attracted large crowds to witness the gory feeding frenzy of the crocodiles and especially Old Gnarly's vicious attacks. The caretakers around the feeding theater were the first targets of Old Gnarly when it gained sentience.

Environment

The theater is a stone structure that rises 20 feet from the ground on its western side, sloping down

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towards the pond. The bottom level of the theater used to be 10 feet above a raised feeding area at ground level on its eastern side. However, the water level has risen 15 feet, and now the water is lapping at the bottom of the seating area.

The rotting and mangled carcass of Queen Bonnyspikes, the triceratops, lies in the grass on the southern side of the theater (see area 7a).

6c. Caretaker's Platform

Background

This platform once served as a feeding mechanism for the shows, from where menagerie caretakers lowered live animals onto the small stretch of dry ground below the theater. The wizened head menagerie caretaker, Seldonius Soothis, locked himself into the feeding cage hanging above the water when Old Gnarly slew the other caretakers but has now fallen unconscious due to the strains of confinement. Old Gnarly keeps Seldonius alive for past favors and choice meats and also finds evil pleasure in the reversed roles and seeing the suffering of the caretaker.

Environment

The feeding platform is a wooden structure with a rail separating it from the theater stands and separate stairs used only by staff. A thick pole rises from the platform and a wooden cage hangs from it. The cage is 6 feet on a side and can be lowered and raised by a pulley mechanism or swung 180 degrees clockwise so it is over the water or resting on the southern side of the platform. The cage is currently submerged in the water, and a body dressed in green robes lies slumped inside.

Scene

Seldonius Soothis (use the **menagerie caretaker** monster entry), the head menagerie caretaker, lies slumped within the cage suspended and sitting in the pond. He has been held prisoner by Old Gnarly and has fallen unconscious. If revived, Seldonius can detail the original array of beasts and monstrosities that inhabited the menagerie and describe the secret door leading to the underground feeding chambers in area 15. He is ever grateful if the characters help in clearing out the park, and he can aid in this undertaking.

"Thank you most kindly, visitors. I beg your forgiveness for the dreadful state of the menagerie. Something must be done to tame the monsters and their habitat."

Seldonius Soothis requesting aid after being rescued and revived.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they rescue and revive Seldonius Soothis.

7a. Triceratops Pen

Background

The pen used to house the mated pair of triceratopses - King Blackhorn and Queen Bonnyspike - brought to Aglarion in a caravan from the far south over a decade ago. As a result of the Midnight Curse, the horns of the triceratopses have changed to resemble unicorn horns and the beasts have also acquired limited teleportation abilities as a result.

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Unfortunately, Queen Bonnyspikes unknowingly jumped outside of the confines of the pen and was soon attacked and dispatched by Old Gnarly. Old Gnarly then battered down the northern columns of the pen and went after King Blackhorn. A battle of giants ensued, which resulted in a mutual retreat, both combatants with severe wounds. Taron Soothis has tended to king Blackthorn, and the two have become close companions.

Environment

The pen is about 70 feet across, enclosed by massive wooden columns. Some leafy low-hanging trees and thick bushes grow rampant on its sides. A 16-foot long trough sits idly within the pen, brimming with rainwater. The open center of the pen has turned into a muddy quagmire, which is difficult terrain.

"Long live their tri-horned majesties, King Blackhorn and Queen Bonnyspike! May their reign bring peace from the lands of the south!"

The sign outside the triceratops pen.

Scene

King Blackhorn, the triceratops alpha, rules this domain. The beast has been licking its wounds after its fight with old Gnarly, sometimes phasing around the enclosure in grief and anger. It attacks anyone who ventures within 10 feet of the pen or inside it.

King Blackhorn. Use the **triceratops** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Teleport (1/Day).*** King Blackhorn can magically teleport itself and up to three willing creatures it can see within 5 feet of it, along with any equipment they are wearing or carrying, to a location it is familiar with, up to 300 feet away.

If characters have triggered Taron's *alarm* spell, the young caretaker hides in ambush here, waiting for his trap to be activated (see area 7b). He can be noticed hiding in the bushes with a successful **DC 19 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

7b. STORAGE BARN

Background

The menagerie caretakers used the wooden barn to store hay and other dry feed for the beasts and monsters in the park.

Taron Soothis has been hiding out in the wooden shed that is part of the pen, using it as a base to fashion his traps and hunt the grounds for victims to feed Old Gnarly.

Environment

This large, 20-foot tall wooden shed was used to store small bales of hay, dry animal feed in large boxes, and all kinds of equipment used for gardening and animal husbandry. A small camp is set up in the barn, around which a bedroll and some cooking appliances have been strewn.

Scene

The barn is the hideout of **Taron Soothis**, a former menagerie caretaker who has been hunting for prey to placate Old Gnarly and free his father from the clutches of the giant crocodile. Taron has set up a camp here, whence he sometimes goes forth into the menagerie to set his advanced hunting traps. He also maintains an *alarm* spell on the path from the entrance to the greenhouse and will prepare to lie in ambush for prey - anyone who dares to tread the grounds - within the thick foliage on the northern side of triceratops pen.

If caught unaware, Taron can be found in the barn. He has gone into survival mode under the conditions that the curse has brought to the menagerie, as well as the plight of his father. He will see anyone whom he encounters as prey and meat that he might offer to Old Gnarly. Taron will immediately summon King Blackthorn with a bellowing roar, who will teleport to his side in the following round.

Taron Soothis. Use the **menagerie caretaker** monster entry with the following modifications:

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- He is *neutral evil*.
- He has the following ranger spells prepared:
  - 1st level (4 slots): *alarm, ensnaring strike, hunter's mark, speak with animals*
  - 2nd level (2 slots): *beast sense, spike growth*

"Best not to struggle. It will hurt more. And Old Gnarly likes its meat to be intact when served."

Taron to a trapped character after he attacks from ambush.

If Old Gnarly is defeated and his father freed, Taron will fall to his knees in exhaustion from the trial that was mentally, physically, and emotionally draining on the young man. Nevertheless, he will join any effort to reestablish some order to the menagerie and eliminate all threats. He will also seek repentance for his deeds done in need and humbly beg for forgiveness from the Uncanny Vagabonds for killing their members, offering to join their ranks if possible.

Treasure

Taros has 3 advanced hunting traps and an explorer's pack, whose contents are spread on the ground.

8. Guess the Mimic

Background

The mimic cage has always been a favorite attraction for visitors, especially during feeding times when caretakers fed live rabbits to the monster from the feeding house in area 11, and visitors could play a game to guess which object the mimic has chosen as its form from the various items in the cage. As a result of the heavy rains, the wooden inner cage of the rust monsters in area 9 has been damaged, and the beasts have escaped by corroding the metal bars of the cages, thereby opening the mimic cage to the outside. The mimic has acquired an adhesive breath weapon ability as a result of the Midnight Curse.

Environment

Several objects are on display in this 15-foot high cage with a ceiling and iron bars, including a barrel, a trough, a crate, an armchair, an oven, and a chest. Water has seeped in from the pond's overflow, covering the northern part of the cage with a thin layer of water. The water is blooded, and there is a half-eaten and unrecognizable corpse of a menagerie caretaker among the objects with an intact potion vial clutched in its hand. On the southeastern corner of the cage, the iron bars have been corroded to stumps, and the cage is open to the outside.

Scene

The **cursed mimic** is currently in the form of a trough and lies in wait for anyone to enter the cage, at which point it springs to attack.

Cursed Mimic. Use the **mimic** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Adhesive Breath (Recharge 5-6).*** The mimic exhales a gooey substance in a 20-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is covered by goo and is restrained. It requires a **DC 13 Strength** check to break free. Ability checks made to escape the adhesive goo have disadvantage.

"Guess the mimic! Spot the monster before it eats the rabbit!"

The sign outside the mimic cage.

Treasure

The menagerie caretaker has a *potion of invisibility* in his hand, labeled "Emergency Use Only."

9. Eaters of Iron

Background

The rust monsters housed here were captured at the foothills of the Shandar Mountains and brought to Onadbyr to display the curious iron rusting ability of the monsters in the menagerie where they were fed ingots of iron, knives, and other metalware. Visitors were actually encouraged to try to throw metal trin-

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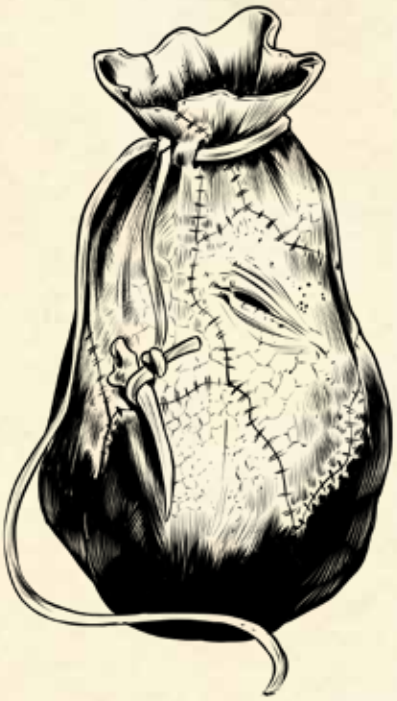
kets to the monsters through the double enclosure. As a result of the curse, one of the rust monsters has grown to a giant size, and the overflow from the pond has weakened the wooden structure, allowing the monsters within to reach the iron structure and start feeding on the delicious metal of the cages. They began to consume the northeastern side of their own cage and the southeastern side of the mimic's cage before being chased off by the mimic. The rust monsters have been careful to avoid Softplume the owlbear and have moved on to the chomping on the iron on the southern side of their cage.

The monsters also quickly dispatched a contingent of the Royal Swords and witchservants who were exploring the menagerie.



Environment

The 15-foot tall cage of the rust monsters features two layers - an external iron one like the neighboring cages and a wooden inner one to contain the monsters within. Small metal trinkets line the space between the two enclosures. The northeastern side of the wooden cage is sodden and broken, while the iron bars on the outside have been corroded away and turned to rust in a few places. The corpses of five Royal Swords and a witchservant cultist lie on the southern side of the enclosure in their under-armor padding, their ferrous armor and swords having been turned to rust.

"Throw your metal trinkets to the eaters of iron from the Shandar Mountains!"

The sign outside the rust monster cage.

Scene

Two **rust monsters** and a **giant rust monster** are engaged in feeding on the iron bars of their cage and the armor of the corpses littered on the southern side. The monsters will attack anyone who approaches their cage and will target opponents wearing metal armor or carrying metal shields or weapons but are otherwise not interested in the characters.

Giant Rust Monster (CR 1, 200 XP). Use the **rust monster** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The giant rust monster is Large size.
- It has 55 hit points.
- Its bite attack deals 10 (2d8 + 1) piercing damage.
- Any time the giant rust monster is hit with a nonmagical weapon made of metal or when it hits a creature with its antennae, it gains 5 hit points.

Treasure

The corpse of the witchservant cultist has 12 silver pieces and 5 gold pieces in a small purse. The six Royal Swords don't have any valuables except for the remains of their equipment - the shafts of their spears and badly damaged uniformed cloaks.

10. SOFTPLUME THE OWLBEAR

Background

Softplume the Owlbear was captured in the Bleak Mire and sold to King Waldrann by Frumby Goldtooth several years ago. However, Frumby claimed that he caught the beast at the edge of the King's

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Forest and made no mention of the Feyrealm. Softplume has been a prized attraction of the menagerie and a favorite of Aglarion's children due to the unique faerie sheen of its feathers and the popular stuffed owlbear toys in its image sold around the kingdom.

Softplume remains trapped in its cage. However, as a result of the Midnight Curse, it has acquired a thunderous hoot ability that it has used already when Queen Aphinah's company of soldiers approached its enclosure.

The Uncanny Vagabonds have managed to avoid the beast's fury by stealth and throwing it some morsels when needed.

Environment

The 15-foot tall enclosure features a large nest in its center, and its floor is dirty and covered by feathers and guano. Characters can see the pitiful hunched form of Softplume within the cage, dirty and hungry.

"Hoot if you wish to see the dazzling ruffle of Softplume's marvelous feathers, of the prettiest owlbear in all the lands!"

The sign outside Softplume's cage.

Scene

If anyone ventures within 15 feet of the enclosure, Softplume will rise from its nest and use its *Thunderous Hoot* ability.

Softplume. Use the **owlbear** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Thunderous Hoot.*** As a bonus action, Softplume can issue a thunderous hoot with a radius of 20 feet that ripples through the air. The thunderous hoot ability functions as a *shatter* spell with a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw. Softplume is immune to the effects of its own thunderous hoot ability.

11. Feeding House

Background

The feeding house was used by the menagerie caretakers to prepare and portion the feed for the beasts and monsters on display - primarily rabbits and other meats for the mimic and Softplume, as well as iron ingots for the rust monsters.

One of the witchservant cultists, Zartior Greentree, fled to the building after encountering the rust monsters and Softplume. He stumbled upon a menagerie caretaker who was already hiding in the building. The witchservant first befriended the caretaker, finding out some key details about his past, before murdering him and feeding the remains to the mimic. The witchservant then dressed in the caretaker clothes stored in the building and barricaded himself. He has been persisting on the rabbit feed that he has found and is waiting for someone to "rescue" him so he may continue his explorations with new "allies."

Environment

The feeding house is a small, 10-foot tall, flat-roofed brick side building with a wooden floor. The building has three 3-foot tall upward sliding doors that connect it to the three cages in areas 8, 9, and 10. Each doorway also has a metal grill inside the surrounding cages that can be opened with a latch from both sides. Currently, all doors and grills are closed.

Utensils used for food preparation and wide bowls filled with putrid meat and wilted vegetables lie on a table on the northern wall. A large rabbit cage with several live rabbits sits along the eastern wall and a large box filled with iron ingots in the southwestern corner. The door from the outside of the building is unlocked, but it opens to the inside and has been barricaded with chairs and wooden boxes, blocking the way into the building. The barricade can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

When the characters try to open the barricade or if they approach the building loudly, Zartior Greentree,

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a **witchservant cultist**, calls the characters for rescue. He pretends to be afraid and feigns the need to be persuaded for him to open the barricade. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check realizes that Zartior Greentree tries to gauge the characters' intentions. Once Zartior Greentree has made sure that the characters can lead him further into the menagerie, he assumes the form of the murdered menagerie caretaker using his *Hag's Form* ability and opens the barricade.

When questioned, Zartior Greentree explains in jumbled sentences that he fled into the building when the curse manifested and has been hiding there since. He will avoid answering questions that would unravel his deceit, especially if the Soothis' are present, acting deadly afraid, disoriented, and confused. Characters can see through the act if they make a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check. If confronted, Zartior Greentree will try to flee using a *potion of misty step* and report the characters to Queen Aphinah. If he is not discovered, Zartior Greentree will want to be close to the characters for an hour until he can glean some details about them and their intentions. When the end of the hour approaches, Zartior Greentree will try to leave the area and contact his fellow witchservants. If he can do so, nine Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and three **witchservant cultists** arrive within 5d4+10 minutes to investigate the entire Monster Menagerie again.

Treasure

The witchservant cultist has 8 silver pieces and 16 gold pieces in a small purse, as well as a *potion of misty step* if he hasn't used it in the encounter.

12. GRICK ROCKS

Background

The gricks inhabiting the rocky enclosure were captured on the lower slopes of the Mountainfall by Jon Blackthorn the ranger and sold to the Menagerie for a pretty penny. The monsters lie absolutely still, even during feedings times, attacking in a flash when presented with live feed.

As a result of the Midnight Curse, the tentacles of the gricks have gained the ability to expand to 40 feet and have also become poisonous.

The giant scorpion in the neighboring cage has acquired an acidic bite and has slowly opened up the iron columns on the southern side of areas 12 and 13, freeing itself and the gricks from their enclosures. The scorpion had attacked the gricks but was beaten off by their superior numbers.

Environment

The enclosure of the gricks is essentially a rock bowl that is 30 feet deep on its northern side, sloping up 40 feet towards the southwestern side. The bowl is closed off from the neighboring giant scorpion enclosure by a thick wall made of stone, fashioned to organically fit into the environment. The stumps of iron columns stand on the elevated southern side of the bowl that used to close off the enclosure from the rest of the park, now dissolved by acid. The half-eaten carcass of a grick lies on the ground, its body also partially dissolved.

Secret Feeding Hatch. At the bottom of the bowl is a hidden feeding hatch that blends into the rocky environment, opening to the underground feeding chambers (area 15.) It can be discovered with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

"As still as stone and able to blend into a rocky environment, the grick is an ambush predator that can overwhelm the unwary mountain traveler. Can you see the monsters before they move?"

The sign outside the grick rock enclosure.

Scene

Four **tentacled gricks** are hiding on the rocky floor of the bowl, unmoving and indistinguishable from the surrounding terrain. They will lash out with their elongated tentacles at anyone who approaches the sides of their enclosure and will try to drag them down into the bowl.

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Tentacled Grick. Use the **grick** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Tentacles.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 +2) slashing damage. Any creature hit by the grick's tentacles is grappled and must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or gain the poisoned condition for 1 minute.

13. Deathsting, the Giant Scorpion

Background

The giant scorpion Deathsting is renowned for being one of the most ferocious vermin that the people of Aglarion have ever seen. The beast was captured in the rocky paths of the eastern Vordan Mountains and brought to the capital for display.

As a result of the Midnight Curse Deathsting has grown fanglike mandibles that seep acid and has eaten away at the iron pillars of its enclosure as well as those of the neighboring enclosure to get at the gricks. Nevertheless, the tentacled monsters have mostly managed to evade and drive off Deathsting, who now lurks in the bushes on the southern side of the menagerie.

Environment

The enclosure of Deathsting is essentially a rock bowl 30 feet deep on its northern side, sloping up 40 feet towards the southeastern side. The bowl is closed off from the neighboring grick and griffon enclosure by thick walls fashioned from stone, built to organically fit into the environment. The stumps of iron columns stand on the elevated southern side of the bowl that used to close off the enclosure from the rest of the park, now dissolved by acid. The ground outside the closed secret feeding hatch is littered with sealed feeding bags that are actually filled with feces (dumped here by the Uncanny Vagabonds hiding below.)

Secret Feeding Hatch. At the bottom of the bowl is a hidden feeding hatch that blends into the rocky environment, opening to the underground feeding chambers in area 15. It can be discovered with a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

"Beware Deathsting, my son! The tail that stings, the claws that catch!"

The sign outside the giant scorpion enclosure.

Scene

Deathsting is a patient predator. It waits patiently and motionless in the bushes on the periphery of the menagerie for prey - for any grick that would leave its enclosure and separate from its pack or any creature that would approach the areas on the eastern side of the grick rocks in area 12.

Deathsting. Use the **giant scorpion** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Multiattack.*** The scorpion makes four attacks: two with its claws, one with its fangs, and one with its sting.
- ***Fangs.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

14. Griffon's Nest

Background

Suncrest and Goldfeathers, a mated pair of griffons, was found by Seldonius Soothis in the Talanar Hills, injured and unable to defend themselves or to lay eggs. The old caretaker befriended the pair of majestic monsters and brought them to Onadbyr for caretaking. The griffons have since recovered, and Goldfeathers has laid two eggs that the griffons ferociously protect.

As a result of the Midnight Curse, the griffons have become able to blast strong winds with their wings, which they use to repel anyone who ventures near their webbed enclosure. The animals are cautiously fed through the secret feeding hatch by the Uncanny Vagabonds, hiding under the rock enclosures.

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Environment

The enclosure of the griffons is similar to the other rock enclosures next to it - a rock bowl that is 30 feet deep on its northern side, sloping up 40 feet towards the southwestern side. The rocky outcrop at the top of the boulders features a large nest with two yellowish eggs resting inside. The bowl is closed off from the neighboring giant scorpion enclosure by thick walls fashioned from stone, built to fit into the environment organically, and iron columns on the southern and western sides of the bowl that separate it from the rest of the park. The iron columns here are almost 30 feet tall, supporting a wire mesh that keeps the griffons confined.

Secret Feeding Hatch. At the bottom of the bowl is a hidden feeding hatch that blends into the rocky environment, opening to the underground feeding chambers in area 15. It can be noticed with a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Secret Door. The secret door to the Underground Feeding Chambers in area 15 is well hidden and fashioned to resemble the natural rock face into which it is carved, requiring a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice.

"The rays of the sun are made brighter by the glorious plumage of Suncrest and Goldfeathers, the mated pair of griffons."

The sign outside the Griffon's nest.

Scene

Suncrest and **Goldfeathers** guard their eggs viciously and repel any intrusion, taking to the air and blasting forth gusts of wind with their wings as soon as any creature approaches their enclosure.

Suncrest and Goldfeathers. Use the **griffon** monster entry with the following modification:

- ***Wing Blast.*** As an action, the griffons can create turbulent gusts of wind with their wings, which functions as a *gust of wind* spell with a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw.

15. Underground Feeding Chambers

Background

The menagerie caretakers used the underground feeding chambers to store feed and the equipment needed to run the menagerie. The upper chambers have three secret hatches that connect to each of the three rocky enclosures, whence live feed could be introduced to the monsters.

A group of the Uncanny Vagabonds who have been stranded in Onadbyr has commandeered the chambers. Gren, a member of the vagabonds and bastard son King Waldran, has been declared an outlaw by the Queen's authorities, and the clan has gone into hiding. Narder Tyk advised his cousin Taris, the clan's patriarch, about the Monster Menagerie and, specifically the underground feeding chambers to be used as the family's hideout. The Vagabonds have utilized doses of *dust of odorlessness* to bypass the animals and travel in stealth through the premises. Separated from the rest of the family in Aglarion, the Vagabonds plot their escape from the city and getting to a safe location.

Gren has started to gather key allies in the resistance against the new regime and exploit flaws in its workings. However, Taris is playing two hands, weighing Gren's value in being a figurehead for rebellion while at the same time trying to manipulate events to best serve the Uncanny Vagabonds. The Royal Architect Narder Tyk is also hiding out with his Uncanny Vagabond family after having been rescued by Gren from the clutches of Queen Aphinah's forces.

Environment

Steep stairs descend 30 feet from the secret door beneath the griffon enclosure to the underground feeding chambers. Torches illuminate the chambers, and each features a feeding hatch that can be easily seen from the inner side. There is also an open trap door that leads to the storage chambers below.

The chambers have been turned into a rebel hideout that houses a dozen members of the Uncanny Vaga-

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bonds. Dirty sleeping mats and small campsites with cooking utensils, backpacks, and personal belongings are spread around the chambers, which also serve as storage for stores of weapons, barrels of water and wine, and crates of foodstuff - mostly smoked meats, onions, and tubers. The air is stuffy with the bodily odors of many people in a confined space for an extended period, and the space is cramped with stores of goods and the belongings of about a dozen Uncanny Vagabonds. Ceilings are 10 feet high.

Scene

The Uncanny Vagabonds are all related by family ties and will usually act as a group after discussing the plan of action privately in their own tongue. The most imposing figure among them is **Gren,** while Taris (use the **spy** monster entry with the ability to cast *minor illusion* once per day) the elder acts as the group's voice when decisions are made.

TARIS

When the characters enter the chambers, the five Vagabonds in the first chamber (use the **thug** monster entry with the ability to cast *true strike* once per day) jump to attention and take up defensive stances, trying to surround the characters while calling for reinforcements - an additional three Vagabonds (use the **assassin** monster entry with the ability to cast *vicious mockery* once per day) and Gren the bastard son of King Waldrann and self-proclaimed rebel leader, who arrive after one round from the inner chambers. After the second round, an additional three Vagabonds (use the **thug** monster entry with the ability to cast *true strike* once per day) and Taris, the family's elder, emerge from the storage chambers below.

GREN

Oi chums! It seems you've opened the wrong door. These chambers are already occupied. But best if you stay awhile and explain yourselves, we aint't wantin' little birds flying around the city and chirpin' to the wrong people."

Gren smirking as he emerges from the inner chambers.

The family will not allow access to Narder Tyk, who is in the storage chambers below, unless the characters can prove their loyalties and convince them that no harm shall befall the architect or the Uncanny Vagabonds. They are especially suspicious of all outsiders, so characters must succeed on a **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception)** skill check to appease the group. If any character tries to Intimidate the Uncanny Vagabonds, they will attack immediately.

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"These troubling rains affect us all, and the Vagabonds can aid the common cause. But, naturally, at our discretion. Now if youz want to parlay with my cousin Narder, it will cost a pretty penny. 100 gold for our trouble and yon word of silence, which we treat as one worth yon life."

Taris the elder explaining his terms after deliberations have been made.

Characters can attempt to haggle with Taris, succeeding on a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception)** skill check to set a lower price, reducing the cost by half.

Once the negotiations are out of the way and oaths secured, Taris and Gren will lead the characters to the storage chambers under the trap door.

16. Storage

Background

The lower storage chambers under the rocky areas of the park were used to store all manner of goods related to the running of the menagerie. Like the chambers above, the rooms have been used by the Uncanny Vagabonds as their hideout since the onset of the Midnight Curse's effects. Narder Tyk, the former Royal Architect, also makes his camp in this room.

Environment

Similar to the chambers above, these rooms are also occupied by the Uncanny Vagabonds, with signs of temporary use as a dwelling among the items that are stored here - water, cleaning supplies, animal feed, rope, pieces of wire mesh and netting for repairs, and crates and bags of supplies hoarded here by the Vagabonds. However, unlike the rooms above, these chambers also feature a large desk with plans and illustrations drawn by Narder Tyk, escape routes out of the city, the palace, and some other buildings of strategic importance. In addition, a makeshift bathroom and lavatory have been set up in the eastern corner of the room, filling the entire room with a foul odor that takes getting used to.

Scene

If characters are led to Narder Tyk and if they explain their plans, the Royal Architect will gladly show characters his maps of any strategic and state-owned building in the city, including the layout of the Royal Palace. He also describes the secret tunnel that leads from an abandoned royal villa at the shores of River Nenock by the Queen's Bridge, directly to area 52, the King's Cabinet. Narder Tyk also tells about a magical force gate that blocks the tunnel, which features the most complex locking mechanism that the architect has ever seen (see Tunnel of Love in Chapter 3).

Narder Tyk

"Eye, I know the tunnel like the back of my hand. Master Arlen created it. It leads directly from the shore to the King's Cabinet. And there's also powerful magic involved."

Narder Tyk laying out the map of the Royal Palace.

Treasure

The Uncanny Vagabonds have a small stash of valuables, including 638 silver pieces, 389 gold pieces, and various jewelry worn by the members in a total value of 1,340 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for speaking to Narder Tyk and obtaining the map of the palace.

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A LEAP INTO FIRE

Background

The witchservant agents of Queen Aphinah have found the secret hideout of Lord Cyne Monder and his renegade Knights of the Crown in the Lucky Leap. They have alerted their queen, who has dispatched a regiment of werehellhound knights to eradicate them. Ricio Tane took notice of the approaching armored beasts and activated the Lucky Leap's lockdown mechanism, but the lycanthropes torn down the shutters of the front door and stormed inside the building. The knights made their last stand at the taproom and were quickly defeated by swords, jaws, and flames. Lord Cyne Monder's last hope was a retreat to the basement, where death ultimately found him. But before he perished, he took his ring off and clutched it in his palm, hoping that any survivors would be able to decipher its secret. The werehellhounds have just started to explore the tavern when the characters arrive.

Environment

The Lucky Leap is on fire. Heavy smoke obscures the view into the tavern, seeping out into the nearby streets, and forming a massive column of black smoke above the building.

Scene

The characters find the Lucky Leap on fire when returning from successfully obtaining all three components - the master key, recovering the information on the secret tunnel from Narder Tyk and emptying the Idol of Thyargylosh into the antimagic cave. The tavern's front door is smashed to pieces, and the lockdown mechanism's metal plate is torn to the side. A few residents watch the flaming, smoke-engulfed building fearfully from their windows or doorways further down the streets. They can relate that the queen's werehellhounds have stormed the building, that they heard the sounds of prolonged battle from inside, and that only a severely burnt werehellhound knight has left the building in a hurry, keeping to the shadows as it ran away.

"Which part don't you understand? I could even smell the strangely sweet smell of its badly burnt flesh. Now leave me be before they put me in the stocks!"

A frightened citizen describing the burnt lycanthrope knight.

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Treasure

All treasure described under the locations of the Lucky Leap in Chapter 1 is available for the taking.

GROUND LEVEL

Environment

The entire ground floor is ablaze, the signs of a recent and fierce battle clearly visible. The bodies of a dozen dead Knights of the Crown are scattered on the floor, barely distinguishable behind the cover of smoke and flames.

Scene

The ground floor of the tavern is entirely engulfed in flames. A character who enters the ground floor automatically takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of every turn and must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion due to the choking smoke that has turned the level into a lightly obscured area.

If Ricio Tane was in the building with the knights, he has been murdered, his body dangling from the bar.

The werehellhound knights who have been slain have returned to their original forms upon their deaths, painting a confusing picture, suggesting that knights were fighting knights some short time ago. A **werehellhound knight,** with one level of exhaustion, occupies area 1, breathing fire on the walls and on the furnishing to feed the flames. It growls at and attacks anyone who enters.

TOP LEVEL

Environment

The top floor of the tavern is a complete inferno, even more ablaze than the ground floor.

Scene

A character who enters the top floor automatically takes 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of every turn and must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw with disadvantage or gain one level of exhaustion due to the dense smoke that has turned the entire level into a heavily obscured area.

SECRET LEVEL

Environment

Smoke has spread into the stairway but not the secret level, whose door to area 12 is shut.

Scene

The werehellhound knights have not yet found the door to area 12. A single **werehellhound knight** is searching area 11. It has two levels of exhaustion and has 38 hit points left.

CELLAR

Background

Lord Cyne Monder had retreated to this location with some of his knights to make their last stand against the overwhelming heat and the onslaught of their lycanthrope brethren. The seasoned paladin did not know that the two knights with whom he made his final stand were doppelganger infiltrators of the Golden Masks, who killed two of his knights and joined their ranks during the coronation ceremony. The shapeshifters have managed to continuously avoid detection by being withdrawn, mind-reading the paladins, avoiding the heat of the battle, and through sheer deception. After the rest of the brave paladins fell, Lord Cyne Monder and the two fake knights faced the last of the werehellhound knights in the cellar in area 15. The lord trusted his knights to protect each other, but he soon realized that something was amiss. The smoke had a more severe effect on them than it would have on his paladins, and they utilized unusual fighting techniques. One of them fell quickly and changed back to its original form of a doppelganger, while the other fled the cellar, leaving Lord Cyne Monder behind with two growling and coughing werehellhound knights. The treacherous doppelganger named Djaharons could read the lord paladin's mind before

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leaving and had learned that Lord Cyne Monder's last thoughts before being butchered concerned his journal, which he kept safe in the secret vault under his family's crypts. The doppelganger has fled to its master, Yhlsaby, and has informed the lamia about the secret it has uncovered.

Environment

Smoke obscures the cellar, slowly seeping down from above. The bodies of two Knights of the Crown lie dead on the floor. One of them is Lord Cyne Monder. The other has strange pale skin, long grey fingers, and a featureless face under its helmet.

Scene

The body of one of the doppelgangers, dressed as a Knight of the Crown, lies in a pool of strange dark-colored blood, its featureless face torn away. Lord Cyne Monder's body lies in front of it, obviously having tried to protect the supposed knight to the end. Lord Cyne Monder holds his left fist shut thigh, clutching his signet ring that was otherwise always worn on his finger.

The golden signet ring is worth 750 gold pieces and has a large, flat, irregularly cut ruby in a broad mounting. The symbols of house Monder - a crossbow and scale with a gem on each of its plates - are engraved on the ruby. The inner side of the ring bears an inscription that reads: Crypt Monder 2-4-2. The inscription is a reference to the Crypts of House Monder and the order of the trap-free doors in the vaults. It can later also be used to gain passage from Drusssturr, the vault naga (see event Crypts of House Monder).

If **Avra** has moved into the Lucky Leap, it is also present here, raging in a state of berserking, under the effects of an *enlarge/reduce* spell, with 40 hit points remaining.

Two **werehellhound knights** occupy the room. They have two levels of exhaustion and 38 hit points remaining. The lycanthropes are either fighting the berserking flesh golem or investigating the cellar for clues and valuables. They attack anyone who enters and soon abandon their search to avoid the smoke that is continuously building up.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for recovering Lord Cyne Monder's signet ring.

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The Hidden Vault of House Monder

A Clash of Interests

Background

Lord Cyne Monder's ring should lead the characters to the Monder family crypts that house the cremated remains of members of the noble clan, as well as the secret family vaults of the House Monder behind ingenious dwarven traps.

Lord Monder's ring contains a vital clue engraved inside its back - the number sequence 2-4-2, marking the order of the right doors through the vaults. The numbers correspond to the correct doors in areas 5, 7, and 8, counted in a clockwise direction from the entrance to these rooms, not counting the door where one enters the room.

Unknown to the characters, a doppelganger from the Golden Masks, Djaharons, had infiltrated the ranks of the Lord Monder as a Knight of the Crown and has learned of the vaults by using *its Read Thoughts* ability on Cyne Monder before he fell to the werehellhounds, minutes before the characters arrive at the scene. Djaharons quickly retreated and changed shape into a werehellhound to easily escape the burning Lucky Leap and immediately inform the criminal organization about the vault.

Thus, the Golden Masks are the first to the scene, led by none other than Yhlsaby, the lamia matron of the Loud and Lusty Brothel and captain of the criminal organization. The greedy criminals found the secret door to the vaults but couldn't resist opening the sarcophagus of Lord Gronjyph Monder in the Hall of the First (area 2), and as a result, the first lord of the Monder clan has risen as a ghost. The gang then fled into the vaults but has only partially infiltrated the deeper chambers, with a few of their members already falling to the deadly traps. So they are cautious to advance further. They are betting on the fact that the vault contains vast riches and will consider a joint operation with the characters if the encounter doesn't lead to bloodshed.

Environment

The crypt of House Monder is located in the Noble's Rest (Onadbyr location 30.) cemetery in the High District and is just one of many similar structures in the area. The building resembles a squat fortress

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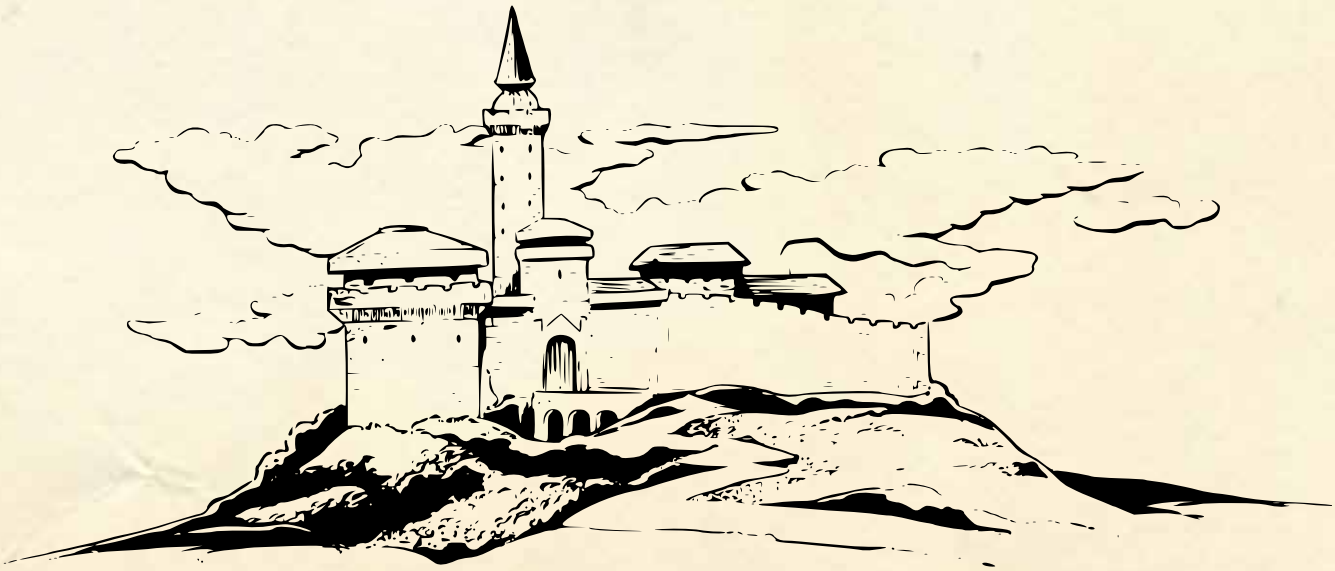
carved from marble with a bluish tint. The edifice is decorated in dwarven style with four statues of dwarven warriors standing guard in alcoves on the facade. A single chimney protrudes from the roof of the building.

All rooms have ceilings that are 20 feet high, and continual flames are placed on the ceilings to light most rooms, where indicated on the map. While the outer chambers are inlaid with bluish marble, the hidden chambers of the vault reveal the original stone blocks used in building the structure.

Doors. Doors in the vaults in areas 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are made of marble that is 1 foot in thickness, with elaborate opening mechanisms consisting of circular valves on plates that can be turned. A successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check reveals the correct valve settings to open the doors, which are locked by default and automatically locked when shut. It requires a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check with thieves' tools to open the locks on the doors. All doors have AC 17, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to poison, psychic, piercing, and slashing damage. The marble slabs can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check and can be held open with the same skill check every round.

Corridor Traps. The two stairways in areas 4 and 6 and the corridor in area 8 are trapped. The corridor traps can be deactivated by pressing tiny buttons interwoven into the intricately carved decorations on the inner sides of the archways at the entries to the stairs or the corridor. Pressing the button deactivates the trap for ten minutes. It requires a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the tiny circular buttons. The traps can be detected with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. They can be jammed or disabled with a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check with thieves' tools, rendering them inoperable.



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Crypts of House Monder

1 tile = 5 feet

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CRYPTS OF HOUSE MONDER

1. Hall of Glory

Environment

Four statues of dwarven warriors in full battle regalia and bearing the symbol of House Monder stand guard in the entry chamber to the family mausoleum on square stone pedestals. The structure and walls are made of blue marble, except for the stairs that descend deeper into the crypts. These are of a lighter shade of blue with white veins. A massive relief covers the eastern wall, entitled "The Greatness of the Monder Clan" in Dwarvish. The relief displays armies of dwarves engaged in mining and trading stone, building walls and towers, and hoarding vast resources, alluding to the immense wealth of the Monder family.

Scene

Two Golden Mask toughs (use the **thug** monster entry), Joran and Basko, have been stationed as lookouts at the door to the mausoleum. They wear Royal Sword uniforms, and Joran has a doppelganger mask to impersonate a specific member of the Royal Swords. They have heard the keening of the ghost of Lord Gronjyph Monder from below and are nervously glancing into the building, scared to descend. If the thugs notice the characters, they will pretend to be Royal Swords and defend the door. A character who succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check sees through the bluff.

"Halt! The tomb has been closed by the Queen's orders. Be off before we call for reinforcements!"

Joran holding his whistle as the characters approach the crypts.

Treasure

The thugs have a total of 4 gold pieces, 16 silver pieces, and 8 copper pieces on their person. Two of the gold pieces bear the symbol of the Golden Masks. Joran has a *doppelganger mask*.

2. Hall of Respect

Background

This vast chamber houses the sarcophagus of Lord Gronjyph Monder and his wife, Lady Aranoshka Monder, the first Monders to obtain a noble title from King Grankar Melkar the Brash in the early days of the Melkar dynasty over 500 years ago.

Doppelganger mask

The room also functions as the crematorium and as a place of remembrance to honor the Monder ancestors.

The Golden Masks who disturbed the rest of the dwarf lord have fled the hall into the chambers beyond the secret door, which has closed behind them. An unfortunate member of the gang was pushed into the necrotic crematory in the hall, but only piles of dry ash remain from this victim.

Environment

The Hall of Respect is a vast chamber that rings with echoes. Two sarcophagi lie in the southern alcove, both of their lids embellished with reliefs - one displaying a male dwarven warrior, the other a female. Both figures are depicted in ceremonial plate armor, with long braided hair, and the symbols of house Monder. The sarcophagus of Lord Gronjyph Monder has been opened, its lid propped up against the sarcophagus, exposing the withered skeleton of the dwarven lord, who wears lavishly decorated plate armor and whose remains have also been disturbed.

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There is a large crematory in the northwestern corner of the hall currently open, with a small heap of ashes inside.

Raised shelves that are 3 feet high line the northern, southern, and eastern walls. Numerous unlit candles and over a hundred small semi-precious stones rest on the shelves, left here as tributes to the ancient ancestors of the Monder clan.

Secret Door. The secret door to area 4 is a part of the raised shelf and it automatically closes itself after being opened. It requires a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the door and the small button beneath the shelf that opens it.

Scene

When the characters enter the hall, the **ghost of Lord Gronjyph Monder** materializes out of thin air above his tomb and wails in an enraged, otherworldly voice, lashing out at the characters for disturbing his rest and his mortal remains, demanding respect and honor for such an illustrious member of the Monder clan. Black flames abrupt from the furnace, burning with necrotic energy. The ghost will use its *Telekinesis* ability on the characters, attempting to push them into the **Necrotic Crematory** and keep them there by maintaining its concentration or lash out with its *Withering Touch* if anyone comes near. However, it will not pursue characters up the stairs or into the vault chambers behind the secret door.

"How dare you disturb my eternal rest and remains?! What has been defiled must be righted and honor offered by bowed pate, prayer, and tribute. Or be consumed eternally 'in flames, like those of the Monder line."

The ghost of Lord Gronjyph Monder keening as it rises from its tomb.

The wrath of Lord Gronjyph Monder can be abated if his body is set in a ritual burial position with hands crossed over his chest. Once the lid of his tomb is placed back in its place, and when the correct prayer is offered along with a lit candle and a precious stone of at least 5 gold pieces in value that is placed on any of the shelves in the hall, the ghost's spirit can rest again. Characters must make a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check to recall the dwarven prayer for the dead. Dwarves gain gains advantage on this skill check.

Ghost of Lord Gronjyph Monder. Use the **ghost** monster entry with with the following modifications:

- ***Telekinesis (Recharge 6).*** The ghost can cast the *telekinesis* spell with a spellcasting ability check modifier of +7. This ability replaces the *Possession* ability of the ghost.

Necrotic Crematory. The Necrotic Crematory is active only if the ghost of Lord Gronjyph Monder manifests. Anyone who is pushed into the furnace of the crematory suffers 22 (5d8) necrotic damage at the beginning of their turn, their flesh withering away to dust if affected.

Treasure

The remains of Lord Gronjyph Monder are clad in his ceremonial plate armor that is worth 2,000 gold pieces. The 124 semi-precious stones on the shelves are of all varieties and are worth a total of 720 gold pieces.

3. Hall of the Ancients

Background

The Hall of the Ancients houses the cremated remains of all members of the Monder clan, going back approximately 500 years.

Environment

The columbarium features two long corridors with niches where white marble pedestals stand, about two-thirds of them with urns of various shapes and designs from different ages sitting on their tops. Some of the urns have cracked over time, and their

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contents have spilled. However, they have been left as is as a sign of respect by the Monder descendants.

Treasure

A few of the urns are works of elaborate craftsmanship and considerable value: a small cold iron urn in the shape of a mountain held by two dwarven workers worth 350 gold pieces, an ivory urn decorated with scrimshaw depicting warships worth 250 gold pieces, and a silver urn set with white jade stones worth 300 gold pieces.

4. Iron Spears

Background

The spear trap in the staircase has been activated by the Golden Masks when they fled from the ghost into the vaults. One of the many iron spears that activated became jammed when it struck one of the criminals.

Environment

Steep stairs descend towards a closed door at the bottom. A single iron spear protrudes from the western wall at the top of the stairs, dripping blood and with a pool of blood beneath its deadly point. Bloody footprints lead down the stairs to the door.

Iron Spear Trap. The trap is triggered when a small or larger creature steps on the sensitive pressure plates under the stairs. After the first jammed one, there are two active spears, each located 5 feet apart down the stairs. When triggered, a spear makes a melee attack with +8 and deals 11 (2d10) piercing damage on a hit. An activated spear trap resets immediately, retracting into its hidden compartment in the wall.

5. Hall of the First

Background

The Golden Masks activated the trap mechanism of the room, and one of their members, Fernog the Bull, is stuck below the floors of the room, impaled on a spike at the bottom of the pit. The thug is still alive but near death as it slowly bleeds out.

Environment

This chamber is dedicated to Lord Gronjyph Monder, with a carving of the dwarven lord's face set into the floor, depicting him wearing a crown, with closed eyes and mouth. Two out of the four doors in the room are fake but feature the same valve mechanism as the real ones. A failed attempt to unlock, pick, or force any doors activates the trap.

Belly of the King Trap. When the trap is triggered, all the doors close automatically, and the floor of the room splits in half along a vertical line in its center. The two opposite slabs of the floor start to slowly retract towards the eastern and western sides of the chamber. It takes a full round for the floor to completely open. Any creature who is in the center of the room where the floor opens when retracting can evade falling into the 30 foot deep spiked pit with a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature falls into the pit and suffers 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 13 (3d8) piercing damage from the spikes embedded in the pit floor below. A creature that stands on the floor falls into the pit when the floor retracts fully at the end of the round. The floor slabs take another full round to close once they have fully opened. The floor slabs are 1 foot thick stone blocks with AC 17, 100 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. When destroyed, the slabs crumble into large stone blocks that fall into the pit, causing 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage or half that amount on a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw.

Scene

The muffled moaning of Fernog the Bull (use the **thug** monster entry) can be heard with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check, coming from under the floor.

"Aaaargh...Heeeelp meee... Pleeese heelp meee..."

Fernog the Golden Mask thug as he lays impaled at the bottom of the spiked pit.

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Treasure

Fernog has 2 gold pieces, 9 silver pieces, and 11 copper pieces in a pouch. One of the gold pieces bears the symbol of the Golden Masks.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for rescuing Fernog the Bull as if they defeated him in combat.

6. CRUSHING DOOM

Environment

Steep stairs descend towards a closed door at the bottom.

Crushing Doom Trap. Unless the correct valve settings are used on the door to area 7, the door to area 5 slams shut, and the trap is triggered. Massive slabs of stone start to slowly descend from the ceiling, and anyone trapped in the staircase faces unavoidable crushing doom. It takes the slabs three rounds to completely fill the staircase and retract into the ceiling. During the third round, checks made to unlock the doors are made with disadvantage. Anyone on the stairs at the end of the third round suffers 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage. The trap resets at the end of the sixth round.

7. HALL OF THE CLAN

Background

This chamber is as far as the Golden Mask crew have gotten in the vaults. The Golden Masks are hesitant to open any of the doors in the chamber, still carefully exploring the hall before venturing further into the vaults.

Environment

This chamber is dedicated to the Monder clan. An immense carving on the floor depicts a dwarven fortress with a massive gate under the beard of Lord Gronjyph Monder's face. A character who makes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check notices a thin layer of fine sand in some places on the floor. A failed attempt to unlock, pick, or force any fake or real doors activates the trap.

Choking Sands Trap. When the trap is triggered, all doors automatically close, and a myriad of small openings appear in the ceiling from where fine stone sand starts to pour into the room. It takes three rounds for the room to completely fill with sand. The doors are only wholly accessible during the first round, and all checks to open them are made with disadvantage during the second and following rounds. Any creature in the chamber at the end of the third round begins to suffocate in the following round. A mechanism depletes all the sand in the room through small vents after 10 minutes.

Scene

When the characters enter the chamber, they come face-to-face with a group of Golden Masks. They consist of four **thugs** and two **doppelgangers,** one in human form while the other, who fled the onslaught of the werehellhound knights at the Lucky Leap, is in its original form, still wearing the armor of a Knight of the Crown and has AC 20. They are led by Yhlsaby, the **lamia** matron of the Loud and Lusty Brothel. Yhlsaby is open to negotiating. The lamia shamelessly admits that they are here to rob the vault of house Monder and will offer an equal share of any treasure found per person, counting all seven Golden Mask members in the chamber. It takes a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to increase the split to fifty-fifty.

If characters are unwilling to share the treasure or attack the gang, Yhshaby will assume its natural lamia form and order the gang to attack. Yhlsaby will try to remain behind the cover of its crew, using enchantment spells from range.

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Yhlsaby

"It seems we have some unwanted competition for the riches of the Monders. It would not behoove us to offer equal share, seeming as how the arrivals are late for the feast. What do you say boys, should we demonstrate the consequences of crossing the Golden Masks? Or perhaps they can find the path for us, and we can all be rich?"

Yhlsaby speaking to its gang as the characters enter the chamber.

Treasure

The thugs each have 5 gold pieces, 19 silver pieces, and 21 copper pieces in their pouches. Each doppelganger has 25 gold pieces and 15 silver pieces; one of them wears plate armor. Yhlsaby has 135 gold pieces on its person and wears golden jewelry worth a total of 1,200 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party experience points for coming to an agreement with Yhlsaby as if they defeated the gang in combat.

8. Passage to Riches

Environment

The curved passage is tiled with large alternating white and dark grey slabs.

Drowning Pits Trap. When a creature steps on a grey tile with more than 20 lbs. of force, the tile opens under them, and unless they make a successful **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw, they fall into the pit underneath the corridor, which is a 50-foot deep connected chamber with 20 feet of putrid water at its bottom. On a failed saving throw, the creature suffers 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and gains the poisoned condition for 10 minutes unless they make a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw each round while being exposed to the putrid water. Climbing the walls of the shafts or holding a position by pressing against the walls requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The slab automatically closes after it is triggered. The statistics of the slabs are the same as doors in the vaults: AC 17, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and immunity to poison, psychic, piercing, and slashing damage. The grey slabs can be avoided by jumping from white slab to white slab, requiring a successful **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check for each jump.

9. Guardian of the Vault

Background

The council of the Monder elders made a pact with Druussturr the Vault Naga to guard the Monder vaults for 1,000 years, in return for ten percent of all wealth deposited in the vault. The naga thus guards the treasure as its own and is loath to let anyone but the Monders withdraw funds from the vaults.

Environment

A short arched hallway leads to a closed door at its end.

Scene

Druussturr the **vault naga** guards the chamber that

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lies behind its writhing form. It will not let anyone pass and attacks anyone other than the sole surviving Monder descendant, Lord Cyne Monder. A character who shows the dwarven lord's signet ring can convince Drussturr that they are emissaries of the Monder clan by succeeding on a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check.

Drussturr will keep the terms of its contract with the Monders and only allow ninety percent of wealth to be withdrawn from the vault. However, it will negotiate about values of items and materials in the vault to set current prices. It will offer the same deal to the characters to store any wealth they wish to keep hidden.

"Ye shalt not passs, lessst ye be of o' Monderrrsss! And if thou arrrt then Drussturr demands rightful ssshare and will not be cheated!"

Drussturr the Vault Naga hissing as the characters open the door.

DRUSSSTURR

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If attacked, the vault naga casts *guardian of faith, flame strike,* and *spirit guardians* before entering melee. If reduced to half of its hit points, it withdraws into the walls by casting *meld into stone* and heals itself only to re-enter combat with more attacks and offensive spells.

10. The Vault of House Monder

Background

The Monder clan has stored its accumulated wealth in the hidden vault for long centuries; however, over the past 150 years, the funds have radically diminished due to large withdrawals of Lord Cyne Monder to fund his generous donations to causes of charity.

Environment

A stone table sits against the southern wall with full pouches, a chest, a handaxe, a hammer, a few scrolls, and a wooden vial-holder sitting on its smooth marble surface. Two large boxes sit along the northern and eastern walls, one of them open and containing iron bars, the other closed. Several paintings, a lavishly decorated mirror, a vase, and an iron statue are propped against the walls, all wondrous works of art.

Scene

A leather-bound book lays on the table, the personal journal of Lord Cyne Monder, detailing the early days of his life and his uncertain and hazy memories of his travels with King Waldran and his company to the Feyrealm. The entries contain significant time gaps, obviously missing segments of events, and are spread with self-doubting questions about vaguely remembered places, creatures, and happenings. The journal contains the information Lord Cyne Monder told the characters earlier in person (see event Oathbound Truths) modified with the details he vowed not to speak of during his life.

Treasure

The vault contains the following items:

- A large wooden box containing an exquisitely crafted, crossbow-shaped collapsable scale that is 6 feet tall when assembled, worth 200 gold pieces.
- Various gemstones in pouches worth 630 gold pieces in total.
- A delicately decorated iron statue of a dwarven representation of the Efficient Master, god of competence, worth 340 gold pieces.
- A beautifully manufactured medium mirror inlaid with small diamonds encircling the frame, worth 420 gold pieces. The mirror is magical and sheds light as a torch when activated with the command words: "You can do it!"
- A 2-foot tall ancient vase from the times of the Dark Star, depicting the three dark planetar generals, worth 560 gold pieces.
- Three identical paintings of Lord Gronjyph Monder on the mast of a boat, leading an armada of ships shown in the background. Only one of the paintings is original, worth 670 gold pieces, but identifying it requires a successful **DC 23 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. The other two masterpiece forgeries are worth only 120 gold pieces if identified as forgeries.
- A chest containing 875 gold pieces.
- *Scrolls of lesser restoration* (2), *dispel magic, remove curse, protection from poison* (2).
- A wooden vial-holder with *potions of healing* (6).
- *+1 handaxe.*
- *+1 light hammer.*
- A *gem of brightness* with 7 charges.
- An *ioun stone of protection.*

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for securing Lord Cyne Monder's journal.

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The Triplets of Malice

To seize the crown of Aglarion from the Queen's head, the characters must raid the Royal Palace, which has been transformed by the triplet Queen Aphinahs into a place of horrors from the Feyrealm and Hell.

Under the Shadowdome

The characters are trapped in Onadbyr and hunted, with seemingly no means to escape the city with the crown. They are betrayed by Taris of the Uncanny Vagabonds in their hour of desperation, until aid arrives from a most surprising source.

Dirge of the Dark Angel

Samsadur of the Golden Masks takes the characters to the Shadowrealm, where they must end the Lament of the Dark Celestials - the song of Sabrael the dark deva - that powers the shadowdome through the despair of mortal souls.

Lair of the Eternal Hive

After lifting the shadowdome, Samsadur collects his favor and involves the characters in negotiations with the sentient carcass of the dead black dragon Baendretarixus, the Eternal Hive.

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Chapter 3

Trapped Under Shadows

Characters should be level 7 when they start Chapter 3 of Crown of the Oathbreaker.

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The Triplets of Malice

Background

The Matrons of Malice, the coven of midnight hags - Blister, Splinter, and Tyke - have for decades kept King Waldrann Azennar charmed and seduced in their shared form of Lyrencia, the beautiful maid-turned-queen. Each of them gave birth to identical daughters, all named Aphinah, raised in turns in the Royal Palace and on the Bleak Mire - the hags' Feyrealm domain. The existence of the triplet hagspawn princesses was kept secret by the hags, and the rare few who became suspicious were quickly disposed of by either the Children of the Coven, the identical sisters, or one of their hag mothers.

The Matrons of Malice held absolute control over the Bleak Mire for ages. They sealed it from the outside and allowed travel to their plane only through the mysterious Hagtree they corrupted (see Traversing the Hagtree section in Chapter 4). However, the midnight hag coven's Feyrealm domain was then usurped by Krasnar and the aberration venerating drow of House Ausstyl, who revived the soul-torn prince after saving him from the captivity of the hags. The mutated drow and the now aberration-infused ex-paladin prince have captured two of the hags, Tyke and Splinter. They keep the hags captive at Quellar Ausstyl, the underground fortress of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten in the Dark Below under the Bleak Mire. At the same time, Prince Krasnar roams the Bleak Mire in his gibbering mouther stronghold, Bwael Phindar, the Magnificent Beast - a living and moving fortress of aberrant flesh.

It was Blister's turn as Queen Lyrencia at the time of the drow invasion. The gluttonous hag could not save her sisters or the Bleak Mire, a realm that the hags have been corrupting with such meticulous care over the centuries. Blister collected all three of the hagspawn princesses and initiated the final phase of the coven's vile plan to kill King Waldrann Azennar and crown one of the Aphinahs as an illegitimate queen to take over the kingdom and to finally release the Midnight Curse over Aglarion.

The midnight hag has been extremely cautious since losing control of the Bleak Mire to Krasnar and the drow of House Ausstyl. Blister has summoned a chain devil and some of its most loyal evil fey servants to protect itself and the three identical Queen Aphinahs and has ordered the werehellhound knights to be by their sides at all times in the palace.

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THE ROYAL PALACE

Background

The characters have probably secured all three components for their heist and are ready to steal the *crown of Aglarion* from the Royal Palace, which has seen some changes of late. The palace is divided into two sections, the north and the south wing. It is still functional in its protections, production, and services except for the south wing that incorporates the Halls of the Crown (second level) and the Royal Quarters (third level), which are infested by Blister's minions.

The Royal Palace was planned by Master Arlen over 600 years ago and built by an army of builders assisted by his magnificent daedal wright golems. The first archmage of the Kingdom of Aglarion incorporated many inventions into the building, which primarily protected the royal family and provided a safe environment for all who reside within its walls.

The clerks, cooks, craftsmen, and servants of the palace are utterly frightened by the effects of the Midnight Curse and the lycanthrope knights of the queen. They undertake their daily tasks while being immersed in terror and try to survive by eluding their new monstrous masters and the harmful weather as much as possible. Many have considered fleeing, but they are not convinced of their safety outside the palace. The demoralized royal guards still follow orders as commanded. They will protect the Royal Palace from anyone if ordered by the werehellhound knights, the witchservant cultists, one of the Queen Aphinahs, or Blister in the form of the Dowager Queen Lyrencia. They are scared and feel insecure. Some of them have already fled or have been killed by the lycanthropes when resisting the cruelest of orders.

Currently, no one is allowed in or out of the palace. Anyone bearing arms within the walls of the royal palace is apprehended and interrogated by the royal guards before being executed by the werehellhound knights.

Environment

The Royal Palace was a clean and tidy place before the time of the Midnight Curse. Currently, it is the heart of the horror that has taken hold of the entire Kingdom of Aglarion. The palace is dirty, littered with items abandoned during their use, and the signs of neglect are showing in every room. Bloodstains are not uncommon, and the strange sounds that emanate from the Royal Quarters and the Halls of the Crown keep inhabitants awake at night.

Smaller rooms have a height of 10 feet, while larger ones are 20 feet high.

Doors and Double Doors. Doors open inwards and are made of thick, sturdy wood that has been fitted with iron hinges and handles. They feature masterfully crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The doors have AC 17, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison, and psychic damage.

Windows. Windows open inwards and have wooden frames and a single layer of thick glass. The wings are held together by iron latches that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. Iron bars are embedded in the wooden frames in front of the glass panels on the outside, forming a fixed barrier that has AC 19, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Walls. The almost impenetrable wall around the palace is built out of large stone blocks. It is 60 feet high and 20 feet in thickness. Narrow arrow slits of different sizes dot the palace's walls in some places on the first level where rooms connect to it. Only tiny creatures can pass through these narrow windows by squeezing. The top of the wall supports a 15-foot wide battlement that runs around the palace, with crenels along its outer edges. There is a **royal guard** stationed

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at every 100-foot section of a wall, keeping an eye on events outside and inside the palace as well.

Gates. These massive iron gates (40 by 40 feet) can be locked by a heavy sliding bolt latch made of iron. They each have AC 19, 350 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They can be forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. Both gates are further enforced with a massive chain portcullis that can be magically raised from the ground or lowered using a simple lever at the gatehouse. The chain curtains are extremely heavy but still flexible. They have AC 19, 200 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage resistance against bludgeoning and slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. There are four **royal guards** stationed at each gate at all times.

Magic Heating and Illumination. All areas of the Royal Palace, except for the dungeon level, were fashioned by Master Arlen to be magically heated to 70 degrees Fahrenheit at all times. In addition, magical lanterns provide illumination, shedding light as hooded lanterns when touched. They can be dimmed, shut down, or re-activated by tapping them sequentially.

Pipe System. Sewage from the palace flows into the River Nenock through 1-inch diameter brass pipes that connect to all lavatories and baths. It is a complicated system that draws and stores water from the river and depletes it into special tanks that can wash off waste or provide magically heated water. The pipes, tanks, and water trap sections are always completely flooded with incoming clean or outgoing wastewater.

Private Sanctum. The Royal Palace is under the permanent effects of a customized *private sanctum* spell, blocking planar travel, teleportation, and divination spells. The only ones exempt from these effects are the members of the royal family, who know a secret password to bypass the spell's restrictions.

Heavy Ballista. Several heavy ballistae made out of wood and metal parts are mounted on the top of each guard tower in area 22. A heavy ballista is a large object that has AC 17, 75 hit points, damage immunity to poison and psychic damage. It is a ranged weapon that fires heavy bolts with a range of 150/600 ft. that deal (22) 5d8 piercing damage. It takes one action to load the weapon, one action to aim it, and one action to fire it. A heavy ballista can be aimed and fired in the same round if two creatures perform these two actions at the same time.

Scene

The once busy palace now sees a fraction of the activity than before. **Royal guards** patrol the walls and the courtyard regularly, but they and the remaining clerks, servants, and even the werehellhounds keep themselves sheltered from the **choking rain** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) as much as they can. As part of the queen's sadistic cruelty, the royal guards are assigned to the walls for several hour-long shifts despite the enervating effects of the rain. Any loud commotion or sound of battle within the palace, except for the monster-infested Halls of the Crown (second level) and the Royal Quarters (third level) of the south wing, draws the attention of the royal guards. They arrive in 2d4+2 rounds but are hesitant to intervene, especially if they are not threatened. Instead, they call in two **werehellhounds** if the situation requires it, who arrive within 1d4 minutes.

TUNNEL OF LOVE

Background

This secret tunnel was created by Master Arlen as an escape route for the royal family. It was used instead by King Waldrann Azennar to get away for liaisons or bring favored ladies to the palace. Each royal architect passes on the knowledge of the tunnel to their successor, who always informs the royal family about its workings. As a result, Narder Tyk knows everything about the entrances to the tunnel and the force gate at its middle, which features the most complex lock mechanism he has ever seen. Blister also knows about the tunnel and has placed a hideous monster in it for protection.

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Environment

The tunnel starts outside the Royal Palace in the basement of a royal estate located on the left side of the southern end of the Queen's Bridge (Onadbyr location 70.). The royal families of the past used the building only on rare occasions to host private meetings with nobles, merchants, or emissaries to which they did not want to draw attention or allow into the palace. The building is unguarded, abandoned, and shuttered. The doors of the estate are made of thick, sturdy wood. They feature well-crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The doors have AC 17, 20 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The entry to the tunnel is concealed by a secret door inside a huge barrel that can be located with a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check that can be made with advantage because the characters know what they are looking for.

A 5-foot wide spiral staircase descends 80 feet to the beginning of the tunnel. The tunnel is covered with stone tiling and continues for 500 feet. It is 10 feet wide and 10 feet in height. After 100 feet into the tunnel, a gate made out of magical force blocks the way. Blister keeps the key to the **force gate**. After the force gate, the tunnel continues for another 400 feet, mainly under the river, before ending at the bottom of a similar, 5-foot wide spiral staircase that goes up to 100 feet and connects to area 52, the King's Cabinet, through a secret door. The door can be located with a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. *Continual flames* illuminate the tunnel and both staircases at every 40 feet.

Force Gate. The ornamental gate appears to be constructed out of thin metal parts, but in reality, it is encased in a magical force field similar to a spell that can be deactivated and reactivated using a regular key. When the proper key is used, the wall splits into two halves, and the gate can be opened. It is impossible to force the gate open, but it can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 30 Dexterity** ability check.

Scene

Blister has brought one of Tyke's favorite creations from the Feyrealm and placed it into the more extended section of the tunnel between the force gate and the palace, tasking it to keep intruders away. **Blattella** is a pale-skinned, naked human woman from the waist up, but it has the body of a giant cockroach from the waist down. It has long dark shabby hair, and festering scabs cover its dirty, humanoid skin. Its deformed, bug-like head shows almost no signs of its original humanoid form. Blattella has a chitinous, flat face that lacks a nose and ears. Instead of a mouth, it has large mandibles, long feelers, and a set of large black cockroach eyes.

"You are my meal that was promised and the carriers of my treasure. I will implant my eggs into your body, and you shall bear my spawns!"

Blattella speaking in Sylvan before it attacks.

Blattella. Use the **drider** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Blattella does not have the web walker feature and can not cast spells innately.
- Its bite attack also spreads **flesh rot** disease. A creature bitten by Blattella must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or become affected as if targeted by the flesh rot disease of a *contagion* spell.

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Royal Palace

Dungeon Level

1 tile = 5 feet

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DUNGEON LEVEL

Environment

Both parts of the dungeon level are located 20 feet below the ground. They are cold and dry underground chambers of stone where the sounds of the above palace are almost inaudible.

1. Chapel of Farewells

Background

This sizable processional chapel is used only in times of the death of a monarch or a member of the royal family, and once a year on the morning of the Day of the Crown, when the prominences of the palace gather here to pay homage to the ancestral kings and queens of Aglarion.

Environment

A pulpit stands in the middle of the chapel flanked by rows of old wooden pew benches with holders running through the backs of the seats where prayer books can be placed. The statues in the room depict King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar and his closest descendants in various majestic poses that reflect their bravery and wisdom.

2. Royal Sepulcher

Background

The remains of kings and queens of lesser significance, royal relatives, and the most prized pets of some of the late monarchs are placed in the containers of this sepulcher.

Environment

The urns of ashes or the velvet encased bones of the deceased are placed behind small niches sealed by marble doors that bear the name, date of birth, and date of death of the individual whose remains lie inside. Many rows of these small marble doors run along the shelves on both sides of the aisles.

Treasure

Behind one of the marble doors, a *ring of swimming* is still on one of the fingers of the remains of one of King Orlon Ebrin's deceased children. The words carved into the marble door read: "Prince Rolantar Ebrin, Cursed was the ring he wore, may his innocent soul rest in peace under the waves (235-243)." The bones are wrapped in a large, now crumbling velvet flag that bears the symbol of the Ebrin dynasty.

3. Mausoleum of the Monarchs

Background

Past kings and queens since the founding of the Kingdom of Aglarion are buried in this vast hall.

Environment

The walls of this 20-foot high hall are covered with large banners of the royal dynasties that ruled over the Kingdom of Aglarion over the past six centuries. 15-foot tall iron statues stand in the room on 5-foot high marble-covered bases that form aisles in the hall. Each of these bases encloses the stone sarcophagus of a departed royal. The front of each sarcophagus is decorated with intricately carved motifs that include the name and dates of the king's or queen's life and reign.

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4. Depository

Background
Everything that has to be stored for a longer time is placed in this large hall. Oversized goods are moved down the ramp next to the staircase by cart.

Environment
Old carts, disassembled wagons, wardrobes, tables, weapons, armor, vases, paintings, sacks full of clothing, and many sealed crates lie in an orderly fashion within this enormous storage area. Some cobwebs and dust cover most of the items.

Treasure
In one of the sacks of clothes, a wide leather belt still holds a flat vial of a *potion of superior healing* and four platinum bars tucked in its secret pockets.

5. Larder

Background
This room contains all of the less perishable food resources of the Royal Palace.

Environment
Massive amounts of vegetables, fruits, grain, dairy, and other food products are stored on high shelves, in large crates, and baskets in this relatively cold storage area. Recently, stocks have been refreshed less frequently, causing some of the foodstuff to start to rot.

6. Ice-house

Background
Dairy products, ice, ice cream, and meat are held in this room, keeping them frozen.

Environment
One of Master Arlen's magnificent magical creations, this room constantly emanates freezing cold that keeps the temperature near 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Shelves packed with boxes and containers rise from floor to ceiling on one of the room walls. Various meats hang from large metal hooks embedded into the wall. A selection of the most refined and rare delicacies for the royal family is stored in the pantry of the Royal Kitchen in area 43. A broad meat processing table stands in the middle of the room, featuring a large circular saw blade that can be powered with a pedal. The rolling blade deals 16 (3d10) slashing damage per round to anything forced under it.

7. Buttery

Background
This area is where water and beer reserves are stored.

Environment
Long rows of barrels are lined up in this cold room.

Scene
An awakened **rat,** given intellect by the effects of the Midnight Curse, inhabits this room. It has an Intelligence score of 10, a Charisma score of 10, and it can cast the *charm person* spell at will, requiring no components to cast it with a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw. It speaks Common and calls itself the Grey Lord. It is irreversibly addicted to beer, and when it doesn't sleep or scavenge food from area 5, it can be found in a puddle of beer under one of the barrels. The Grey Lord uses its magic power to convince servants, or any humanoid creature who comes to the buttery, to open the tightly shut spigot of a new beer barrel. Some of the less scared kitchen staff or food servants might mention the Grey Lord and speak highly of the friendly rat if asked.

"Would you be so kind as to help me with turning that spigot? Yes, that one. You are very kind, good creature."

The Grey Lord asking for help.

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8. Wine Cellar

Background
Large quantities of mid to high-quality wine of all tastes and ages are stored in this long cellar.

Environment
A small aisle runs between a long row of wine barrels and racks of wine bottles in this room. Most bottles of the best quality wines are missing from the racks.

Treasure
The most valuable wines left in the cellar are four bottles of white dessert wine from Drayl that are over a hundred years old, worth 100 gold pieces a bottle.

GROUND LEVEL

Background
The Royal Palace's ground level is where the mundane tasks of the palace are carried out and where visitors and guests are welcomed. The north wing of the ground level houses crafting facilities and the rooms of the crafters and the armory and the barracks of the royal guard. The south wing is reserved for storage, including the coach house and the stables.

9. Courtyard

Background
This is the only area where regular visitors, merchants, and suppliers from outside the palace are allowed entry, but recently, there haven't been many visitors.

Environment
This enormous area is paved with cobblestones. The courtyard serves as a staging area and training ground for the royal guards, who are sometimes forced into sparring contests by the arrogant werehellhound knights. On some occasions, these fights result in the death of the guards. As a result, the area is dirty and stained with blood in some places. Small livestock - chickens and goats - were stored in wooden cages, but most of them were eaten by the werehellhound knights or have perished because of the neglect of the servants.

10. Tulip Garden

Background
This area was once a majestic garden with beautiful tulips and low, trimmed bushes. The royal family and noble visitors once drove their coaches to the coach-house, where they were greeted by dozens of servants with refreshments and snacks.

Environment
The vegetation in the area is neglected, the ground is soaking wet, and the bushes have grown into thick, dark formations in some places. The mutating effects of the Midnight Curse have given life to **stranglevines** and **bloodletting thorns** in the more bustling regions of the vegetation (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

11. Smithy

Background
The palace's smithy provides metalware of all kinds for the everyday life of the court, including weapons for the royal guards.

Environment
Large hearths, bellows, anvils, and a long cooling bath dominate this large room. Only one of the hearths is heated for use. Barrels of water, open crates full of raw materials, and finished metalware stand scattered or turned over in the room. A shelf with various metalworking tools stands in one corner. A desk has some blueprints and documents scattered all over it.

Scene
The master smith of the palace is Dareian Frost (use the **expert** monster entry), a deep-voiced aging dwarf with a surprisingly firm grip who keeps working for

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the queen but is considering fleeing the palace to save his son, daughter, and wife. Dareian Frost can tell the characters about the command word, "Slash through the sun", for the Fountain of Keen Blades (area 27) if he finds them trustworthy.

Dareian Frost

"Can you get us out of this damned place in safety?"

Dareian Frost asking the characters for help.

12. Crafter's Quarters

Background

This housing block is the home of the smiths, cooks, weavers, grooms, repair crew, and servants of the palace who, on some occasions, live together in a room as a family.

Environment

The rooms of the staff are simple. Some of them are furnished with bunk beds in case of a larger family occupying it. The housing block features a communal bath used in turns by men and women and a common dining hall.

Treasure

Each sleeping quarter contains a total of 3d6 gold pieces that reflects the private treasure of all of the inhabitants of the room.

13. Main Kitchen

Background

Meals for the servants and artisans are prepared in this kitchen.

Environment

Preparation desks line the walls of this vast chamber. Soups boil away in large cauldrons and pots over a fire in the middle of the room, bread is baked in large ovens, while meat is cooked on grills by the wall. Barrels of water, crates of vegetables, and various sacks of grain stand next to the cooking facilities.

Scene

The palace's head chef is Jorn Hot-Tongue (use the **expert** monster entry), a half-orc cook with a positive attitude, even despite the curse. His cheerfulness is clouded only by his concern for the safety of the cooks who work under him.

Jorn Hot-Tongue

"You don't belong here and only bring trouble to our heads. Get lost before you are discovered."

Jorn Hot-Tongue urging the characters to leave.

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14. WEAVER'S WORKSHOP

Background

New clothing, linen, bed sheets, blankets, and other woven materials are always in high demand within the palace. These are all created here by the weavers, of whom the masters also produce woven goods for the royal family.

Environment

This long, well-illuminated workshop has large looms and sewing stations lined up along the wall. Tubs full of dyes are used for coloring textiles, which are hung to dry on lines in the corners.

Scene

The master weaver of the palace is Koldios Tallbush, a middle-aged male gnome. Koldios is one of the **witchservant cultists** of the Children of the Coven who keeps his identity a secret in front of his coworkers even after the rise of the hagspawn queen. He is ready to report anything that would undermine her rule.

"What was your name again? Hm, very interesting..."

Koldios Tallbush sizing up the characters.

15. REPAIR WORKSHOP

Background

Anything that breaks and can be repaired is brought to this workshop. Coach wheels, broken chairs, weapons, or other household items are fixed here.

Environment

This huge room is packed with items waiting for repair or under repair. A separated area serves as storage for tools, boxes of nails, building blocks of scaffolding, ladders, and other such equipment.

Scene

The master of the palace maintenance staff is Bryn Helgraz (use the **expert** monster entry), a half-elven handyman who can fix everything despite how dismal the chances might seem. Bryn maintains his generally philisophical attitude, preferring not to draw attention to himself.

BRYN HELGRAZ

"If I were you, I would leave as soon as possible. I won't say a word, but you must be careful. Very careful."

Bryn Helgraz warning the characters to be cautious.

16. ARMORY

Background

This large area is used to store armor, shields, weapons, and ammunition. Only the captain of the royal guards can allow access to this area. The only exceptions are the werehellhound knights who enter whenever they wish.

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Environment

Long rows of weapon and armor racks are lined up in this room. They primarily hold spears, longswords, and light crossbows, but there are a few of every simple and martial weapon in the room. The armor racks hold mostly chain shirts, studded leather armor, and metal shields.

17. Guard Barracks

Background

The royal guards are accommodated in this block along with two of their captains. Morale is at its lowest. The royal guards are confused, hesitant, and some are even frightened, but they still answer the commands of their superiors.

Environment

Each of the guards' sleeping chambers features nine beds, some private storage boxes tucked under them, and a large wooden table with chairs in the middle of the room. The royal guards are responsible for their equipment which they clean and keep in their storage boxes when not using them. The two captains live in two conveniently furnished separate rooms. The guards use the wide dining hall in turns, once in the morning and evening of every day. The communal bathing area in the middle of the block is accessible from every corridor of the barracks.

Scene

The two commanders of the royal guards are Arla Steel, a middle-aged tiefling who does her best to keep her men together, and Jon Blackthorn, a young human who quickly rose to position through his skills and dedication. Use the **royal guard** monster entry for both of them. At any time of the day, eighteen off-duty **royal guards** are sleeping or relaxing in their rooms.

Treasure

Each sleeping quarter contains a total of 5d6 gold pieces that reflects the private treasure of all of the inhabitants of the room. The rooms of the captains contain 50 gold pieces each, placed in small metal boxes bolted to the floor and equipped with a standard lock.

Jon Blackthorn

18. Coach House

Background

Royal coaches, carriages, mundane wagons, and carts are stored in this area. Carriages of visitors are also parked here. Horses are led to and from the vehicles through the doors that connect to the stables.

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Environment
Several large, beautifully decorated carriages stand next to heavy freight wagons in this dimly lit coach house. The smell of horse manure from the nearby stables is heavy in the air.

Scene
A sturdy stage-coach covered in dirt stands out from the other vehicles parked in the coach house. It bears the rose encrusted helmet symbol of the Gorso family and has obviously arrived from a long-distance trip. Two **guards** of the noble family sit in the driver seats in a nervous discussion about the monstrous inhabitants of the palace, their spears close to their hands at all times. They are part of the delegation that carried Dyronias Gorso to the Royal Palace (see area 25). They only know that their lord is here to meet with Queen Aphinah, and they are set to leave today.

19. Warehouse

Background
Most of the palace's non-food resources and mundane equipment are stored in this large warehouse.

Environment
The warehouse is separated into two sections. The larger section with two double doors is where the more numerous, easily movable items are stored, like timbers of wood, crates filled with coal, marble blocks, stones cut in different sizes, barrels of oil, and coach wheels. The other section can be accessed via a 20-foot wide sliding door. This storage is where bulkier items are stored, like large stone statues, ballistae, or the chassis of a coach. Both sections are fitted with shelves, pulleys, and movable ladders that assist in storing and moving items.

Scene
The master of logistics of the palace is Domoros (use the **expert** monster entry), a silent young man who keeps to himself and perfectly remembers what was placed where and when.

"Row three, shelf eleven, top basket."

Domoros giving directions in the warehouse.

20. Granary

Background
Grains in large quantities and bales of hay for the horses are stored here.

Environment
Many different grains are stored here in large sacks in one part of this warehouse area. The rest of the space is filled with large bales of hay.

Scene
A young servant couple - a female human named Idro and a male half-orc named Uzzag - hides within one of the bales in the back of the hay storage area. They are waiting for the right moment to escape the palace but are still undecided on their timing. Nevertheless, they are eternally grateful if safely escorted outside the walls by the characters. Use the **commoner** monster entry for both of them.

21. Stables

Background
This area houses the riding and carriage horses and the warhorses of the knights and the royal family.

Environment
The horses in the pungent stable are separated by tall wooden walls built out of planks. A massive rotating horse walker dominates the center of the room, where horses can be tied to walk in a circular path as part of their daily training.

Scene
This large stable houses a mix of over fifty riding and war horses, born, raised, and trained at the Royal Stud Farm. Some of them are exceptionally beautiful and strong, kept exclusively for the royal family. The

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stablemaster of the palace is Baroness Jylin Maritayl (use the **scout** monster entry, but replace Stealth +6 with Animal Handling +4), the young daughter of the Royal Groom, Countess Unper Maritayl, who owns and operates the Royal Stud Farm located near the capital. Baroness Jylin Maritayl does not know about her mother's involvement with the hags and that she is one of the witchservants of the Children of the Coven. She has been in a feud with her mother for over a decade now and left to work in the palace to be far away from her. Jylin lives a simple life and has given up the privileges that come with her noble inheritance. She suffers the same way others do under the Midnight Curse but has nowhere to go, so she stays and survives.

"What my mother does is none of my concern. We are not in direct contact. My grooms handle the transfers with her. Haven't seen her for years now."

Baroness Jylin Maritayl explaining her relationship with her mother.

22. Guard Towers

Background

These towers serve as the primary protection for the palace in times of war.

Environment

The three guard towers of the palace are accessible from the ground level of the palace. A 10-foot wide staircase leads up to the battlements at the top. Each tower's ground, first, and second levels have a common room and a storage space where food, weapons, equipment, oil, water, and ballista ammunition are stored. In addition, the battlement on the top of the towers hosts five ballistae each, which can be moved to face inside or outside the palace.

Scene

Four **royal guards** are stationed on the top level of these towers at all times. When the Royal Palace is under attack by an army or a sizable monster, the number of guards stationed on the top of the towers increases to twelve for each tower.

SECOND LEVEL

Background

The north wing of the second level of the Royal Palace is where the clerks and servants of the royal family live and where guests of lesser status, such as merchants and traveling sages, are quartered. The south wing of the second level is called the Halls of the Crown. This part of the Royal Palace is where the most significant events take place and where the seat of the monarch's power lies.

23. Loggia of the Innocents

Background

This partially open area was where children of the palace were trained and schooled during the day. Since the rule of Queen Aphinah, it is mainly used by the werehellhound knights for sparring and demonstrating their might to the frightened residents of the palace.

Environment

The southern wall of this chamber is open to the elements and fashioned into beautifully decorated arches with a 3-foot tall palisade with only a single opening where the Bridge of Grace reaches the loggia. Small tiles cover the floor of the loggia and stairs lead down to the courtyard.

Scene

Two **werehellhound knights** are parading on the loggia in their hybrid forms while they wait for Queen Aphinah to finish her meeting. They are mocking the guards below and are breathing fire in the direction of servants to scare them as they hurry to their business, trying to escape the monsters' fury.

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"Hahahahaaa! You run like a duck. Want to become a roast duck?"

One of the werehellhound knights shouting after a servant.

The werehellhound knights stop and inspect suspicious visitors and attack anyone bearing arms, even sheathed weapons, who is not a royal guard. The four **royal guards** in front of the meeting rooms at area 25 watch but don't come to the characters' aid if combat breaks out. They instead knock on the meeting room's door and alert a witchservant, who opens the door.

24. Servant's Quarters

Background

This housing block is where the clerks and the servants live. Many are in their rooms with fewer and fewer tasks to perform.

Environment

Each room has two beds accompanied by a small wardrobe. A communal bath is used in turns by men and women. The simple but functional dining room is busy mainly in the early hours at dawn and late at night.

Scene

The chief butler of the palace is an old male human named Ytar Eloran (use the **commoner** monster entry), who follows orders but secretly plots to kill the queen by poisoning her. He doesn't know that there are three hagspawn queens, but based on his experience with Queen Aphinah unexplainably "changing places", he falsely suspects that she has the power to teleport.

"I can help you. This madness must end. I suspect that she is more than what she looks."

Ytar Eloran speaking to the characters in a hushed voice.

25. Meeting Rooms

Background

Merchants, lesser nobles, emissaries, spies, and other important individuals are met here by members of the royal family or their representatives for more extended discussions and meetings. More important nobles and influential individuals are escorted to the private drawing-room in area 41.

Environment

These rooms feature a large table with chairs and a small cabinet that holds glasses and bottles of wine, water, and a small keg of beer. The northern meeting room, called the Griffon Room, is decorated with a large painting of a flock of griffons over the peak of a mountain, one of Illiandro's early and stunning works. The southern room, called the Dragon Room, features the white marble statue of a beastial white dragon.

Scene

The **Queen Aphinah,** who currently wears the *crown of Aglarion* is engaged in a meeting in the Dragon Room with Dyronias Gorso, the eldest son of Lord Ziademos Gorso. Blister - her **midnight hag** mother in the form of Queen Lyrencia - accompanies the queen with four **witchservant cultists.** Four **royal guards** stand outside the room while the prominences conduct their meeting inside. The discussion is regarding tax cuts the Gorsos could receive if they provided the heads of Lord Arenbar Nangrath and his two sons. Both parties are unaware of the ill fate that has be-

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fallen the dwarven noble family and their fortress town (see Kingdom of Aglarion location 15. in Chapter 4). Queen Aphinah is flailing with the *falcon blade* as she speaks vehemently, explaining her demand for punishment on the Nangraths in great detail.

Queen Aphinah

"Show them no mercy! Debone them slowly, then cut them to little shreds, and pull them up on a flagpole. I want everyone to know how creative I am!"

Queen Aphinah in a heated monologue about the Nangraths.

When the characters attack anyone in this room, the agitated and overcautious Blister's first action is to *plane shift* herself to the Shadowrealm to activate the Shadowdome so that no one might escape from the incident. It takes some time to initiate its plans and to instruct its minions there. When the Shadowdome appears across all coexisting planes, Blister casts *plane shifts* again to travel back to the Material Plane to hunt the trapped characters and to retrieve the *crown of Aglarion*. The characters should have enough time to escape the Royal Palace before Blister returns.

Treasure

This Queen Aphinah has 174 gold pieces and four platinum bars on her person, carries the *falcon blade,* and wears the *mithral torc of the tower* and the *crown of Aglarion*.

26. Apartments

Background

These lavish apartments accommodate the guests of the royal family. The ones on the second floor are smaller and kept for guests of lesser importance and status, while those on the third floor are more spacious and reserved for more prominent guests.

Environment

Each apartment consists of a small living room furnished with sofas and a low table, a bedroom with a large canopy bed, a private living room with more sofas and a writing desk, and a bathroom with a wooden tub and a porcelain lavatory. Large paintings and beautiful carpets decorate the apartments, and even more luxurious ones on the third floor.

27. Garden of Blades

Background

This garden was used to welcome guests and host outdoor parties. Currently, it is untended and overgrown.

Environment

A broad staircase of white marble leads to the garden terrace from the Tulip Garden below. A railing made out of the same white marble runs around the garden, enclosing a beautifully carved tall white marble fountain, called the **Fountain of Keen Blades**, that depicts King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar, the first king of Aglarion. The 20-foot tall white marble statue of the king stands with his sword - the Falcon Blade - lowered in his hand as he looks up at the sky while holding his other hand casually in front of his face as if blocking the rays of the sun from burning his eyes. Water flows softly along the edge of the blade into a large, low pool below the statute. An impossibly thin and intricately carved white marble bridge with low railings arches over the courtyard, connecting the upper garden with the Loggia of the Innocents in area 23. The overgrown vegetation of the park does not contain any dangerous plants, and the plants do not cover the pathways.

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Fountain of Keen Blades. The fountain is magical and can be activated by the proper command word, "Slash through the Sun.", known only by the royal family, the werehellhound knights, and the master smith, Dareian Frost. When a slashing weapon is dipped into the waters of the Fountain of Keen Blades, and the command word is spoken, it transforms the blades and gives it an extremely keen edge for one hour. A blade that is so enhanced scores a critical hit on an attack roll of 19 and 20, and adds an extra third damage dice on a critical hit.

The Cursed Crown of Aglarion

Scene
The werehellhound knights from the Loggia of the Innocents have a clear view of the area. The bushes provide total cover from their sight.

28. Reception Hall

Background
When the palace was receiving guests, they entered this hall where they were greeted with refreshments served on small, tall tables covered with lace.

Environment
Currently, the room is a mess. The laced tablecloths are either on the floor in tatters or are missing altogether. The massive painting on the wall depicts Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, changing from a black to a green dragon and spewing forth poisonous gas at one of the Fists of Azennar, a huge tower with multiple heavy ballistae and a regiment of soldiers.

Scene
Six **royal guards** occupy this room, drinking excessively. They are all drunk and have the poisoned condition. When attacked or faced with intruders, the guards alert the werehellhound knights and one of the Queen Aphinahs in the ballroom in area 30.

29. Robe Room

Background
Guests leave their coats in the robing room where the servants neatly arranged them.

Environment
The wardrobes of this room are empty. A blueish cloak embroidered with tiny runes has fallen off one of the hangers a long time ago and lies on the floor. In one of its pockets, there's a small note that says, "To save the ancient sufferers, climb the pillar of pain, and remove the gem of souls". This note references The Groaning Pillar (Kingdom of Aglarion location 46. in Chapter 4).

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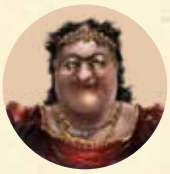
30. Ballroom

Background
Parties and dances of great reputation took place in this room before the Midnight Curse.

Environment
An elegant bar, lined with empty glasses, stands by the northern wall. The cabinets are filled with the most luxurious alcoholic beverages the palace can provide. A large podium stands between two short flights of stairs at the southern end of the room, and several long divans covered in red silk sit by the eastern wall.

Scene
One of the three **Queen Aphinahs** entertains herself in this room by forcing over-intoxicated and horrifically mutilated servants into a morbid dance choreography. Two of the servants are already dead, while three others - Zokar, Shalimah, and Voren - are in a state of terror. They are almost incapable of movement on their own either from the vast amount of alcohol they have been forced to consume or from the nearly lethal sadistic wounds inflicted on them by Queen Aphinah, or the three **werehellhound knights** who are guarding the queen.



"One, two, three,
one, two, three.
No, noooo! Left foot first...
Oh you had them cut off.
Right foot then!"

Queen Aphinah urging the half dead servants to dance.

Treasure
The cabinets behind the bar hold several exclusive and rare drinks with a total value of 1,500 gold pieces and a total weight of 50 pounds. This Queen Aphinah has 213 gold pieces, three platinum bars, and a *potion of fire giant strength* that she immediately drinks if attacked.

31. Hall of the Monarchs

Background
Guests wait in these halls before meeting the monarchs of the kingdom.

Environment
Two 15-foot tall marble statues stand next to the north wall, depicting Queen Aphinah and Dowager Queen Lyrencia in exquisite detail. The third, toppled statue in the middle depicts King Waldrann Azennar. The south wall has huge paintings showing the countryside, mountain ranges, and coasts of the Kingdom of Aglarion.

32. Palace Library

Background
The palace library was used primarily for research by the advisors of the monarchs or the education of young royals.

Environment
The walls of the palace library are covered with bookshelves from floor to ceiling. Narrow aisles run between the bookshelves in the middle of the room. Many of the books lie on the floor, trampled and dirty, and some are placed on the tables for further examination. The palace library mainly holds books on nature, history, religion, neighboring countries, ethics, politics, economy, law, and literature. It also includes a collection of autobiographies by past monarchs. Sections are marked with small metal plates on the bookshelves and are well referenced in several index books placed at the front of each section.

Scene
Four **witchservant cultists** of the Children of the Coven - Jermos, Taiblar, Zolter, and Kazudian - are researching books for secrets of past kings and queens. The books on the table are primarily autobiographies of departed monarchs. Small notes mark certain pag-

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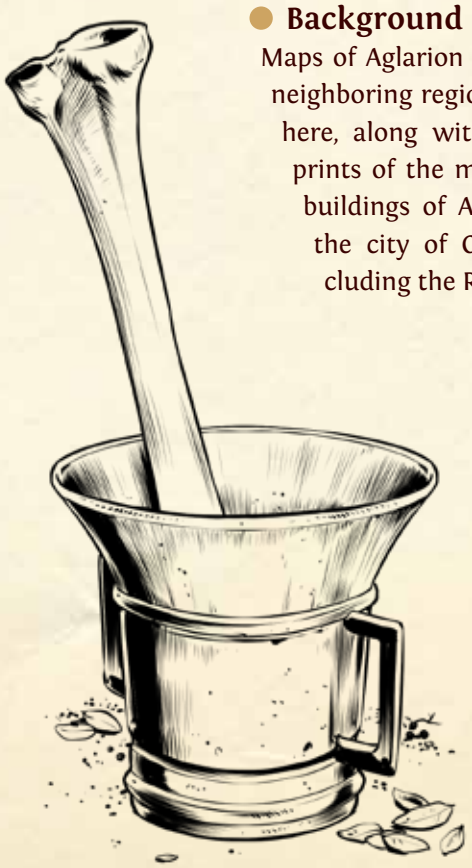
es where entire entries have been encircled or underlined by the warlocks. They attack anyone who is not one of the residents of the palace.

A handwritten book lies open on the table. Its cover is inscribed with a beautiful caligraphy that reads "Master Eydan's Arcane Principles of Extraplanar Iterations". This is the last book written by the former archmage of the Arcane Tower, and the witchservant cultists have obviously paid close attention to its contents. The book contains academic information about the school of conjuration, summoning spells, and planar travel. In addition, a bookmarked section of the book describes the traits of the coexistent planes such as the Ethereal, the Shadowrealm, and the Feyrealm. A small note on the side of one of these pages reads: "Must prove theory upon my return."

33. Charting Room



Background

Maps of Aglarion and various neighboring regions are kept here, along with the blueprints of the most notable buildings of Aglarion and the city of Onadbyr, including the Royal Palace.

Environment

Piles of maps lie rolled up or in flat hardcover folders on the shelves around the walls. In the middle of the room, a large table stands painted with a colorful and detailed map of Aglarion, marking all commonly known locations with little symbols. A **witchservant cultist** named Cassia Mossgrove took over the role of Royal Cartographer several years ago, promoted by Queen Lyrencia herself. She protects her maps with vicious ferocity.

Cassia Mossgrove

"I only have to scream and you all will be in big trouble!"

Cassia Mossgrove threatening the characters.

34. Council Chamber

Background

The Court of Voices - the twelve representatives of the kingdom's most important social groups - have gathered here every month to present their issues to the king or queen of the realm. Queen Aphinah

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disbanded the Twelve and bestowed the room to the Children of the Coven.

Environment

A giant table dominates the center of the room, covered in blood, carvings of ritual runes, and candles. Comfortable but straightforward armchairs surround it. At the end of the table is a larger wooden throne bearing the symbols of House Azennar. Four statues, a priest, a commoner, a merchant, and a noble, stand in each corner. A nest of some sort made out of rugs, furs, and dead bodies lies by a wall, obviously made for a large creature.

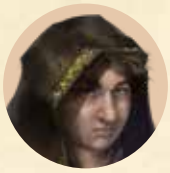
Scene

The young leader of the Children of the Coven, **Mordio Delons,** his **imp** servant Chranzius, and his two-headed **large death dog,** its heads named Hecatez and Achlyz, call this room their home and base of operations. The cult leader rides his dog when traveling in the city or on long distances.

MORDIO DELONS

Large Death Dog. Use the **death dog** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The large death dog's size is Large it has a Strength ability score of 18, and 63 hit points.
- The large death dog has +6 to hit with its bite attack that deals 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.



"Your livers shall wither with the setting of the sun. Crows will feast on your rotting corpses when I return!"

Mordio Delons cursing before casting the levitate spell and stepping through the window.

Mordio Delons is no fool, despite his young age. He is vicious and quick to react if threatened but will utilize any method of escape if needed. He is stubborn and willful and will not surrender any secrets, even if tortured, unless compelled to do so by magic.

35. Hall of Music

Background

The royal family and their prestigious guests gathered in this room to listen to musicians, mainly from the College of Minstrels.

Environment

An open harpsichord, with the painting of a forest lake and nymphs on the inside of its lid, stands in the room next to a large harp, surrounded by a few rows of chairs. The shelves by the walls hold a collection of handheld instruments.

36. Hall of Art

Background

Some of the most spectacular art pieces from all over the known continent were on display here until the three Queen Aphinahs rampaged through them, destroying everything they considered as hatefully beautiful.

Environment

Painted vases from ancient times, frescoes and other paintings, figurines, and torsos from the most famous

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artists from the beginning of known civilization lie on the floor in pieces or torn on the walls, sometimes defaced or disfigured in creative ways. The largest of the paintings takes up the entire western wall of the hall. Pieces of its canvas hang down from its broken frame. It depicts the strangely shaped peaks of the barren mountain range known as Mountainfall, with a small but delicately detailed representation of the Gate to the Darkness Within (Kingdom of Aglarion location 31. in Chapter 4).

Treasure

A melon-sized adamantine statue of a kraken, worth 1,000 gold pieces, lies undamaged under the rubbles of a statue of a merfolk warrior.

37. Hall of History

Background

Those who came to see the rulers of Aglarion had to approach the throne room via this hall that displays the glorious history of the kingdom.

Environment

A mural made out of tiny colorful mosaic pieces covers the two sides of this long hall. On one side, the mosaic displays the war against the dark angels, showing a large side portrait of Sarath in front of the scene where the high priestess destroys the moon, blocking the sun. On the other wall of the hallway, behind the large portraits of King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar and Master Arlen, the mural shows the war between the armies of the Order of the Eternal Light and the rebel heroes in front of the Royal Palace.

38. Hall of Trophies

Background

Trophies of the most exotic prey captured during royal hunts are on display in this hall. The three queens are fond of the trophies, especially the monstrous ones, so they have left them untouched.

Environment

The trophies of smaller and larger animals, beasts, and monsters are hanging from the wall, including the heads of a dire boar, a dire bear, a giant elk, a large red dragon, and various other monsters.

CONTINGENT APPLICATOR

Scene

Three frightened servants - Loren, Thulio, and Hamos (use the **commoner** monster entry) - are briskly dusting the trophies so they might leave the Halls of the Crown as soon as possible. They help the characters with as much information as they can before running off to their quarters. Thulio knows that Queen Aphinah has some guests from the Gorso family because he has seen the carriage of the noble family in the coach house in area 18.

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39. Throne Room

Background

There are no more visitors to the throne room as of late. Currently, it is the lair of Nuzkiah, the Breathdrinker, a chain devil summoned by Blister. Its task is to torture to death those sent to him. Nuzkiah must kill a thousand mortals this way in this room before it can return to Hell.

Environment

White marble covers the large coronation hall of the Royal Palace. Its 40-foot high ceiling and tall walls are inlaid with enormous windows that allow plenty of light to illuminate it in brightness during the day. The gates of the hall have massive iron wings, both decorated with the imposing images of Knights of the Crown in full regalia. Galleries with marble banisters run on both sides at the height of 10 feet, accessible via wide marble stairs. The hall ends in a large elevated stage accessible through a pair of narrow stairways on both sides. In the middle of the stage stands a large, intricately carved wooden throne painted in gold. Large silver candelabras are positioned throughout the room to provide light and heat generated by their enormous flaming braziers. Large banners bearing the sigil of House Azennar hang in many places, covering the walls and giving the hall a warm atmosphere. The iron gate is closed, but it is not locked.

Iron Gate. The gate is a large (20 by 20 feet) fortified iron gate that has AC 19, 80 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It is barred from the outside with an iron pole and can't be picked, but it can be forced open with a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check if it is barred.

Throughout the middle section of the throne room, 40-foot long chains, some of them covered in blood, dangle from the ceiling, forming a thick net of chains in front of the stage and between the two galleries. Humanoid forms wriggle in pain within this forest of chains, their bodies entwined high above the ground.

Scene

Nuzkiah, the Breathdrinker (use the **chain devil** monster entry) hides 20 feet high within the chains, seemingly entangled in them just like its prisoners. It waits for the characters to come within 30 feet before using its *Unnerving Mask* ability and revealing itself. Next, it animates the chains and attacks the characters, hoping to raise the number of tortured mortals. Breathdrinker uses one of its animated chains to hold itself up at the height of 10 feet at all times. There are eight dead bodies entangled in the chains - three royal guards and five commoners.

THIRD LEVEL

40. Knight's Quarters

Background

A squad of Knights of the Crown has always lived in these chambers. They have spent a week or more here before returning to their private cells and headquarters at the Bastion of the Knights. Their proximity to the royal family ensures that the knights can react quickly. A handful of werehellhound knights occupies these rooms.

Environment

The entire area is sparsely furnished. The cells have two simple beds and a small chest at the end of each, the dining area features a simple large wooden table and chairs, and the training area is simply a large room with a few practice dolls and accessories used for sparring and training. A large portrait of King Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar I. the True, founder of Aglarion and the order of the Knights of the Crown, hangs on the northern wall of the training hall. The canvas and the frame of the painting are partially burnt from the breath weapons of the lycanthropes, but the first king's image is still recognizable.

Scene

Two **werehellhound knights** are in the middle of combat practice in the training hall. They investi-

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gate any sound that would wake them or alert them while sparring.

41. Drawing Room

Background

The royal family met their most valued guests and their advisors in this lavishly furnished room. Queen Aphinah and Dowager Queen Lyrencia use this room on the rare occasion when they hold council with Mordio Delons and the witchservant cultists of the Children of the Coven.

Environment

Large sofas with soft cushions stand around a low table in this room. Some smaller but still very comfortable chairs are placed next to them for those accompanying important guests or the royal family. Some broken glass and spilled liquor cover the table. Small cabinets by the walls hold exquisite liquors, snacks, and spices. The walls are adorned with three beautifully painted large portraits of past royals whose eyes are focused on the center of the room.

Treasure

A platinum bar is stuck between two cushions in one of the sofas reserved for the guests. The three portraits on the walls are each worth 200 gold pieces.

42. Dining Hall

Background

The royal family had their lunch and dinner served in this dining hall every day. All three Aphinahs rarely have their meals here simultaneously, but it quickly turns into a food fight when they do.

Environment

An enormous, well-crafted, and lavishly decorated black wooden table dominates the center of this room. A mess of leftover food and broken glasses and bottles are scattered over its surface. Comfortable dining chairs surround the table with tall backs, two of which are significantly spacious and more throne-like than the rest at each end of the table. Two large paintings cover the longer walls of the hall. One of them depicts the Royal Palace and the isle it was built upon, while the other shows a large army of Aglarion camping near a battlefield.

Treasure

A wide selection of exotic spices stored in small glass vials can be found in a container in the middle of the dining table, worth 150 gold pieces.

43. Royal Kitchen

Background

This well-equipped kitchen and the accompanying pantry serve the royal family. Only a handful of serv-

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ants used to prepare food and cook here continuously. The hagspawn princesses and their midnight hag mother took over the kitchen to brew their horrid potions and conduct vile rituals.

Environment

The kitchen is equipped with preparation desks, ovens and grills, a deep dish wash basin, and several pieces of furniture to store utensils, plates, glasses, and tools used for food preparation. A large cauldron is placed in the middle of the room over a makeshift fire pit with a foul-smelling liquid brewing. Skulls, boney hands, feet, eyeballs, pieces of hair, and other body parts and organs float in the softly bubbling soup. The tightly shelved pantry holds expensive and rare foodstuffs that are now rotting away. Characters can hear a constant buzz of wings from the small room.

Scene

The midnight hags have brought over a **swarm of ghoulish sprites** from the Bleak Mire that they tortured, turned into undead, and pressed into servitude with their magical abilities. A character that makes a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can make out the sounds of raspy chittering within the buzzing sound of wings. The sprites used to serve King Dasmag when alive but were captured by the ettercaps of the midnight hags soon after they took over the satyr king's domain. The hags stole their poison crafting secrets and turned them, much to the three Aphinah's amusement, into a swarm of mindless undead that regularly feeds on itself. The queens keep the swarm locked in the pantry and control it through magic when needed. The swarm of ghoulish sprites collectively turns invisible before each attack.

44. Guard Room

Background

Regular squads of royal guards were stationed in this room to secure the royal family's quarters from outside threats. It is now the home of a trio of wights, raised by the Matrons of Malice from the royal guards, and their zombie spawns.

Environment

Blood, decaying body parts, and organs cover the floor of the room. A crowd of dead soldiers and servants, butchered with weapons, stands in the room, forming a wall in the middle. Flies buzz over their maggot-ridden carcasses that emit a gut-wrenching stench.

Scene

Twenty **zombies** in two rows stand from wall to wall in the middle of the room, facing the door's direction to the left. Behind them, three **wights** created from dead royal guards stand still on the right side of the room, waiting for anyone to enter the room. They allow passage to any of the Queen Aphinahs, Blister, the werehellhound knights, the dryad witches, or anyone accompanying them by commanding the zombies to move to the walls. They order the zombies to attack anyone who enters the room, joining the fight first with their ranged longbow attacks, followed by their *Life Drain* attacks if forced into melee combat.

45. Krasnar's Private Chambers

Background

Prince Krasnar Azennar lived in this room until he left on the quest to the Bleak Mire with his father. It has been unoccupied ever since, except for the times when the Queen Aphinahs barged through, knocking over everything they could.

Environment

A sizeable bare canopy bed stands in the middle of the chamber without any bedding, with an empty armor stand and an empty small writing desk next to it. When removed from the desk, the outside bottom of the desk drawer shows several childish scribblings and drawings of a tortured King Waldrann, Queen Lyrencia, and baby Princess Aphinah. A crude glaive

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and a text above it are carved into the wood, saying, "I will avenge you Mother!"

The bathroom is set with a large porcelain tub and toilet, and an empty cabinet with mirrors. The wardrobe is also empty and dusty. The private sitting room features comfortable sofas and low tables surrounded by several paintings of Queen Elyssa on the walls. Each painting of Krasnar's mother has been defaced and vandalized by the Queen Aphinahs with mocking and obscene graffiti.

46. Aphinah's Private Chambers

Background

The triplet hagspawn Aphinahs each spent many years in this room while growing up.

Environment

These chambers are a complete mess and stink awfully. Broken mirrors, trashed furniture, rotting food, and torn pieces of clothing are lying scattered all over the bedchamber. The bed has a huge strange liquid stain in its center. A giant stuffed toy bear lies beheaded next to a dollhouse that is partially burned down, with small toy figurines hanging by their necks inside. Food stains and rotting leftovers cover the sitting room. The bath and the garderobe are dirty and completely neglected.

Scene

The three Queen Aphinahs currently use these chambers as their private recluse within the Royal Palace. Small pieces of paper are tucked into cracks and under random items with messages from one Queen Aphinah to the other in the same handwriting, saying things like "You stink!", "Born in hell, burn in hell!", or "It's my turn, bitch!"

One of the three **Queen Aphinahs** plays a terrifying hide and seek game with a **mumus** in the room. If the mumus finds Queen Aphinah, it slashes her with its claws then runs off to hide while the hagspawn regenerates the damage. When Queen Aphinah sees the characters, she screams to draw the attention of the werehellhound knights outside her room, and orders the mumus to attack. Meanwhile, she mocks the characters.

Queen Aphinah

"You want the crown?
Today it is my sister's turn to wear it!"

Queen Aphinah laughing at the characters.

Treasure

A makeup kit made out of rare seashells sits on one of the small tables. It is of exquisite craftsmanship and is worth 225 gold pieces. The hagspawn Queen Aphinahs share a large collection of richly decorated garments thrown around the room. Twenty of these embroidered pieces of noble outfits are hemmed with gems and pearls, and each is worth 50 gold pieces.

47. Terrace of Dawn

Background

The royal family had its breakfast served on this balcony every morning. They were always visible to the residents of the Royal Palace during these occasions.

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The Queen Aphinahs, though they never appear together publicly, enjoy the balcony and sometimes come out here to look down at the courtyard and the garden below.

Environment

Large window tiles comprise the northern half of the room, letting the morning sunshine onto a large white marble dining table at the center of the room. Large plants are placed in each corner and small cabinets holding spices and utensils stand by the walls.

Treasure

A container in one of the cabinets holds a wide selection of exotic spices stored in small glass vials worth 80 gold pieces.

48. Private Sitting Room

Background

This room serves as the main living quarter and recreational space for the royal family.

Environment

The room is separated into three sections. The two wings on either side of the chamber serve as separate lounges. The middle section is a more open space with a large rocking pegasus made out of wood and a huge, finely detailed dollhouse fashioned after the Royal Palace.

The entire room is entwined by thick barbed vines, spread out as if they were veins. The vines get thicker as they connect to reach area 54, from where they grow. Strange flowers on meaty bulbs grow from the vines in a few places, their broad petals forming

mumus

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large, layered cups. There is a sweet aroma, and puffs of purple pollen fill the air.

Scene

Two **werehellhound knights** stand guard at the door to Queen Aphinah's private bedchamber located in area 46. If they hear sounds of battle from area 44, they wait for anyone to emerge before starting combat. The werehellhound knights use the terrain to their advantage by standing their ground and using their breath weapons unless attacked by ranged weapons. They also push enemies into the death cup flowers if possible, scorching any trapped victim.

Human-sized carnivorous flowers called **death cup flowers** grow in certain areas of the room. These flowers attack any living creature that moves within 5 feet of them.

Death Cup Flower. These purple-colored flowers look like beautiful rosebuds of gigantic size with layered petals folded on top of each other. The inside of the flower is covered by sharp thorns, each the size of a human finger. The center of the flower hides a circle of wiggling reddish tentacles that the flower uses to attack and entangle victims while it engulfs and slowly devours them. A death cup flower has AC 10 and 21 hit points. It makes a melee attack roll with a +5 bonus against a random living creature within 5 feet of it. A target that is hit takes 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A restrained creature automatically takes 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage every round and can use an action to make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw to free itself.

49. Dressing Room

Background

The kings and queens of Aglarion were dressed in this room by their servants.

Environment

A complex, richly decorated floor-to-ceiling wooden closet system covers the entire wall of this room with dressers, drawers, and hangers for different types of clothes. Several large standing mirrors and mannequins stand in the middle of the room. One of the mannequins has a dress made out of paper thin leather, flayed from the bodies of humanoids.

A character who searches the clothes and succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check followed by a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can identify the remnants of otherworldly materials in Queen Lyrencia's clothes. Strange plant matter in the pockets or marks of odd brimstone soot on a shoe imply that she was visiting Hell and the Feyrealm on several occasions in these clothes.

Treasure

The total value of the noble outfits in the room is 4,000 gold pieces, weighing 400 pounds.

50. Royal Bedchamber

Background

The king and queen of Aglarion spent their nights together in this room.

Environment

This room reeks of death. The beautifully carved king-size canopy bed is soaked in blood. The naked dead body of a nosy elven wizard named Istran Balrodyr is stretched out on the bed, his legs and arms chained to the pillars of the bed, his body a memento of a thousand small cuts and needle marks. The wizard started a private investigation to uncover the secrets of the queens after the Midnight Curse struck the realm. He ended up in the hands of Blister, who tortured and eventually killed the wizard, ripping his soul from his body.

51. King's Bath

Background

The monarch's private bath where King Waldrann

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Azennar welcomed his lovers, whom he stole into the Royal Palace through the secret entrance.

Environment

A lavishly decorated bathroom features a large porcelain bathtub and a toilet with a golden seat. There is also a large standing mirror and a dresser with perfumes, accessories, and neatly folded towels.

52. King's Cabinet

Background

This room served as the most private hideout of the monarchs of Aglarion. No one was allowed in the chamber, not even the sovereign's spouse. Servants could visit to do their work only when requested to do so.

Environment

This luxuriously furnished and equipped room has some of the richest decorations of all of the Royal Palace. A huge carpet made out of the silken hair of some exotic beast interwoven with fine threads of silver covers the floor. A finely crafted wooden couch with soft velvet cushions stands in the room next to a table that has some books and paper on its top. A weapon rack holds some of the finest blades of the kingdom. Smaller and larger statues and paintings showcase an art collection of magnificent quality. A trophy of a medusa stands on a pedestal. A small cabinet holds the finest selection of liquors and wines from many different regions. Scattered around the room are bottles, glasses, and clothes of King Waldrann.

A character who searches for secret doors and succeeds on a **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice an extremely well-hidden panel that opens to a narrow spiral staircase that leads down into the secret tunnel (see the Tunnel of Love section).

Treasure

The huge carpet is worth 1,350 gold pieces and weighs 30 pounds. A *+2 rapier* and a longsword encrusted with rubies worth 2,200 gold pieces is placed on the weapon rack. The artwork in the room is worth 2,500 gold pieces and weighs a total of 200 pounds. The cabinet holds two bottles of Xantharosian whiskey worth 200 gold pieces each, a large heavy glass bottle of Draylish cognac worth 300 gold pieces, and a large keg of rum worth 600 gold pieces.

53. Queen's Boudoir

Background

This room was reserved to serve the privacy of the spouses of the monarchs.

Environment

A large porcelain bath and a gold-rimmed toilet are in the corner of the room. A vanity table with a triple folding mirror and numerous make-up tools, perfumes, and wig holders stands next to a cabinet designed for jewelry, now lying empty.

Treasure

The perfumes are worth 560 gold pieces in total.

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54. PRIVATE SHRINE

Background
This used to be the private shrine of the royal family.

Environment
A small altar dedicated to each of the major gods stood in this room but they have been defaced or completely destroyed. The shrine's floor, walls, and the ceiling are covered by thick wriggling vines that entangle dead bodies on which death cup flowers grow.

Four **dryad witches** - Vilantra, Moadissa, Ayras, and Oniette - live in this room, fanatically serving Blister and the hag-spawn queens. They attack intruders on sight and react to any commotion outside in area 48.

GOLD PIECE

55. TREASURY

Background
This secure room held the private treasure of the royals of Aglarion. Currently, it stands empty, all of its treasures relocated to the home lair of the Matrons of Malice at the Demonbane Isle in Hell.

Environment
The heavy iron doors of the treasury stand open. Several iron-bound chests occupy the room. Some of them are open, some of them closed. A few coins lie on the floor.

Treasure
11 gold pieces and 17 silver pieces are scattered on the floor and in some chests.

ESCAPING WITH THE CROWN

Scene
Leaving the premises of the Royal Palace without being noticed requires a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check and is possible by climbing the walls or flying above it. Exiting through the gates is possible only if they are open for some reason like troop transports, which is extremely rare after the manifestation of the Midnight Curse. The Dexterity (Stealth) skill check is made with disadvantage if the palace is on alert. On a failed skill check, the characters draw the attention of 4d4 **royal guards** and 1d4+1 **werehellhound knights** who immediately start pursuing them.

Exiting the Royal Palace unnoticed through the secret door in area 52 is possible only if the secret door was previously undiscovered by the characters' enemies. Blister is the only one who knows about the well-hidden staircase but the hag does not inform anyone about it before leaving in haste to the Shadowrealm.

As the characters take possession of the *crown of Aglarion,* it resists them to the best of its abilities, trying to take control of anyone holding it and to alert the residents of the palace to prevent the characters from taking it away. Placing it inside the *chest of magic nullification* prevents the *crown of Aglarion* from functioning and from being detected by any means of divination magic. It does not break the effects of the Midnight Curse.

Experience
Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can steal the *crown of Aglarion* and escape the Royal Palace with it.

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UNDER THE SHADOWDOME

THE DOME OF SHADOW

Background

As soon as the characters intrude on Blister, the midnight hag uses *plane shift* to travel to the Shadowrealm version of Onadbyr. Blister issues commands to the Gloom Widow - a night hag subject of the Matrons of Malice on the Shadowrealm - to force the drug addicted dark deva Sabrael into activating the Lament of the Dark Celestials with Tannur's crystal of the immortals inside the Shadow Ziggurat (see section Dirge of the Dark Angel). The crystal generates a dome of impregnable shadowstuff over the city of Onadbyr on all coexisting planes - the Material Plane, the Ethereal Plane, the Shadowrealm, and on the Feyrealm. Blister also tasks the Gloom Widow and its tribe of despair giants led by Gygor, a warlock of the Matrons of Malice, to guard the Shadow Ziggurat and the Dungeon of Tears where their prisoners that fuel the crystal are kept. After arranging these precautions, the midnight hag returns to the Material Plane, directing its minions to hunt for the characters. The characters should be out of the Royal Palace by this time with the *crown of Aglarion* in their possession, safely held in the *chest of magic nullification*.

Environment

A giant dome of shadowy force with a radius of over 2,000 feet envelops the entire city, rising from the ground 500 feet outside of the New Wall to an apex 200 feet above the Royal Palace. The semi-transparent dome swirls with dark shadows and obscures the sun, casting the entire city into gloomy semi-darkness. Rain still falls from darkened skies through the dome and the few people on the streets and windows gaze with apprehension upon the enclosure that envelops the entire city.

Shadowdome. The dome of shadow is made up of condensed raw shadow material generated on the Shadowrealm by the crystal of the immortals in the Shadow Ziggurat and exists simultaneously on the Material Plane, Shadowrealm, the Feyrealm, and even on the Ethereal Plane. It is just the upper half of a sphere that reaches deep into the bedrock and the sea bottom outside of the city, totally enclosing the area. It functions as a spell that can not be destroyed by a *disintegrate* spell, so it is impregnable, practically sealing off the city from the outside, as no living being (including even constructs) can penetrate the barrier. It blocks all forms of teleportation, dimensional, planar, or any similar magical means of travel, into and out of the dome. Still, dimensional travel

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works normally within the confines of the Shadowdome. The dome is immune to magic, dispelling, and all forms of damage. On closer inspection, a character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can determine that the force field of the dome is indeed formed from shadows, in all likelihood originating from the Shadowrealm.

Scene

The general reaction of the populace to the new threat that arches over its head is to withdraw indoors. People shut themselves into their homes, shops and services are closed and suspended, the streets are abandoned. Fishing ceases as the seas become inaccessible and boats that are trapped in the ports of Onadbyr float helplessly on the River Nenock. The royal army still patrols the walls and the gates of the city, and the city is essentially under lockdown until orders come from the palace. Supply of scarce foodstuff and raw materials like timber or minerals are pushed through the dome and pulled through using ropes. The process is handled through the Crown Gate, which is the only gate that remains open for this purpose.

The double hex is hard for the people of Onadbyr to bear, who are now like shivering mice in a glass cage, as the Midnight Curse is now made worse by their entrapment in the city.

FUGITIVES FROM INJUSTICE

Background

After Blister has completed its preparations on the Shadowrealm and has the Shadowdome raised, the hag returns to the palace to consolidate its hold over Onadbyr. If all three Aphinahs have perished, the hag assumes their form and begins to rule directly. The hag's primary goal is to find the crown and the characters. Blister declares martial law, and its first order is to hunt the characters down and scour the entire city until they are found. Children of the Coven are sent out to find any information on the characters, while the authorities go door to door to hunt for the fugitives.

Environment

The city goes into general lockdown, maintained and enforced by the Royal Swords and the werehellhound knights, who are the only ones allowed on the streets without special dispensation from the palace. Doors are bolted, windows shuttered, and social interactions between neighbors are suspended. Terror spreads over Onadbyr as people are huddled and afraid of what the future will bring.

Scene

The voice of a High Speaker can be heard clearly over the city from the Minaret of the Speaker, as it conveys the proclamation announcing the characters as criminals with rewards for their heads.

"By order of Queen Aphinah Azennar, the following individuals are declared wanted for crimes against the crown. Any information leading to their whereabouts will be rewarded with 1,000 gold pieces, with a reward of 2,000 gold pieces for each of their heads, dead or alive..."

A High Speaker announcing the edict, followed by the characters' descriptions and their names if known.

As a result of the terror of the lockdown and the hunt for the characters, their social interactions become impeded. Characters must make all **Charisma** ability checks with a disadvantage as long as the characters are at large.

Eyes of the Coven

Background

Everyone is suspect, and many will find the first chance to report the characters to the authorities for the blood money or out of sheer fear of the queen's forces. The Children of the Coven mark targets in the city based on their network of informants and weed out suspicious individuals by using their *Hag's Form*

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ability and hiding among the populace. Their tactics are reminiscent of the infiltration within the ranks of mortals by the shapeshifting dark angel agents of the Dark Star, which brings forth ancient and dormant fears in the inhabitants of the city.

Scene

If the characters travel the open streets of the city, there is a chance that they will be spotted, recognized, and reported if they have any social interactions. All characters must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to avoid notice if they are on the streets. On a failed check, the characters draw unwanted attention from an informant of the Children of the Coven (use the **witchservant cultist** monster entry), who is hurrying away but can be noticed with a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The informer will flee and gather 2d6 Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) within 2d4+1 rounds if unobserved. After 2d4 minutes, two **werehellhound knights** arrive from the Royal Palace to assess the situation.

If the characters aren't disguised, the witchservant cultist will direct the guards to apprehend them, supporting them with ranged spells from afar. If the characters are disguised, they must succeed on a **DC 11 Charisma** ability check made with a disadvantage to fool the authorities.

Inquisition by Fire

Background

Squads of Royal Swords led by werehellhound knights go from house to house, ransacking residences and places of business in their search for the characters. One such building has been marked for a search.

Environment

Any building connected to the characters, either their residence if they are locals or an establishment they have frequented before.

Scene

The Children of the Coven prioritize places with ties to the characters and send out forces to undertake the door-to-door searches. One such building is being razed and set on fire, its inhabitants made to watch on their knees as two **werehellhound knights** spread the flames with their breath weapons. The werehellhound knights interrogate the cowering victims about the characters under a *zone of truth* spell. Ten Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) accompany the lycanthropes, who surround the innocent victims, whose only crime was some involvement with the characters. The werehellhound knights lose their patience after a few minutes of dealing with the commoners and burn them alive.

NO ESCAPE

Background

Characters might attempt to pass the dome of shadow in various ways - in the air, through the city's sewers, in the river, or over the walls. They will soon realize that all their efforts are in vain. The dome is impregnable, surrounding the city in a sphere that reaches into the bedrock itself.

Broken Flight

Environment

The dome above Onadbyr swirls with dark shadows, keeping the sun at bay and casting an envelope of gloom over the city.

Scene

If characters take to the air to inspect the dome from up close, their flight draws four **vile swarms of ravens** with vile intellect from the rooftops of the palace, who harass the characters and try to force them to the ground. These ravens have learned strategies to simultaneously attack from all directions and drop a shower of sharp items onto victims.

Vile Swarms of Ravens. use the swarm of ravens monster entry with the following modifications:

- The swarm of ravens have **vile intellect** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

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- They have advantage on attacks due to *Pack Tactics*.
- ***Shredding Barrage.*** As a bonus action, the swarm of ravens can fly above targets to shower them with all manner of sharp objects collected by the swarm. Each creature under the swarm in a line towards the ground must make a successful **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw. The targets take (14) 4d6 piercing damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. The swarm of ravens must spend five minutes to rearm themselves before using this feature again.
- ***Eye Gouging.*** As an action, the swarm of ravens can focus on gouging the eyes of a helpless target in a synchronized effort. The swarm attacks one creature it can see that has 0 hit points and is still alive or one that is incapacitated. The swarm deals damage normally; however, the attack's target must succeed on a **DC 9 Constitution** saving throw or be blinded. Attacks against the swarm have advantage in the round when it uses its *Eye Gouging* ability.

Under the River

Environment

The River Nanock still flows freely through the city and the dome on two sides. The sewers under Onadbyr are also functional and have a few drainage tunnels that connect to the river. However, vast schools of carp are stuck in the city, enclosed by the dome. On the outside of the dome on the western side of the city, outside the Thousand Lanterns bridge, mounds of helplessly flopping or dead fish cover the shores, unable to reach the waters of the sea.

Scene

If characters take to the water and try to pass the dome underwater, four schools of aggressive carp (use the **swarm of quippers** monster entry) are drawn to the disturbed waters and will attack any character in the waters of the river.

A Devious Plan

Background

Taris, the elder of the Uncanny Vagabonds has decided to capitalize on the reward offered for the characters and to betray Gren, seeing the strapping and increasingly popular relative as a threat to his role as patriarch. Taris has notified a known informant of the Children of the Coven that he will deliver the characters and Gren to the authorities. In reply, he has received Royal Sword uniforms and fake identities for the characters and Gren. The package came with information that a troop transport will be leaving the city through a gate that Queen Aphinah herself will open on the fabric of the Shadowdome. Taris has been tasked with directing the characters to seek a captain named Grillondar Onkas, who is expecting replacements to the transport and to board the armored carriage. Taris does not know the details of the planned ambush, but he is fine with his ignorance and the sacrifice of Gren to serve the well-being of the rest of the family.

Environment

The hideout of the Uncanny Vagabonds under the Monster Menagerie.

Scene

Taris (use the **spy** monster entry with the ability to cast *minor illusion* once per day) sends a message to the characters through a family member if they are not hiding out in the Monster Menagerie with the Uncanny Vagabonds. He lays out the information he has gained from one of the family's contacts in the Royal Palace. He explains that he can secure passage for them on a troop transport carriage of the army that somehow is planned to leave the city. He has heard that Queen Aphinah herself will be present to open a gate on the Shadowdome. His only condition is that the characters take Gren and secure his escape from the city as well. This method seems to be their one chance to cross the impenetrable wall. He tells the group to seek Captain Grillondar Onkas, who will be expecting the arrival of new recruits to the transport. He also gives the full sets of Royal Sword uniforms and gear to the characters and Gren and a list of fake identities as soldiers.

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"Aye, tis like walking into the House of the Soldier as a raging Vordani invader. But tis be yon only chance to escape the city. Yon mugs are posted all over the city, so best keep them disguised, lest ye be caught like minnows in a net of steel."

Taris as he outlines his concerns with the plan.

Taris is trying to hide his anxiety and characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can notice the strain on his nerves and that something is amiss, especially concerning the identity of his contact in the Royal Swords. If pressured, he prevaricates that he is worried about the large numbers of Royal Swords at the gate and explains that the contact wishes to remain anonymous.

Betrayal at the Gates

Background

Blister plans to lure the characters and Gren into the armored carriage, at which point they will be locked inside, allowing the hag to cast a deadly spell that will suffocate all within and turn them into undead. Captain Grillondar Onkas is wholly ignorant of the plot and thinks that he will be leading troops to Southkeep to reinforce the southern watchtowers. In reality, Blister is planning to eradicate the characters once and for all. If any of the Queen Aphinahs survived, she is present, and Blister takes the form of a robed witchservant cultist. If all Aphinahs have perished, Blister takes her form.

Environment

A large, armor-plated personnel transport carriage is boarded by soldiers at Crown Gate. A mean-looking captain of the Royal Swords orders soldiers about. Royal Arrows guard the walls, and additional soldiers mill about the gate.

Armored Carriage. The carriage is made of reinforced wood and plated with metal sheets on the outside. It is 30 feet long and 10 feet wide with two rows of benches on each side. It can hold 10 creatures of medium size at full capacity. The carriage walls have AC 17, 80 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. Three windows with iron bars open to the outside, lined with metal bars with AC 19, 25 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The carriage can be barred from the outside with an iron latch that can't be picked from the inside, but it can be forced open with a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

If the characters follow Taris' instructions and have disguised their features, they can move freely through the city as Royal Swords with official identity papers until they reach the Crown Gate. Six Royal Swords are in the process of boarding a large, closed, armored troop transport carriage under the watch of six other Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and four Royal Arrows (use the **scout** monster entry). Captain Grillondar Onkas (use the **knight** monster entry) barks orders at the soldiers to hurry.

"On the double soldiers, and in order! You better not have grown soft in good old Onadbyr. This is your chance to finally prove your worth in the field. Where are my blasted new recruits? They'll wish they were never born after I get through with them!"

Captain Grillondar Onkas shouting over the din of preparations.

When the characters arrive at the scene, Captain Grillondar Onkas grills them about being late, threatening double guard duty at the southern forts, and demands their papers. Characters must succeed on a **DC 12 Charisma (Deception)** skill check or be identified by the Captain. On a failed save, the Captain

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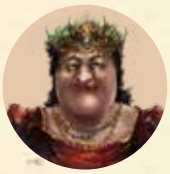
orders the fugitives to be restrained, at which point a total of twelve Royal Swords and four Royal Arrows attack the characters. On a success, he ushers the characters and Gren onto the carriage, closes its door, and latches the bolt from the outside.

As the characters are seated, the queen's arrival is announced and the Royal Swords surrounding the carriage stand to attention. Queen Aphinah can be seen on a palanquin carried by four Royal Swords. Two **werehellhound knights** and four **witchservant cultists** accompany her. If any of the Queen Aphinah's have survived, she sits on the palanquin, and Blister the **midnight hag** is in the form of a witchservant. If all Queen Aphinahs have perished, Blister wears the queen's guise.

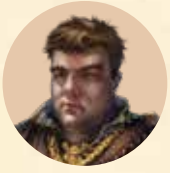
As the royal procession arrives, the characters can hear Queen Aphinah's voice from outside.



"Brave swords of Aglarion! I will personally see you off on your voyage.... Which ends here and now! Hahahahhaha! "

Queen Aphinah (or Blister) cackling to the characters as she casts her spell.

At this point, Blister casts a *lungrot vapor* (DC 19 Constitution saving throw) spell from a scroll targeted at the carriage. All Royal Swords within the carriage suffocate in the necrotic energies and rise as six **zombies** (with the *Choking Strike* ability of the spell) at the end of the first turn. Gren fights the zombies and urges the characters to break out.



"Oi, muckers! Get that door open, now! I ain't planning to become zombie grub."

Gren urging on the characters.

If the characters break out of the carriage, they will have to face six Royal Swords, four Royal Arrows, their commander Captain Grillondar Onkas, the four witchservant cultists, and the two werehellhound knights. Blister does not want to risk anything and casts *dimension door* to bring herself and Queen Aphinah back to the Royal Palace to bring reinforcements if needed.

As soon as the players break out of the deadly trap, a figure approaches them from the shadows, walking with soft steps in a relaxed posture. His very presence speaks of the absolute confidence of an apex predator.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can escape the clutches of the authorities.

GUIDED THROUGH SHADOWS

Background

Samsadur, the rakshasa master of the Golden Masks, has learned about the events that took place in the Royal Palace and the involvement of the characters. The Midnight Curse has already severely hindered the fiend's criminal operations but it also opened up new opportunities that the organization has come to utilize to cover its losses. Unfortunately, the Shadowdome is blocking the Golden Masks' export and import operations from and to Onadbyr, which causes a severe disruption in its cash flow and logistics.

Samsadur is glad to see another faction doing the dirty work and hopes the resistance will succeed. It has learned of the death of the Crownwarden and the crown's theft. The fiend has decided to assist this unknown ally and has stalked the characters to find out who they are, what they know, and their goals.

Environment

Samsadur approaches the characters in any location where it can parlay with them discreetly, in an alley near the Crown Gate or the Monster Menagerie. The fiend doesn't mind coming forth in front of the Un-

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canny Vagabonds, because it considers them possible allies and part of the resistance.

Scene

Samsadur (use the **rakshasa** monster entry) does not reveal its fiendish identity or form to the characters and their allies. Before explaining its agenda, it steps out of the shadows and greets them in a confident, reserved, but friendly manner. The fiend reveals that it is the leader of the Golden Masks, trusting that this gives weight to his words. It also tells the characters about its informant, Zurafkira Shoemaker, who exists in both the Shadowrealm and the Material Plane and has the power to communicate with its other half through mirrors. This informant has reported to Samsadur about the past and current events taking place on the Shadowrealm. Samsadur tells the characters the following information that is described in more detail in the upcoming Dirge for the Dark Angels section, but the fiend does not know more than the following.

- The Shadowdome is generated on the Shadowrealm, spewing forth from the Shadow Ziggurat, a seat of power for the fallen angels for millennia.
- A dark song began as the Shadowdome appeared and its debilitating effect drains every last drop of positive thought from those who hear it.
- A small tribe of despair giants came to camp at the Shadow Ziggurat, led by their magic-wielding chieftain.
- The despair giants and their night hag master have brought dozens of prisoners to the Shadowrealm version of the Dungeon of Tears over the past years.
- A faint cloud of shadows has been rising from the Dungeon of Tears towards the Shadow Ziggurat since the Shadowdome appeared.
- The only soundproof location in the city that might help against the Lament of the Dark Celestials is the Shadowrealm version of the Eyrie of the Fabled. Zurafkira Shoemaker tried to explore the area and entered the auditorium, which suppressed the draining effects of the Lament of the Dark Celestials. Still, she gazed upon a haunting phantasmal play on the stage that almost warped her mind, and she decided to flee.

Samsadur tells the characters that it is in its power to bring them to the Shadowrealm and back the next day. If asked about its powers, it smiles and says that it is an arcanist of great power. Before casting *plane shift* and taking the characters to the Shadowplane, Samsadur requests a friendly favor in return for his help. The fiend demands this favor to be performed after the Shadowdome has been negated and before bringing the characters back to the Material Plane.

"I can bring you there, and promise to bring you back. But I also need you to do a little favor for me in return."

Samsadur summing up its offer.

A Favor You Can't Refuse

Background

Samsadur found out that Baendretarixus, the Eternal Hive, an undead sentient carcass black dragon, is in possession of a very expensive, highly magical weapon - the *bow of the night*. The undead dragon acquired the magic bow from one of its rivals, a shadow elf chieftain named Galloris Laerinn, who attacked the undead dragon with his band of shadow elves. The black dragon was victorious in the conflict and of-

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fered the shadow elves their lives in exchange for their servitude. Left without a leader, the emotionless elves of the Shadowrealm accepted the mighty Baendretarixus as their new master.

Samsadur approached the undead black dragon and its elves and made a deal with the dead sentient beast. The rakshasa promised to hunt down and deliver to the dragon those who killed it in his living form in return for the magic bow. The contract was for Laros Masari, a human necromancer, Iktair Zotas, a human fighter, and Elcan, an elven paladin. It took months for Samsadur to find the heroes and murder the first two, whose bodies the fiend hid in two chests, but it never found the elven paladin, even after years of searching. The rakshasa hopes to convince the undead dragon that the death of the two heroes would be sufficient payment for the *bow of the night* but it knows that it will be a risky negotiation that can easily turn into a fight. Samsadur plans to spill as little information about this side mission as possible.

Scene

The fiend requests players bring along two large heavy chests, and accompany it to a meeting with its business acquaintance that resides on the Shadowrealm outside the Shadowdome. Samsadur does not initially disclose any further information about the nature of the business partner nor the contents of the chests. If pressed, the fiend reveals that the business partner is a young black dragon and that the chests contain things of high importance for the dragon (see section The Bow of the Night for more information on this event). A character who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can sense that Samsadur holds back important information about the meeting or its acquaintance. The corpses in the chests are under the effects of a *gentle repose* spell.

"You should trust me, the same way I trust you."

Samsadur putting an end to unwanted questions.

If the characters are ready to leave, four **thugs** of the Golden Masks arrive with a carriage loaded with the two chests that weigh 150 pounds each. Each chest is locked with a large iron padlock that requires a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** check to open using thieves' tools. Samsadur tells the characters that a deadly trap protects the chests so they should not consider opening them. A character with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can see through the deception.

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Dirge of the Dark Angel

THE SHADOWREALM

Environment

The Shadowrealm is a coexisting plane, a parallel reality, a depressed, emotionless, and colorless representation of the Material Plane where everything appears to be neglected, abandoned, ruined, dark, and cold. Vegetation is scarce, animals are rare, and mostly only small rodents, vermin, and birds survive on whatever they can find. The weather is always cold and rainy and dark clouds always cover the sky.

A soft persistent gloom hangs over the plane that always sheds dim light on everything at angles that form long, overlapping shadows. Many areas of the plane are naturally dark without even the dim light penetrating them. Other parts of the plane, especially low territories, are so dark that even darkvision can't penetrate the umbral void.

The Shadowrealm changes as the Material Plane changes, especially with regards to unnatural constructs or interventions. For example, deforestation on the Material Plane might cause trees on the Shadowrealm to fall as if they withered away and were unable to uphold themselves. Likewise, the layers of a house would appear in their already weathered condition as a new building is being constructed, or a building might seemingly crumble to rubble on its own if it gets demolished on the Material Plane.

Although the Shadowrealm is a dark depiction of the Material Plane, the plane itself seems to prefer some sites that it keeps from being destroyed. These places or locations are usually the ones that resonate well with its dark, shadowy nature.

Onadbyr, just like the other settlements of the Kingdom of Aglarion on the Shadowrealm, are abandoned and defunct, without any residents. The houses have no signs of previous inhabitants and stand mostly without any furniture, their doors and windows open or broken. The Shadowrealm version of the city of Onadbyr is under a Shadowdome (as described under the The Dome of Shadow section) and the sad Lament of the Dark Celestials can be heard everywhere under the shadowy hemisphere of force.

Suppressed Light. The range of natural and magical light sources is halved on the Shadowrealm, including both brightly and dimly lit areas.

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Lament of the Dark Celestials. The **Tannur's crystal of the immportals** (see area 5 of the Shadow Ziggurat) emanates the Lament of the Dark Celestials, a dark dirge in otherworldly tones in the Celestial language that can be heard all over the Shadowrealm version of the city of Onadbyr under the Shadowdome. The song's lyrics are almost incomprehensible, long stretched words, which mourn the banishment of the Dark Star and praise the Darkness Within. Any humanoid creature within the aura (effectively the entire Shadowdome) must make a **DC 18 Charisma** saving throw every day. On a failed save, the creature is overwhelmed by negative emotions, sadness, a lack of motivation, and sorrow for one day, and must succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma** saving throw before making a Charisma ability check or suffer disadvantage on the check.

LURKERS IN THE DARK

Background

The Shadowrealm imprint of the capital city of Onadbyr is a deserted place in ruin and decay without obvious signs of life. Only a few creatures, living or dead, have carved out their own territory or stalk the crumbling streets.

Sisters of Lunacy

Background

This nest of six shadowrealm-born harpies is the brood of the crazed harpy bard Akythoa, who drove Hymmir, the previous despair giant chieftain mad. Gygor, the current despair giant chieftain, killed the raging Hymmir and hunted down the harpy bard to make sure he didn't suffer the same fate. The harpies avoid the despair giants and keep improving the song of madness they inherited on any other victim they can find.

Environment

The Sisters of Lunacy nest on the top and various levels of the Shadowrealm imprint of the Minaret of the Speakers that lacks the loud, sound-altering magical properties of its Material Plane version. Their nests are made of wood, furs, rock, and the bones of their victims. The harpies have transposed the notes of their maddening songs all over the walls of the minaret with their own blood.

Scene

The harpies, Aredna, Delectra, Caelna, Phandarra, Urputra, and Waerra are constantly looking for victims from their nest, with at least one **Sister of Lunacy** always singing its *Song of Madness*. The Sisters of Lunacy also fly out to hunt from time to time. They follow their prey, singing from above until the creature is vulnerable enough to be safely lynched and consumed. As monstrosities, they are unaffected by the Lament of the Dark Celestials, which they utilize to their advantage.

Sister of Lunacy. The bodies of these long-haired, sullen harpies are covered in leather strips made from the cured hides of their victims. Use the **harpy** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Song of Madness.*** The Sister of Lunacy sings a vibrating screech-like magical song. Every humanoid and giant within 300 ft. of the harpy that can hear the song must succeed on a **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw or gain a random short-term madness until the song ends. The Sister of Lunacy must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the Sister of Lunacy is incapacitated. An affected creature ignores the songs of other Sisters of Madness. A creature can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to this Sister of Lunacy's song for the next 24 hours. *Song of Madness* replaces the *Luring Song* ability of the harpy.

Treasure

The nests of the Sisters of Lunacy contain a total of 823 silver pieces and 258 gold pieces, a platinum bar, a magic scroll of *dispel magic,* and a *+1 hand crossbow*.

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The Umbral Stalker

Background

Querrai Xalo, the aberrant drow master assassin of House Ausstyl, was sent on a mission by the Inheritors of the Unbegotten to explore the Everstorm vortex at the edge of the Lake of Tears on the Bleak Mire. Being at the wrong place at the wrong time, the drow became trapped under the Shadowdome that encompasses all four coexistent planes. Using his powers, Querrai Xalo traveled to the Shadowrealm to investigate.

Environment

Querrai Xalo can be encountered near the Shadow Ziggurat or the Dungeon of Tears.

QUERRAI XALO

Scene

Querrai Xalo has spent days observing the Shadow Ziggurat and the Dungeon of Tears to make sure he knows what he is up against. He does not yet know how to get rid of the Shadowdome, and the more information he gathers, the less confident he becomes. He trusts his skills, but he doesn't want to risk his life sneaking alone into either an ancient ziggurat or into the midst of an overpowered group of creatures. Querrai Xalo is hiding when the characters approach any of the two locations and starts to follow them from a safe distance. A character who succeeds on a **DC 23 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can spot the drow stalking them silently through the rooftops. Querrai Xalo immediately uses his *Shadowshift* ability to return to the Bleak Mire if he realizes he has been discovered. He returns only an hour later at a completely different location in the city and cautiously revisits one of the two locations he is scouting. If confronted, he will not engage in combat alone and always tries to return to his home plane, the Bleak Mire.

Random Encounters in the Shadowrealm

The Shadowrealm is a desolate place with few encounters, especially if anyone ventures into the wilds. The Shadowrealm manifestation of Onadbyr draws more of the few inhabitants that live on the deserted plane. These creatures are mostly looking for food and are lured to the sounds and complexity of the city.

Roll on a d20 for a random encounter every time the characters move from one location to another or stay at a location for a short or long rest.

1-10	No encounter
11	A pack of three **shadows** is on the trail of the characters, thirsting for their life essence.
12	The shadow specialist necromancer, Asundor Albor died a gruesome death on the Shadowrealm and has risen as a **wraith** centuries ago. It roams the plane seeking long-lost components for its rituals together with its two **specter** acolytes.
13	Brosim is a withered, chaotic evil **treant** that drains any fluid it can find, including the blood of creatures it slays. It wanders around the city, looking for prey or a source of water.

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14 Murky is a shadow mephit (use the **dust mephit** monster entry but change dust to shadow in its description, and it can cast *darkness* instead of *sleep*) who has found a perfect spot of pure darkness exactly where the characters are. It angrily demands that the characters change their route or move from the spot. It flees and gladly tells on the characters to the Gloom Widow if the characters act in a hostile manner towards it.

15 A pair of **despair giants** are on their way between the Dungeon of Tears and the Shadow Ziggurat.

16 A building suddenly collapses next to the characters. Each character must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage from the falling debris. A character who fails its saving throw by 5 or more is pinned under a large block of stone or wood and takes 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage at the start of its turn. The character can free itself or can be freed by anyone with a successful **DC 15 Strenght** ability check.

17 A character can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice a bottomless puddle of black goo. On a failed check, the character steps into the bottomless puddle and can only escape it by succeeding on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. On a failed escape attempt, the character sinks deeper and can make the same check every turn with a disadvantage. After three consecutive failed Strength (Athletics) skill checks, the character begins to suffocate.

18 A vicious storm of blinding shadow rages through the streets of the city for one hour. A character who is exposed to the strong winds has its Strength score reduced by 1d4 (as if hit by a shadow) for every minute spent in the wind, and must spend 2 feet of movement for every 1 foot it moves. The wind disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames in the area. It causes protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly, and there is a 50 percent chance that it extinguishes them.

19 The characters run into four of the **Sisters of Lunacy.**

20 A gargantuan **shadowstrand spider** moves slowly above the houses of the city, looking for prey.

Gargantuan Shadowstrand Spider (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **giant spider** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The shadowstrand spider is Gargantuan size.
- It has 136 hit points.
- It has a Strength score of 20.
- It has a speed of 50 ft, and climb speed of 50 ft.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 18 (4d8) poison damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.
- ***Shadowstrand Web (Recharge 5-6).*** The enfeebling webs fill a 60-foot cube, which becomes difficult terrain and a lightly obscured area. A creature within the area of the enfeebling web has its Strength ability score reduced by 1d4 every turn and is restrained by webbing at the beginning of its turn. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 14 Strength ability check, bursting from the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 10; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

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SAMSADUR'S INFORMANT

Background

The Shadowrealm version of Zurafkira Shoemaker is a real survivor. She lives alone in the empty city of the Shadowrealm version of Onadbyr. She learned many of her skills from her Material Plane counterpart and later from Samsadur, who visits her from time to time. However, she has had to become stealthy and self-sufficient to survive the harsh environment in which she lives. The rakshasa has been deceiving the two women, telling them that they would die a gruesome death if they inhabited the same plane of existence. Instead, each of the two believes the fiend who aids them in both realities, serving Samsadur as their master and protector.

Zurafkira Shoemaker has made a new friend recently who has forbidden her to talk about him to her Material Plane version or Samsadur. An oni, named Akuma, found her stalking in the city and decided to follow her. The giant befriended the lonely woman in the form of a handsome warrior named Orellis and told her that he escaped the Dungeon of Tears and the grasp of the Gloom Widow. Akuma learned Zurafkira's secrets through guile and the frequent use of *charm person* spells. The giant decided to make Zurafkira convince her "wizard" friend Samsadur to take him to the Material Plane. Akuma has no idea what it is up against and confidently trusts his abilities to achieve his goal.

Environment

Zurafkira Shoemaker's tiny workshop and second-level home seem abandoned as all other buildings in the city. She has barred the front doors from the inside and never makes any loud noises or uses light sources in any form. She leaves the house only through a small upper-level window that opens to the roof of the neighboring building.

Scene

Samsadur takes the players to meet with Zurafkira Shoemaker at her house. The rakshasa climbs the crumbling walls of the building and knocks a special code on the small window for the woman to know that it's him. The fiend asks the characters to leave the chests in the alley and follow him to the roof, 10 feet above street level. A character must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb the wall.

Zurafkira Shoemaker

Zurafkira Shoemaker (use the **scout** monster entry with darkvision 60 ft.) opens the window and invites Samsadur and its allies into her home. The girl is depressed, saddened, and devoid of motivation, which she blames on the lament that lingers over the ruined city. Inside the house, Akuma (use the **oni** monster entry) also greets them in his human form of Orellis, holding his glaive, seemingly unaffected by the Lament of the Dark Celestials. Samsadur hides his surprise and acts politely with Akuma, who tells its made-up story about his escape from the prison and his wish to return to the Material Plane. Samsadur sees through the deception, especially after using its *detect thoughts* and *true seeing* spells on the oni, but does not alert the characters until it can use the powerful giant to achieve its own goals. A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check senses that Orellis is not who he pretends to be, but his intentions are not outright hostile against their group, but rather manipulative.

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Samsadur has a friendly conversation with Zurafkira Shoemaker and Akuma to confirm no changes in her information. Finally, the fiend gives the girl a *potion of invisibility* and two *potions of healing* as gifts before leaving her house along with the characters.

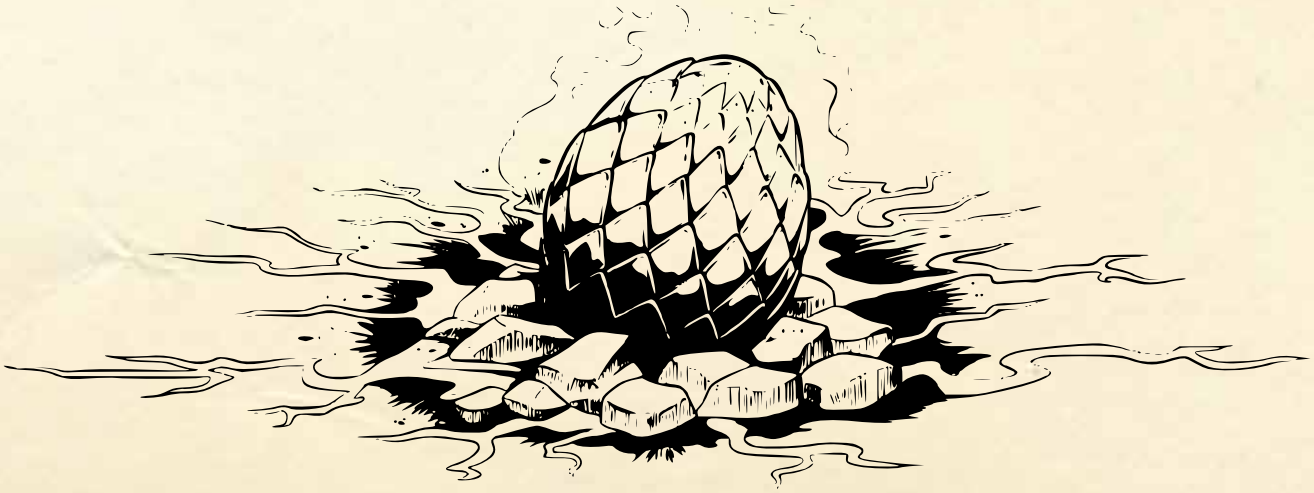
Akuma offers his martial skills and fights alongside the characters and Samsadur if they allow it to accompany them, on which he thoroughly insists. The oni does not reveal its true nature and uses its spell-like abilities only in dire need. Samsadur does its best to win the favor of the giant and eventually takes him back to the Material Plane where he offers Akuma a prominent status within the ranks of the Golden Masks, especially if the characters previously slew Yhlsaby.

THE SHADOW ZIGGURAT

Background

The Shadow Ziggurat is a remnant of an ancient time, a Shadowrealm equivalent of the Throne of the Dark Star, the seat of power of the fallen solar on the Material Plane that was destroyed to the last pebble when the rebellion of Sarath and the Order of the Eternal Light defeated the reign of the dark angels. The Material Plane version of the ziggurat once stood where the Royal Palace stands today, but the Shadowrealm version never transformed to represent the changes in Material Plane. The Shadowrealm retains what serves its purpose, and the ziggurat remains as it was for the past few millennia. No mortal has been allowed to enter the ziggurat other than as a sacrificial offering to the Darkness Within.

Bound to the Shadow Ziggurat is the fallen deva Sabrael, who descended directly into the Shadowrealm together with its direct superior, Tannur, the planetar general, an embodiment of sorrow. Sabrael was assigned to serve as an emissary and an agent of the Dark Star on the Shadowrealm. The deva was instructed to protect the ziggurat and to use the crystal, one of the crystal of the immortals, to syphon the energies of the slaves. Sabrael uses it as a focus to create magical effects as desired by its masters. Sabrael knows that the Dark Star, Tannur, and the other planetars and their deva armies were banished long ago back to their home plane. Still, time passes at a different pace on the Shadowrealm, and the loyal deva perceives the past few millennia as one long period of waiting. Sabrael casts its *commune* spell regularly to fortify its connection with the Dark Star and the Darkness Within, and remains true to its original mission to protect the ziggurat and the crystal.



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The Shadow Ziggurat

1 tile = 10 feet

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The Matrons of Malice found Sabrael and consider the fallen angel as a powerful creature, finding glee in its torment. They knew they could turn it into a useful tool if they could formulate a devious plan to convince the otherworldly being to do their bidding when needed. Through lies and manipulation, the midnight hags have poisoned Sabrael with an addictive ingested substance called dreamwisp candy (see area 10 of the Dungeon of Tears), which causes intense dream-like hallucinations and severe withdrawal symptoms when it is not consumed. During these hallucinations, the deva keeps imagining that the Dark Star has returned to it and that it communes with its master. The deva knows it is trapped, but aches to receive more of the drug to regain its strength and meet its solar master more frequently. The Matrons of Malice trusted their night hag minion, the Gloom Widow, to regularly dose the drug to the dark deva, but only rarely to cause it pain.

When the characters attack the Royal Palace and the triplet hagspawn Queen Aphinahs, Blister, the only free member of the Matrons of Malice rushes to the Shadowrealm. Blister forces the drugged and vulnerable Sabrael to activate the crystal of immortals and thus to enclose the city on all coexistent planes. The midnight hag has already brought several dozen victims to the Shadowrealm from the Material Plane to be able to fuel the divine magical device with their sadness when needed. She keeps them locked up in the Shadowrealm version of the Dungeon of Tears under the supervision of the Gloom Widow.

Environment

The Shadow Ziggurat is a 90-foot tall building with three levels and wide stairways that run up on all of its sides. There is only one entrance located on the top of the ziggurat, a wide chimney that leads through each level, directly into the heart of the building. Corridors and rooms within the ziggurat are 20 feet high.

Suppressed Light. Areas within the Shadow Ziggurat are naturally dark and dim light is suppressed by the power of the Darkness Within. Treat dimly lit areas as total darkness within the ziggurat.

Beam of Sorrow. The sadness and hopelessness of the sorrowful Lament of the Dark Celestials flow upwards, fueling the Shadowdome from the crystal of immortals below. A non-celestial creature that touches the beam of sorrow must succeed on a **DC 23 Charisma** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is overwhelmed by negative emotions, sadness, and sorrow for one day, and must succeed on a **DC 23 Charisma** saving throw before making a Charisma ability check or suffer disadvantage on the check.

1. Stairs to Darkness

Background

The night hag, the Gloom Widow, has ordered its despair giant enforcers to protect the ziggurat with their lives. The giants, a native tribe of the Shadowrealm, are led by Gygor, a witchservant of the Children of the Coven - an obedient thrall of the Matrons of Malice. The despair giant leader considers the Gloom Widow as its superior within the cult.

Environment

The tents and furs on which the giants sleep are spread out on the ziggurat's three 30-foot high steps. Some rotting raw meat and bones lie around as leftovers from their feasting.

Scene

Two **despair giants** and **Gygor** call the steps of the Shadow Ziggurat their home. They attack anyone whom they don't know to be an agent of the Matrons of Malice or who doesn't immediately show the secret tattooed sign of the Children of the Coven. The giants open with a volley of throwing stones if ranged combat is an option before charging with their clubs. Gygor prefers to stay out of melee combat as long as he can. He uses his *Sign of Ill Omen* eldritch invocation on the most dangerous-looking character before casting *eldritch blasts* infused with his *Painful Invocation* feature. Gygor also relies on his *One With Shadows* eldritch invocation to become invisible after moving into a dark area.

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Treasure

The despair giants have a total of 562 gold pieces given to them by the Gloom Widow as payment for their services.

Despair Giant

2. Hall of Inner Shadows

Background

Since the Dark Star's fall and in the absence of slaves to power the ziggurat, Sabrael started hunting for good-aligned creatures on the Shadowrealm to bring them to this enchanted chamber. The enchanted mirrors create shadow reflections of the mortals, who are then sacrificed at the chapel. The duality of the shadow reflection and the victim represents the conflict between the Shining Light and the Darkness Within. The sacrifice of the good-aligned creature by its evil shadow reflection is a ritual that powered the shadow crystal and acted as a proclamation of the superiority of the Darkness Within.

Environment

Flawless mirrors cover the walls of this room, creating an infinity mirror effect, showing reflections from every angle. Ancient symbols on the floor depict the fallen angels and tell of their glorious revolt against the binding rule of their other half, the Shining Light.

Scene

Good-aligned non-celestials who enter the room see their infinite number of **shadow reflections** within the mirrors. The shadow reflection steps out of the mirror and attacks the creature whom it imitates. It pursues the original creature inside the Shadow Ziggurat but does not leave the building.

Shadow Reflection (CR 5, 1,800 XP) . A shadow reflection is the exact copy of the good-aligned non-celestial creature, except for its alignment, which completely opposes the original creature's alignment. A shadow reflection has all the statistics, half the maximum hit points, and all knowledge, powers, spells, and equipment (except for their magical properties) of the original creature at the time when the reflection was created. In addition, the shadow

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reflection has vulnerability to radiant damage. The shadow reflection vanishes together with its equipment if slain or when it kills the original creature.

A character who defeats its reflection becomes immune to the effects of the Hall of Inner Shadows and gains the **boon of inspiration.**

Boon of Inspiration. You have seen the flaws within yourself and have overcome them. As an action, you can touch your reflection in a mirror or on any clear reflecting surface to gain inspiration that can be used until you finish a long rest. Once you use this boon, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

3. Chapel of the Darkness Within

Background

Sabrael supervised sacrifices made by the shadow reflections to the Darkness Within in this chapel.

Environment

Symbols of the Dark Star and its three planetar generals decorate this dark chapel. Ancient rusty metal cages hold the crumbling remains of those who have defeated their shadow reflections or were just stored here for future sacrifices to power the shadow crystal. A decorated dark stone block serves as the altar. A dark layer of dusty material, the dried blood of the victims, covers its surface.

4. Effigies of the Dark Generals

Background

The statues of the planetar generals of the Dark Star stand in this room, just like they did on the Material Plane for millennia before being destroyed. They were raised to channel the purest powers of the planetars and to break the slaves of the Dark Star. Before being executed, the captured good-aligned slaves were brought in front of each statue, escorted by their shadow reflection from area 2. Sabrael sometimes visits the rooms to meet the eyes of the looming statues and ease its longing for the Darkness Within by feeling their powers.

Environment

A colorfully painted statue of a planetar general stands in the far end of each of the three wings surrounded by the pure white skulls of their slaves.

4a. Morkiel's Effigy

Background

Morkiel is the manifestation of the fear aspect of the Darkness Within.

Environment

Morkiel's 20-foot tall statue stands in the room and glares with a cold threatening look on its oddly smooth green face. Its black tunic seems to be blown by the wind as it raises its great sword for a tremendous strike.

Scene

Morkiel's eyes radiate an aura of palpable terror that manifests as a sense of unavoidable danger within those who stand near it. A character within 10 feet of the effigy must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the character becomes frightened until it finishes a long rest.

4b. Tannur's Effigy

Background

Tannur is the manifestation of the sorrow aspect of the Darkness Within.

Environment

Tannur's 20-foot tall statue holds its greatsword in front of itself in a protective stance. Its bald green head has a sad look on its face.

Scene

Tannuar's eyes radiate an aura of sorrow that seeps

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into the soul of those who stand near it. A character within 10 feet of the effigy must make a **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw. On a failed save, the character must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw before making an attack or an ability check or suffer disadvantage on the check. The effect lasts until the character finishes a long rest.

4c. Zaphaos' Effigy

Background

Zaphaos is the manifestation of the hopelessness aspect of the Darkness Within.

Environment

Zaphaos' 20-foot tall statue rests its hands on the hilt of its greatsword, on which it leans. It has a hint of a smile on its green face.

Scene

Zaphaos' eyes radiate an aura of hopelessness that extinguishes any anticipation for success and replaces it with a feeling of emptiness. A character within 10 feet of the effigy must make a **DC 15 Intelligence** saving throw. On a failed save, the character must succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence** saving throw before taking an action or waste that action and do nothing. The effect lasts until the character finishes a long rest.

5. The Crystal of Immortals

Background

The dark deva spends most of its time in this chamber. The vessel of Tannur, a crystal of the immortals, was activated by Sabrael to generate the Shadowdome and to emanate the saddening Lament of the Dark Celestials. Sabrael feels abandoned and useless after the unsummoning of its masters from the Material Plane. The deva does not remove the poisoned effect of the Gloom Widow's dreamwisp candy from itself after consuming it, because it enjoys the realistic hallucinations. Sabrael uses its *commune* spell ability during these hallucinations to communicate with the Darkness Within and is even willing to suffer the side effects of the poison.

Environment

A huge, dark, multifaceted crystal, a crystal of immortals extrudes from the engraved flooring in the middle of this enormous chamber. Deep engravings of hieroglyphs cover the walls and the floor. Wide stairs lead up to a podium where a large stone throne stands between two statues of couatl heads.

Tannur's Crystal of the Immortals. The planetars and the Dark Star used these crystals to descend upon the Material Plane. This particular crystal radiates a power of raw immortal energy that creates a globe of force shield made of shadows and emanates a sad lament that saddens those who hear it. It draws its power from the sadness of non-celestial creatures, slowly consuming their happiness and life spark. The crystal of the immortals is impervious to physical or magical attacks. It creates the Shadowdome (detailed in The Dome of Shadow section above), similar to the effects of a spell in a 2,000 feet radius that forms the Shadowdome. This force effect penetrates the coexisting planes of the Ethereal, the Feyrealm, and the Material Plane, enclosing and blocking everything on all of these planes simultaneously. The crystal of the immortals also emanates the Lament of the Dark Celestials. Any humanoid creature within the aura must also make a **DC 23 Charisma** saving throw every day. On a failed save, the creature is overwhelmed by negative emotions, sadness, and sorrow for one day. It must succeed on a **DC 23 Charisma** saving throw before making an attack or an ability check or suffer disadvantage on the check. A creature can attune to the crystal of the immortals by pressing its forehead against the crystal, while a small fragment of it inserts itself into its forehead. Attuning to the crystal of immortals takes one minute of uninterrupted concentration. An attuned character can pass through the Shadowdome and becomes immune to the saddening effect of the Lament of Dark Celestials. A celestial creature regains 18 (4d8) hit points every round within the aura.

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Scene

Sabrael, a dark deva, the emissary of Tannur, the servant of the Dark Star, and one of the embodied fragments of the Darkness Within, sits on the stone throne. The fallen angel looks enervated and weak because of the withdrawal symptoms of dreamwisp candy fed to it only a few days ago by Gloom Widow. As a result, Sabrael's maximum hit points are halved and its challenge rating is reduced to 9.

The dark deva looks up at the characters as they enter the room and questions them about their intentions in a morose and threatening tone. It listens to whatever story they have to tell and then demands they leave. Sabrael attacks the characters only if they don't leave as commanded or if they attack. The dark deva immediately consumes any dreamwisp candy offered and ignores the characters for a day after that.

SABRAEL

"Did you come as sacrifice or to serve as a well for Tannur's crystal?"

Sabrael questioning the characters in a cruel tone.

The hieroglyphs on the floor and walls tell the story and function of the crystal of immortals in Celestial.

A character who speaks the Celestial language understands the written text, a somewhat altered version of celestial. A character that does not speak the Celestial language can make a **DC 20 Intelligence** ability check every day to decipher the glyphs that hold the following information. A character who speaks the Infernal language makes this ability check with advantage due to the close relation of these two languages.

- Tannur, the dark planetar, arrived at the Shadowplane within the crystal of the immortals found in this room.
- Tannur brought Sabrael with it, and tasked the deva to operate the crystal of the immortals when commanded.
- The crystal of the immortals creates a dome of shadow that blocks all kinds of travel, essentially imprisoning everything inside its area.
- The crystal of the immortals emanates the Lament of the Dark Celestials, a sorrowful song that drains the happiness of mortals, fueling the crystal with their sadness.
- Slaves were brought to Sabrael to serve as subjects for the Lament of the Dark Celestials and as occasional sacrifices to the Darkness Within.

If Samsadur learns or has time to decipher the meaning of the celestial hieroglyphs, it considers it a hint to ending the effects of the *crystal of the immortals*. It needs its businesses reinstated, and the Shadowdome is a primary hindrance besides the Midnight Curse. The rakshasa urges the characters to find those whose sadness fuels the divine magical device and devise a plan to end it.

"We must put an end to this, one way or another."

Samsadur's comment when the workings of the crystal are revealed.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can decipher the ancient hieroglyphs and learn the secrets of Tannur's crystal of the immortals.

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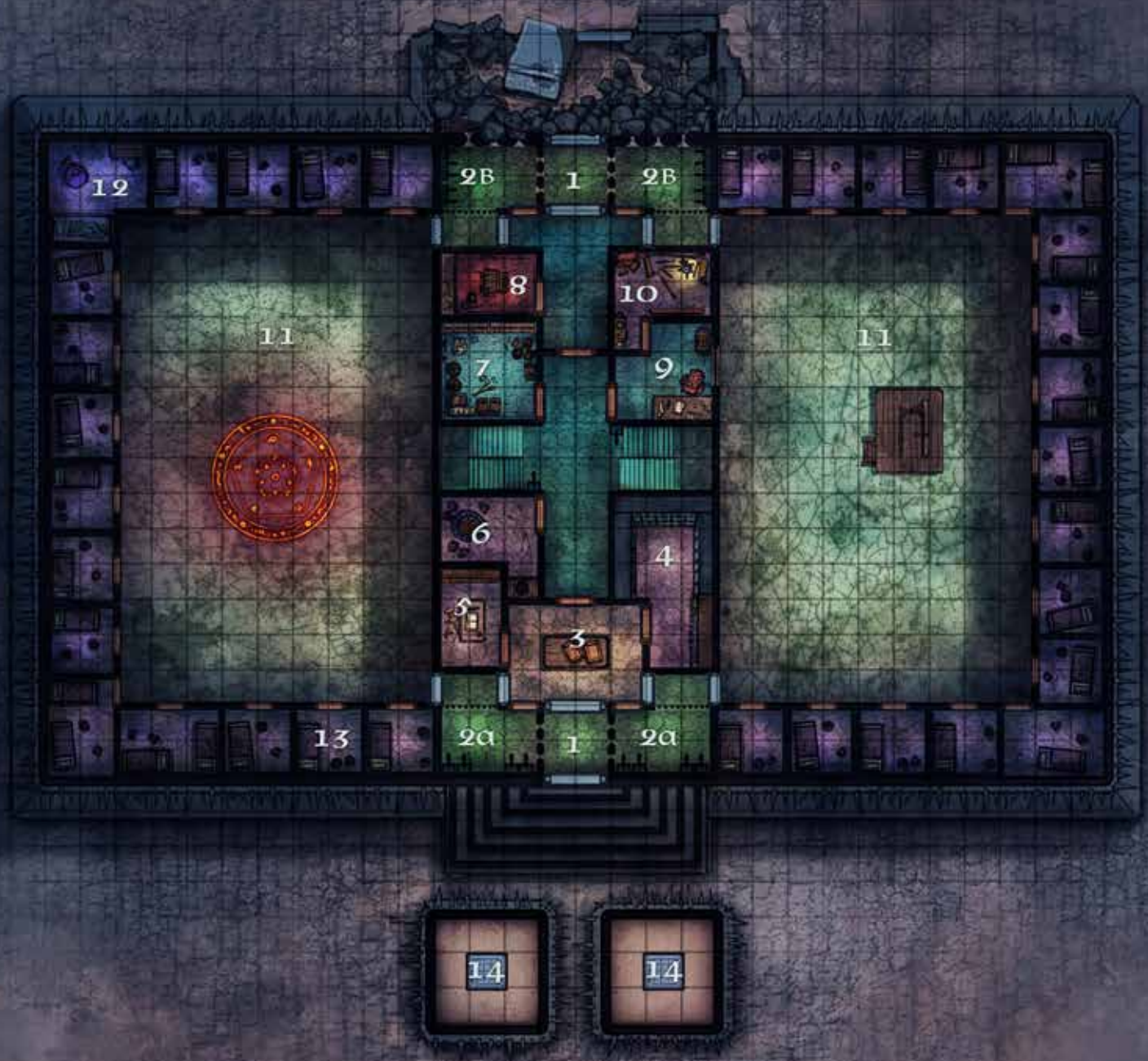
Dungeon of Tears



1 tile = 5 feet

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DUNGEON OF TEARS

Background

The Dungeon of Tears is a secure depository of prisoners for the Matrons of Malice to power Tannur's crystal of the immortals in the Shadow Ziggurat. Many victims have been kidnapped from Onadbyr by the Matrons of Malice over the years and brought to a *teleportation circle* in the prison yard. Victims have been deposited here for future use as fuel, and the time has finally arrived for them to power Tannur's crystal of the immortals with energies of despair and shadows. The prison warden is the Gloom Widow, a night hag, whom Blister has tasked to guard the prisoners in exchange for promises to join Blister's coven if Tyke or Splinter should perish. Blister possesses the Gloom Widow's *heartstone* as leverage, which keeps the lesser hag in line for the time being. Thus, the Gloom Widow is incredibly cautious, as it has been stripped of its *Etherealness* and *Nightmare Haunting* abilities. It also fears Blister and will not cross the more powerful midnight hag. It would rather wait, even centuries, to finally join a coven and is already working on crafting a new *heartstone*.

The prison is relatively empty, with around 50 prisoners in total. The prisoners languish in despair, in absolute darkness in the bunker-like enclosures. One of the prisoners is Sam "Weaver" Ebonhilt, the prison guard-turned-merchant-turned-underworld info broker, who holds an essential piece of the puzzle towards the midnight hags' natures. Another notable inmate is Jasper Platinumhand, a traveling storyteller whose joviality has overcome the effects of the Lament of the Dark Celestials. As a result, he has been sentenced by the Gloom Widow to hang.

Environment

It is evident from afar that the wisps of shadow material that evaporate from the single victims of the Lament of the Dark Celestials coalesce into a wide column, whose origin is the Dungeon of Tears. Crumbling heaps of stone surround the prison proper, only imprints of the massive fortifications around the building on the Material Plane. The ruins of the walls and towers count as difficult terrain but otherwise can easily be traversed. The squat, 15-foot tall building at the center of the ruins is built from massive blocks of grey granite, faded by the effects of the Shadowrealm. The structure's outer walls are 25 feet high, while the two crenelated towers that jut from the center of the building soar to a height of 30 feet.

The small cells each feature a bunk bed and two buckets - one filled with stagnant and dirty water, the other with waste. Larger communal cells each hold two bunk beds.

Doors. All doors of the Dungeon of Tears are locked. They are made of thick, sturdy wood that has been fitted with iron hinges. They feature well-crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill. The doors have AC 17, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The cell doors are set with a single, 2-inch wide and iron mesh-lined peephole at eye level, and they feature locked hatches on their bottom, which are used to empty waste buckets and deliver food and water to the prisoners. Copies of the key that unlocks the prison doors are carried by the Gloom Widow, its two invisible stalker servants, and its imp minions Rakpak and Lekmok.

Security Doors. The doors marked in blue on the map are iron-plated and controlled by levers from the guardrooms (areas 2a and 2b) and the bottom of the stairs in the central hallway. These doors open and shut automatically when their corresponding le-

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vers are set to the open or closed settings - up and down, respectively. For the double doors that lead directly into the facility (in areas 1 and 14), levers in both guardrooms or on both sides of the central hallway must be set to the same setting for the doors to open or close. The security doors have AC 19, 80 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Spiked Wall. The 25-foot high and 5-foot thick external wall of the prison is constructed of hard granite. Both sides of its top are lined with needle-thin and barbed iron spikes that point downward. It requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb the vertical surface of the wall on either side. However, it requires an additional successful **DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check to navigate over the deadly spikes. On a failed check, the spikes deal 11 (2d10) piercing damage, and the needles' barbs restrain the victim. As an action, the restrained creature can try to escape the spikes by succeeding on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check. As long as the creature is restrained, the spikes deal an additional 11 (2d10) piercing damage at the end of the creature's turn.

Scene

Two invisible stalker guards carry on the prison's day-to-day operations - transporting prisoners from the yards to cells or the interrogation room, dumping waste into the cesspit, and replenishing the inmates' meager food and drinking water. The imps, Rakpak and Lekmok, have been tasked with administrative affairs like taking notes on interrogations and processing prisoners. Rakpak is busy with filing, while Lekmok has been stationed on guard duty in the towers (area 14) in the form of a raven. A hell hound guards each yard as service for regular feedings of prisoners to the fiendish beasts. The Gloom Widow is not personally involved in the prison operations and is either torturing inmates to harvest tears or is busy cooking up a batch of dreamwisp candy in the warden's chambers.

A bored and unmotivated **despair giant** sits outside of the prison or sometimes lumbers around the facility. If it notices the characters, it immediately starts throwing rocks at them, which alerts the prison's denizens to external threats.

1. Gate Chokepoints

Background

The massive iron security gates of the facility are only accessible through the southern entry. The northern gate, used for mass transport or freight on the Material Plane, has collapsed on the Shadowrealm and is now totally covered by massive granite blocks. The chokepoints provide closed and well-defensible entry points into the facility.

Environment

A large iron knocker in the shape of a tear is welded to the massive iron door that serves as the prison's single entrance. In addition, arrow slits dot the two side walls of both rooms from where guards can shoot into the rooms from areas 2.

Scene

The two invisible stalker guards operate the levers from areas 2, defending the entry by shooting crossbows through the arrow slits. Only if commanded to do so by the Gloom Widow, will the guards first open the outer security door to allow entry, then close it, before opening the inner security door.

2. Guardrooms

Background

The guards' rooms serve as bunkers for the two invisible stalker guards of the prison. From here, they can oversee prisoner transports to and from cells. The main function of the rooms is defense and control of the opening and locking mechanisms of the security gates.

Environment

The rooms are sparse and almost identical. The walls to areas 1 and the outside in areas 2b feature crossbow slits, through which the guards can target ene-

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mies inside the gate chokepoints (areas 1). The rooms are open towards the prisoner transport corridors leading to the courtyards (areas 11), separated by thick iron bars that allow spears to be used against unruly prisoners in the walkways.

Levers. The southern guard rooms feature two sets of two levers in each room, while the northern transport entrance guard rooms feature two sets of two and three levers. All levers are set to closed (down) position but can be turned to open (up) (see Security Doors above for details).

Scene

If altered by the knocker, forced entry, or Lekmok in the tower, the two **invisible stalker** guards of the facility take to the guardrooms and defend the prison against intruders. They aim to entrap intruders in the chokepoint (areas 1) and shoot their crossbows at them. Both stalkers carry a key for the prison doors.

3. Processing Room

Background

This room is used to process prisoners and their belongings. Prisoners are stripped of their clothes and personal items, which are cataloged for the hag. They are then issued prisoner uniforms.

Environment

The bare room features a large table with several shallow open-top and empty wooden boxes on its surface.

Scene

If altered to intruders, Rakpak the imp comes to investigate from the filing room (area 5). The imp doesn't interfere but immediately goes to summon the Gloom Widow to deal with the situation.

4. Personal Items

Background

This large storage chamber serves as a depository of all the mundane personal belongings of the inmates and a storage space for prisoner uniforms that are issued to prisoners during processing.

Environment

Shelves from floor to ceiling line the walls of the northern side of the large storage chamber. The shelves hold a multitude of open-top wooden boxes that store the mundane possessions and clothes of the inmates. The southern corner of the room features a coat rack that holds a dozen prisoner uniforms - black-and-white striped rough-hewn tunics.

Treasure

If characters rummage through the boxes for at least 1 minute, they can uncover some items that were missed by Rakpak the imp: a small wooden statue of a horse with exquisite craftsmanship worth 12 gold pieces, a pair of varnished silver spectacles decorated with eagles worth 8 gold pieces, and a wooden reliquary housing a finger bone in a glass case and decorated with the symbol of the Order of the Eternal Light, which is an antique and a container for the relic of one of the King Priests of the Order from times long gone (worth 450 gold to the right buyer). The boxes also contain five sets of fine clothes that have been faded by the effects of the Shadowrealm (worth half price).

If characters succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check, they can notice that a scrimshaw pipe holds a tiny diamond in its bowl, hidden by a cover of half-burt tobacco. The gem is worth 150 gold pieces.

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5. Filing Room

Background

The Gloom Widow has tasked Rakpak the imp to oversee the processing of the inmates, a task that the hag loathes and deems more fitted to a lowly servitor.

Environment

The filing room holds a large table with a massive ledger, a quill of a raven feather, and an inkwell. The northern portion of the room houses filing cabinets with notes about all the inmates.

Scene

When processing prisoners, Rakpak (use the **imp** monster entry) sits on the table and writes the prisoners' vital details in the ledger, including age, race, date of entry, and notable features. The imp then creates a separate file for each prisoner, with notes from interrogations undertaken by the Gloom Widow, where the imp is usually present as a scribe. The imp looks forward to these torture sessions and is happy to serve in its role, rather than being stuck on tower guard duty like Lekmok. If alerted to sounds of combat, Rakpak will immediately turn invisible and try to find out the nature of the threat, then flee to alert the Gloom Widow.

6. Cesspit and Well

Background

This chamber houses a well that keeps the prisoners hydrated to a bare minimum, as well as a cesspit in the southern corner where waste is deposited.

Environment

The stench of waste fills the room, emanating from the cesspit in the corner. The well in the room is made of stone and covered by an iron grate with a single opening on its top that is only big enough for a small bucket to fit through or a tiny creature if the standard lock on the grill is. The water drawn from the well is stagnant and very unpleasant both to taste and smell. The bucket can be lowered by using a simple pulley on a horizontal wooden beam. Several empty buckets sit around the well.

7. General Storage

Background

This room is the general storage facility of the prison as well as its armory.

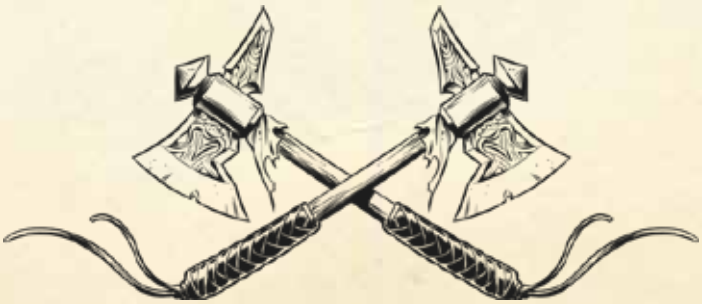
Environment

Various goods are stored here: bales of prisoner uniforms, columns of buckets stacked into each other, crates of hardtack, boxes of crossbow bolts, old cleaning tools, a weapon rack that holds 10 spears, and pegs on the walls with two heavy crossbows.

8. Interrogation Room

Background

The interrogation room is used to glean information from prisoners but mainly as a torture chamber where the Gloom Widow can live out its sadistic tendencies. The interrogations are meticulously documented by Rakpak the imp, who is most enthusiastic about these torture sessions to break up its humdrum tasks of processing prisoners. In addition, the hag collects the tears of the tortured for use as the main ingredient for dreamwisp candy.



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Environment

A bulky, well-crafted wooden interrogation chair sits in the center of the room, with iron latches that can restrain the hands, feet, and head of anyone sitting in the chair. The chair is generally set to a vertical, sitting setting but can also be lowered to a horizontal reclined setting by removing two pins on its back and moving the backrest towards the ground. Once restrained, it requires a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check to escape the bonds or **DC 20 Strength** ability check to break them.

A bucket filled with water sits behind the chair, used for waterboarding prisoners, while all types of torture equipment cover a large table on the western wall and shelves on the other walls in a haphazard manner - knives and scalpels of various shapes and sizes, pliers, hammers, pins, nails, vices, saws, and a range of other utensils used for torture. Some are crude, but many are precision instruments. The table also holds some pipettes and a rack of empty vials. A pile of rags lies in a puddle behind the chair.

Treasure

A set of tinker's tools can be assembled from the precision tools in the room.

9. Warden's Office

Background

The warden's office is unused by the current warden of the prison, the Gloom Widow, who is usually secluded in its chambers (area 10). Items of real value, which have been confiscated from the prisoners, are stored in this room.

Environment

This large office contains a massive wooden writing desk and an ornate chair on its side to the window, which is the only aperture of the prison proper towards the outside. The window has wooden shutters that open to the inside and thick iron bars within its frame. There is also a large wooden chest along the northern wall. The chest is unlocked but trapped.

Polymorphing Trap. If the correct password ("Hopelessness") isn't spoken, all creatures in a 10-foot radius are polymorphed into rats for one hour unless they succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom** saving throw. The trap can be detected with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. Once triggered, the trap doesn't reactivate.

Treasure

The chest contains 634 gold pieces, 869 silver pieces, and 5 platinum pieces. The chest also has an *ioun stone of sustenance* that was confiscated from one of the prisoners, as well as Sam "Weaver" Ebonhilt's belongings: two daggers decorated with eagles on their pommels, a *+1 smelting rapier,* a *+1 leather armor* in the Vordani style, a *potion of greater healing,* a *potion of hill giant strength,* and a Vordani ripper.

Vordani Ripper. This mechanical contraption can be secured onto one's arm, from shoulder to hand, balancing out the weapon's weight on the back of the wielder. At its end, it features two razor-sharp claws that are over one foot in length. When attacking, the suspensions, springs, and power-transmission cogs built into the mechanism cause the weapon to move effortlessly, snapping with devastating force.

Type	Damage	Weight	Properties
Martial Melee Weapon	2d8 slashing	8 lb.	Heavy, Special

Special: It takes an action to don the Vordani ripper, securing it to one's arm with straps.

10. Warden's Chamber

Background

The Gloom Widow keeps to this room, cooking up dreamwisp candy from the tears harvested during the torture sessions of the inmates.

Environment

The room is decrepit and in shambles. The remains of a bed frame are used as tinder for a small cooking

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pot with a small table alongside tools for cooking candy. The odor of sickly sweet-smelling herbs permeates the room. A totally ramshackle garderobe lies crumbled in a corner, and a tapestry hangs on a wall in tatters, depicting hordes of shadowy angels flying above a massive ziggurat at the center of Onadbyr.

Scene

The Gloom Widow (use the **night hag** monster entry) is engrossed in cooking up another batch of **dreamwisp candy** for Sabrael, the dark deva. It has also started creating a new *heartstone,* soaking a jet black gemstone in fresh blood. It rises from a hunched position over the fire if confronted by the characters and attempts to stay back and shoot them with its *blowgun of pain*. If pressed, the hag tries to escape to Onadbyr by using *plane shift*. The Gloom Widow will find shelter to create its replacement *heartstone* and will hunt down the characters in their dreams to steal their souls. The Gloom Widow can be used as a recurring villain, following the characters in their exploration of Aglarion and making their way to the Bleak Mire.

Gloom Widow

"Sorrows eat away your souls, mired paths hide your way, and loves lost haunt you in your dreams!"

The Gloom Widow cursing the characters before vanishing.

Treasure

The table holds 3 doses of dreamwisp candy that have already been prepared by the Gloom Widow, as well as a complete set of cook's utensils. A small pot also holds a large opal worth 100 gold pieces soaking in blood. The Gloom Widow carries few possessions on its person. Notable among them is a *blowgun of pain*.

Blowgun of Pain

Dreamwisp Candy. This small hard candy is brewed from sweet herbs and the tears of mortals. It is opaque and feels relatively light compared to its density. Any creature who ingests the sweetly bitter and salty candy must make a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned for one day. The poisoned creature hallucinates and experiences intense visions of grandeur. The candy is highly addictive and has severe withdrawal symptoms. A creature that consumes dreamwisp candy must make a new **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw at the end of each long rest. On a failed save the maximum hit points of the creature are halved. The addicted creature must succeed on a total of three saving throws to regain its hit point maximum and no longer be addicted to dreamwisp candy.

11. Yards

Background

The yards are used for daily bouts of exercise by the prisoners on the Material Plane, while on the Shadowrealm they are used for executions on the eastern

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yard and as an arrival point for Blister via a *teleportation circle* on the western yard.

Environment

The yards are open to the elements, muddy, and unkempt. The two yards are almost identical, except that gallows have been erected on the eastern yard, facing the warden's office window.

Scene

A single **hell hound** guards each yard. The Gloom Widow has commanded them to guard the cells and use deadly force in case of attempted break-out or break-ins. They obey the invisible stalker guards, who have learned some command words in Infernal.

12. Condemned Cell

Background

Prisoners on death row are housed in the condemned cell before their execution. Currently, the cell is occupied by Jasper Platinumhand, a traveling storyteller whose good cheer has rendered him immune to the effects of the Lament of the Dark Celestials. As a result, he has been sentenced to hang and is awaiting his execution, a day hence.

Environment

This cell is singular in extravagant furnishings compared to the prison's other cells. It features a rickety and worn but quite comfortable bed, a small writing desk with parchment and writing tools, a velvet armchair, and a small dining table with a plate and a goblet.

Scene

Jasper Platinumhand (use the **bandit captain** monster entry) lies sprawled on the bed, musing to himself about his imminent demise but maintaining his positive attitude and even chuckling at the irony of his fate. A greyish birthmark covers Jasper's left hand, and his cheek is marked with a relatively fresh scar that he claims was given to him by a ferocious sea monster (but in actuality, he cut himself shaving with a scimitar).

If freed, Jasper can aid the characters in their efforts to cheer the victims of the Lament of the Dark Celestials, granting advantage on Charisma (Performance) ability checks for this purpose.

Jasper Platinumhand

"Ho there, good folks! And a sunny day to you all! The Baron of the Multiverse is at your service."

A smiling Jasper Platinumhand, as he bows to the characters with a flourish.

13. Sam's Cell

Background

Sam "Weaver" Ebonhilt is languishing in his cell and reliving all the traumas of his young life when his parents were soul-drained by Tyke in front of his eyes. The deformed hag told the young child that she would keep his parents forever. Remembering one of her sister's past victims, Blister, in the form of a witchservant, has hunted down and kidnapped Sam and has deposited him into the care of the Gloom Widow. The hag has been subjecting him to various tortures, made more harrowing due to the mental traumas coming to the surface.

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Sam holds an important piece of the puzzle of the Midnight Curse. He saw and recognized the same symbol on the hand of the witchservant who kidnapped him and brought him to the Shadowrealm as worn by Tyke on a pendant - the sign of the Children of the Coven. He is unaware of the coven's doings, but he definitely knows there is a connection between the witchservant sect and a hag witch named Tyke, whom he can describe in great detail.

Environment

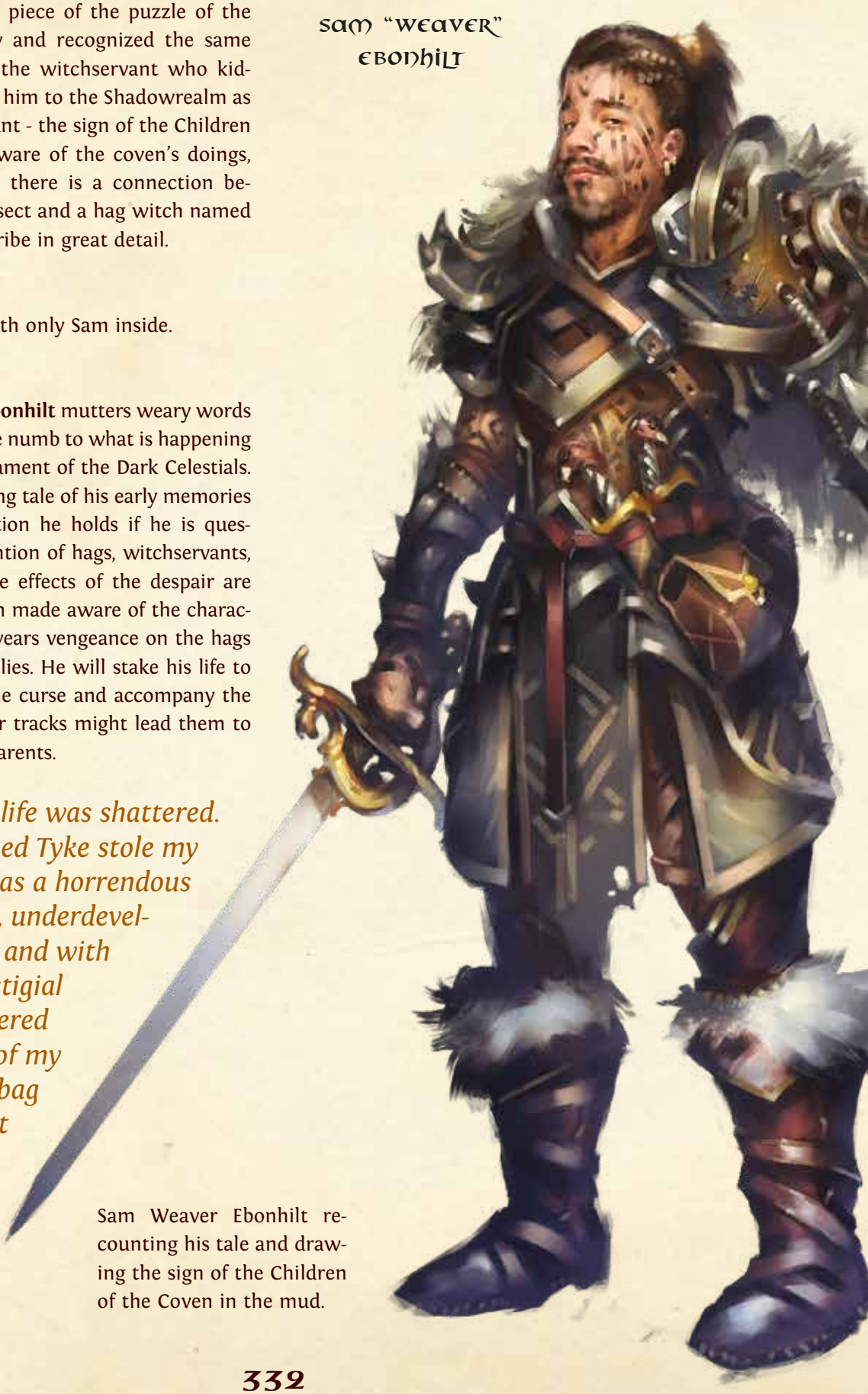
A standard single cell, with only Sam inside.

Scene

If freed, **Sam "Weaver" Ebonhilt** mutters weary words of thanks but is otherwise numb to what is happening around him due to the Lament of the Dark Celestials. Sam will relate the scarring tale of his early memories and the crucial information he holds if he is questioned or if he hears mention of hags, witchservants, cults, or curses. Once the effects of the despair are broken and if he has been made aware of the characters' motivations, Sam swears vengeance on the hags and their witchservant allies. He will stake his life to root out the causes of the curse and accompany the characters wherever their tracks might lead them to search for Tyke and his parents.

"I was 12 when my life was shattered. When the hag named Tyke stole my parents' souls. It was a horrendous deformed creature, underdeveloped and childlike, and with malformed and vestigial appendages. It hovered above the corpses of my parents, holding a bag and cackling that it would keep their souls forever. Then it vanished into thin air. And it bore this sign!"

SAM "WEAVER" EBONHILT



Sam Weaver Ebonhilt recounting his tale and drawing the sign of the Children of the Coven in the mud.

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Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they free Sam and learn what he knows about Tyke.

14. TOWERS

Background

Lekmok the imp has been assigned to guard duty on the towers for failing to notice the smuggling of an *ioun stone of sustenance* into the facility by one of the prisoners. The imp has assumed the form of a raven, and it hops around the towers, incredibly bored with this assigned task.

Environment

Double security doors block entry into the prison from the towers, which can be opened from the inside by using both levers in the main hallway. The parapets of the towers are crenelated. They are also both fortified with iron spikes like the outer wall of the prison.

Scene

As escape attempts are almost nonexistent, Lakmak (use **imp** monster entry) keeps itself busy by torturing bugs that it has collected from the courtyard. As a result, it is distracted, and it takes a successful **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to evade notice, even in plain sight. However, if characters get trapped by the spiked wall traps, and are restrained for more than two rounds, Lakmak will notice the intruders and alert the Gloom Widow by flying to the window of the warden's office (area 9).

EYRIE OF THE FABLED

Background

The Eyrie of the Fabled is a perfect place to negate the effects of the Lament of the Dark Celestials, due to its darkwood soundproofing, magnificent acoustics, and large auditorium that can hold hundreds of people. Once Sabrael has been defeated and the prisoners rescued from the Dungeon of Tears, the depressed crowd can be brought to the theater and pulled out of their melancholy. However, the Eyrie of the Fabled must first be cleared of the native inhabitants of the Shadowrealm.

The tragic consequences of a disastrous, and some say cursed, play entitled "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos" seeped through the planes from Onadbyr and have manifested on the Shadowrealm version of the theater.

Before it premiered over 30 years ago, the play was lauded to be the first magnum opus of the new theater director Syllatur Laudraphol, a young illusionist wizard of great renown. The entire city anticipated the performance, and even King Daerios Azennar was in attendance for the young director's debut. The tragedy revolved around a half-dragon princess from the Isles of Xantharos, who falls in love with a dwarven prince named Grunshank, brought as a slave to the Isles. After the princess rescues the prince, the pair flee the island on the ship of a jolly and flatulent pirate captain named Malform, only to be betrayed by the red half-dragon evil counselor of the princess

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Eyrie of the Fabled

1 tile = 5 feet

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named Turmokix. The ship is sunk and is swallowed by the waves as the princess sings the final song of the play.

The play was a dismal failure. The writing turned out to be horrible, the story flat, and the dialogue crass and out of place. Exacerbating the flop, the male lead Florion Deloiz forgot his lines in the final scene, and the voice of Cassandra Sheelamil, in the role of the princess, broke as she sang the final song. The play offended the King and the sensibilities of high-society, while also angering the nobles of House Monder, who claimed Prince Grunshank was cheaply modeled after their ancestral forefather Lord Gronjyph Monder. The king immediately canceled the play. In his shame, Syllatur Laudraphol took his own life. Spiteful and seeking someone to blame, the vengeful diva Cassandra Sheelamil poisoned Florion Deloiz. She was found out and sentenced to death for her crime.

The play itself has manifested as a magical effect on the stage of the theater, while the spirits of the theater director, lead male, and star diva have all risen in undeath - Syllatur Laudraphol as an illusionist shadow, Florion Deloiz as a silently wailing specter, and Cassandra Sheelamil as a weeping will-o'-wisp.

The characters can try to enact the play to end the haunting of the undead by finding the following components of the play:

- The screenplay of "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos" in area 7.
- Florion Deloiz's gestures in area 6.
- Cassandra Sheelamil's song the "Weeping Princess" from area 9a.
- The costumes from area 10.

Environment

Like its counterpart in the Material Plane, the Eyrie of the Fabled rises above the city from the lofty High District. Somewhat unique among the buildings in the Shadowrealm, the theater has not completely yielded to the corroding effects of the plane and is in relatively good condition - its walls and darkwood slats intact. The building is a squat, one-story 20-foot tall structure with a lavishly decorated gothic facade supported by tall marble columns. Ceilings in all rooms are 10 feet high, except for the auditorium and the stage (areas 4 and 5) where they rise to a height of 20 feet.

Main Gate. The gate is a (20 by 10 feet) heavy double wooden gate that has AC 15, 37 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It is ajar but can be barred from the inside with a wooden crossbeam that can't be picked, but it can be forced open with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

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Doors. Doors and double doors are made of wood, with bronze handles. The doors have AC 15, 15 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. There is no lock mechanism, however the handles can be jammed using thieves' tools. A jammed door can be forced open with a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Loading Gate. In the back of the theater, the loading gate is a large (20 by 10 feet) heavy wooden gate that has AC 17, 27 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The center of the gate is battered and the wooden crossbeam that would bar the gate from the inside is broken in half.

Windows. Windows open inwards and have six-part metal braces with a single layer of thick glass. The wings are held together by iron latches that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** check, or can be forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

1. Foyer

Environment

The main entry hall of the theater lies behind the front gates, featuring a wide space from which three sets of wood-carved stairs with ornate rails rise to the three closed doors that lead to the elevated auditorium space beyond. Two side corridors that slightly slope downwards from the foyer provide additional entrances to the seating areas. The foyer on the Material Plane has a lavish interior, however on the Shadowrealm it is just a colorless replica of itself. Faded and worn carpets, torn wallpaper, moldy velvet curtains, and cracked vases with desiccated plants are what remain of the decorations, giving an abandoned feel to the theater, as if the building itself was exhausted. Benches sit under the corridor windows, splintered and broken. A layer of dust, grime, and cobwebs has settled on all surfaces.

2. Cloak Room

Background

Upon arrival on the Material Plane, theater-goers could deposit their cloaks in the cloakroom in exchange for numbered tokens. On the Shadowrealm, it is unused and became lair of a cloaker that hunts for victims and hangs their clothes on the racks as lures.

Environment

A wooden counter separates the room from the foyer. Wooden tokens with numbers on one side and the double-masked symbol of the theater on the other can be found on the counter. The cloak racks are almost empty, with just a few faded and colorless garments hanging from them, however some are of excellent quality. One of the cloaks is unique - a quilt poncho with a multitude of patches on its front, each with the design of a specific item or creature.

Scene

A **cloaker** lurks amongst the cloaks, appearing as a dark leather cloak of fine craftsmanship. If any character ventures amongst the cloak racks, the cloaker attacks, trying to engulf a surprised target.

Treasure

The racks hold five fine cloaks (worth half price) and a magical pancho that is a *robe of useful items*.

3. Theater Bar

Background

The theater bar serves some of the best wines, liquors, and beer on tap in Onadbyr where visitors from

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high society can enjoy the tastiest refreshments before plays or during intermissions. The sour and bitter drinks of the Shadowrealm have lured a black pudding to the bar.

Environment

The room is in a dismal state - the bars, seating, and tables have bent and crumbled, while barrels holding various alcoholic beverages have split, their contents staining the floor in many places around the room.

Scene

A **black pudding** has been drawn to the room from the outside, soaking up the spilled spirits from the floor and enjoying their tingling effects. The pudding lurks under the bar and will move to engulf intruders if disturbed.

Treasure

The liquors and wines have turned bitter and stale, becoming undrinkable, except for a single bottle of Bitter Spirits, a malt liquor whose bitter notes have been enhanced by the effects of the Shadowrealm, turning it into an exquisite beverage worth 300 gold pieces.

4. Auditorium

Background

The vast auditorium lies behind closed doors. The dreadful **Hypnotic Tragedy** is continuously being played out in the theater itself, from fragments that have seeped through the planes and manifested as scenes to form a play. The theater has been claimed by Syllatur Laudraphol, the former magic-wielding director of the theater, who has risen as a shadow on the Shadowrealm after his play, "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos" tanked, leading to the director's eventual suicide. Syllatur Laudraphol is leading the play, enhancing the effect of the Hypnotic Tragedy. The shadow-mage is delighted and eager to fill the seats with fresh viewers and victims to its madness. Several victims have fallen prey to the Hypnotic Tragedy and have been drained by the shadow-mage. Their bodies sit in the seats, forever watching the performance, while their souls haunt the chamber as shadows.

Environment

The entire auditorium slopes from the foyer towards the raised stage. It can provide seating for 140 attendees in cushioned velvet seats that can be folded upwards. Darkwood panels cover the walls, decorated with plush curtains. The entire theater is covered by a *hallucinatory terrain* spell cast by Syllatur Laudraphol. The illusion shows the chamber in its intact state from the Material Plane, albeit lacking some color and its true vibrancy.

Under the illusion, the seats are worn and even missing in some places, and are partially covered by greying sheets in a few sections. The chamber is carpeted with a thick growth of mildew, which gives a sour odor to the space. Several corpses in various states of decay sit in a few of the seats, watching the illusionary performance.

Darkwood Soundproofing. The darkwood slats of the auditorium completely negate sounds from the outside, including the Lament of the Dark Celestials, which can not affect anyone inside area 4.

Hypnotic Tragedy. A tragedy is continuously unfolding, composed of fragments sliced together from various ages since the theater's existence, seeping through the fabric of the planes into the theater. The scenes are all forlorn and heart-rending. One is immediately hypnotized by the performance. Each creature that witnesses the play must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or suffer the effects of a *hypnotic pattern* spell and be forced to sit down and watch the performance. A new save can be made once a day. A victim that fails its saves for several days is subject to dehydration, sleeplessness and hunger, gaining a level of exhaustion every day after the first.

Scene

As soon as the auditorium doors are opened, a barrage of sights and sounds overwhelm the senses as a scene unfolds. The auditorium appears in its magnificence, the seats are full with audience members, with King Daerios Azennar in prime seating, and a play is being played out on the stage, drawing the eye to its scenes and entrancing the viewer. Any

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creature that steps into the room is affected by the Hypnotic Tragedy and can try to resist the urge to let go and surrender to the arts. Any creature who interacts with the hallucinatory terrain can attempt a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to disbelieve the illusion and see the auditorium in its dilapidated state.

Four **shadows,** victims of Syllatur Laudraphol, rise from under the covering sheets, drawn to drain the strength from the living who resist the effects of the play. Once a victim's Strength score is reduced to under 3, the shadows escort the helpless victim to a seat.

Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check recognize the ghostly nature of the disturbed spirits and know that they can be put to rest in some way. The character also realizes the agony of the spirits over their failed performance and knows that a well-enacted play of the "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos" would bring the undead peace, eliminating them. It takes a minimum of two characters to assume the two leading roles of the play. The characters can deliver the performance by succeeding on three consecutive **DC 18 Charisma (Performance)** skill checks. Characters must know either the dialogue, the tune of the "Weeping Princess", and Prince Grunshank's elaborate gestures even to attempt the performance. If at least one of these elements is missing, the characters have disadvantage on the checks. On the other hand, if the characters are wearing the correct costumes or if the right props are used, they have an advantage on the checks. On a success, the final sinking ship scene is enacted in perfect synchrony with the Hypnotic Tragedy, and the effect ends with all undead immediately banished from the theater.

5. Stage

Environment

The hallucinatory terrain cast by Syllatur Laudraphol extends to the stage, giving room for the Hypnotic Tragedy to play out and showing a stage rich with props and magical effects. If a character disbelieves the illusion spell, they can see the ramshackle remains of a stage and some props, partly obscured by the tattered remnants of the curtains. A small podium sits at center stage. The props are mostly wooden sheets in the form of rocks, giant mushrooms, trees, waves, and mountains. Three iron lines span the width of the stage 20 feet above it, from which the remains of the curtains and wooden cloud-shaped props hang. The ropes that once were used to move the curtains and the clouds have rotten and lie in heaps on the sides of the stage. The wooden planks that form the stage are dry and brittle in many places.

Scene

Syllatur Laudraphol, the shadow-mage, lurks backstage. The former director hides behind the tattered curtains and watches the play unfold, molding its illusions to fit the scenes. The shadow waits to see how the characters fare against the Hypnotic Tragedy and its shadows, then emerges from its hiding and starts directing them in a rage to take part in the performance. If characters start acting out the play, the shadow hovers in rapture and can be distracted as long as characters succeed on at least one Charisma (Performance) skill check per round (see area 4 for details). If the characters attack the shadow, it shrieks and unleashes its spells on the characters.

"Less emotion you bumbling oaf, and more grace! And enunciate your lines, by the harp of the Efficient Master! "Oh my heart! Let the gurgling depths rise and the galley of the Xantharosian princess Garilasia be gobbled up by the waves..."

Syllatur Laudraphol directing the characters in its tragic play.

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Syllatur Laudraphol will not leave the stage. If pressed, the shadow withdraws to the space under the stage through the floorboards.

6. Green Room

Background

The green room is the actors' lounge of the theater, where the theater's players or backstage visitors gather before and during performances. Florion Deloiz, the elven male lead of "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos", has risen as a specter after being poisoned by Cassandra Sheelamil, the play's star performer, as punishment for his dismal performance as the dwarven Prince Grunshank. The specter is haunted by its silence and not able to voice its lines, forever doomed to recite the play to itself.

Environment

The room lies in ruins, its ornate furniture - leather couches, dressers, rugs, table, chairs, and drink cabinet - ravaged by the effects of the Shadowrealm. Some costumes are strewn over the ground, stained by the spilled beverages from the drink cabinet and from the common table. A ripped and faded poster of Florion Deloiz and Cassandra Sheelamil, smiling and arm-in-arm, hangs on the wall, advertising "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos". Stairs lead upwards to the stage area.

Scene

Risen as a specter, **Florion Deloiz** haunts the Green Room. The undead spirit of the former actor hovers in the middle of the room, silently forming the lines and acting out the fateful tragedy while nervously glancing towards the stage. When characters enter the room, Florion Deloiz abruptly stops its recital, looking disoriented, then opens its mouth to shriek silently in anger for being disturbed before attacking the characters. Florion Deloiz doesn't leave the room. If characters withdraw from the room, the specter retreats to its madness and continues reciting its lines. If any character observes Florion Deloiz for 10 minutes, they can make a **DC 15 Intelligence** ability check to learn the gestures of the actor from the infamous sinking ship scene from "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos".

Florion Deloiz. Use the **specter** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Florion Deloiz has a Charisma score of 16.
- It has Performance +5.
- ***Aura of Silence.*** Florion Deloiz is surrounded by an aura of absolute silence that functions as a *silence* spell centered on Florion Deloiz. The aura can't be dispelled.

7. Director's Office

Background

The room's original function was to hold auditions, discuss scenes with the company, and manage the productions by the directors of the theater.

Environment

The small office of the theater director is also in a state of disrepair, with partially collapsed pieces of furniture spread around the room and decayed tapestries of famous plays on the walls. A faded booklet lies next to the writing-table.

Scene

The booklet is the screenplay for the play, the "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos". It includes the list of characters, a brief synopsis, and all dialogues, as well as the director's notes. The booklet is worn and crumpled, but the ship scene from the play is intact in its entirety. If any character studies the scene in the booklet for 1 interrupted hour, they can make a **DC 15 Intelligence** ability check or **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** skill check to learn it to learn the dialogues and action sequences.

8. Director's Chamber

Background

The private room of the theater director is used as an on-site bedroom in case of late work hours and night rehearsals.

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Environment

The large double bed, dresser and trunk in the room are relatively intact, except for the blanket that covers the bed and the exquisite rug on the floor, frayed and threadbare.

9. Dressing Rooms

Background

Each dressing room of the theater is also the personal space of an actor on the Material Plane. On the Shadowrealm, the rooms lie abandoned and disheveled.

Environment

The dressing rooms are almost identical, featuring small daybeds, chests of drawers, and make-up tables with large mirrors. Decorations vary slightly from room to room, manifesting as different personal items strewn about that have been imprinted on the room from their residents on the Material Plane.

9a. Cassandra Sheelamil

Background

This room was the dressing room of the theater's star, Cassandra Sheelamil. The play's tragedy and wickedness of the theater's diva have manifested here as a will-o'-wisp that haunts the room, singing the "Weeping Princess".

Environment

Cassandra Sheelamil's dressing room is almost identical to the others. The make-up table lies in ruins, its mirror shattered long ago. A sweetly wailing song can faintly be heard in the corridor beyond the closed door.

Scene

As soon as characters open the door, they hear the cacophonic tunes of the "Weeping Princess", sung by the invisible will-o'-wisp form of **Cassandra Sheelamil** that hovers at the center of the room. The will-o'-wisp will not attack characters but will engage in melee if attacked.

Cassandra Sheelamil. Use the **will-o'-wisp** monster entry the following modifications:

- Cassandra Sheelamil has a Charisma score of 19.
- It has Performance +7.
- ***Cacophonic Aura.*** Cassandra Sheelamil is surrounded by an aura of cacophonic sounds that warp the mind. Any target within 30 feet of Cassandra Sheelamil who hears its song is subject to an effect that functions as a *confusion* spell with a **DC 14 Wisdom** saving throw and a duration of 10 minutes.

If any character listens to the song for 10 minutes, they can make a **DC 15 Intelligence** ability check or **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** to learn it.

10. Costumes

Background

A shadow elemental has been drawn to the costume chamber, where it can enjoy the rustling of the clothes and the swirls of shadows it creates

Environment

Myriad costumes of all types and designs are scattered around in the room, lying in heaps, with mannequins sticking out from under them. Their colors are faded and most are just tattered rags where their original shape has been distorted. A costume list for the lead players of "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos" hangs on the walls. Characters can find all corresponding costumes and masks after spending 10 minutes collecting them. The costumes are for

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the gold half-dragon Princess Garilasia, the dwarven Prince Grunshank, Pirate Captain Malform, and the red half-dragon evil counselor Turmokix. A small table is set up as a sewing workspace with the remains of threads and needles on its surface.

Scene

The **shadow elemental** remains hidden in the shadows until a character enters the rooms. At this point, it rises from the costumes and attacks.

Shadow Elemental (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **air elemental** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The shadow elemental has Stealth +8.
- ***False Appearance.*** While the shadow elemental remains motionless in an area of shadow, it is indistinguishable from the shadows.
- ***Shadow Stealth.*** While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the hide action as a bonus action. Its Stealth bonus is also improved to +11.
- ***Sunlight Weakness.*** While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.
- ***Strength Drain.*** A creature damaged by the shadow elemental's slam attack has its Strength score reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long Rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow elemental rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

Any character can make a **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to assemble and don the right costumes and masks from the "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos", that is playing out on the scene in the auditorium.

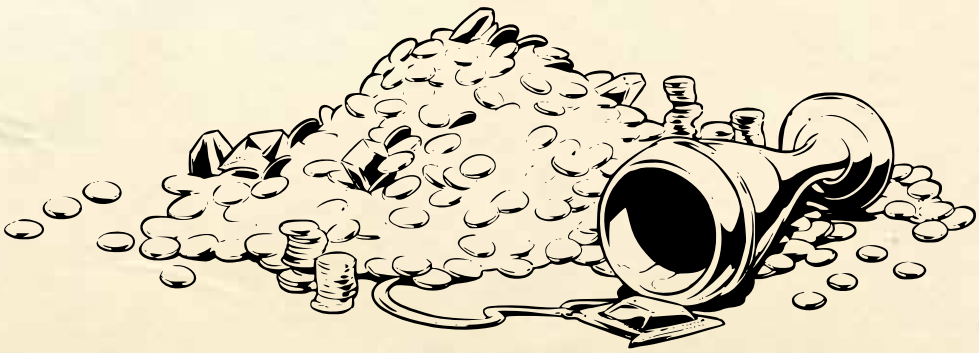
11. PROP ROOM

Background

This large room is used to store the many pieces of props used for theater performances. Diraru Dreadskull the minotaur fear rager has broken into the room from the back gate and has claimed the chamber as its lair. It has assembled the props here into a labyrinth that fills the entire room, which it guards with fury.

Environment

Props from "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos", crates, boxes, wagon, and other large items in the room compose walls that are 10 feet high, stacked so they form a 5-foot path that meanders across the room from all doors in a labyrinthine way. Ramps lead to the stage and into the prop room from the outside through the loading gate, which has been battered but stands intact. However, its broken crossbeam lies shattered and useless inside the gate. A small enclosure in the southeastern corner of the chamber has been fashioned into a small space where the minotaur hoards its treasures and can rest between hunting forays in the Shadowrealm city.



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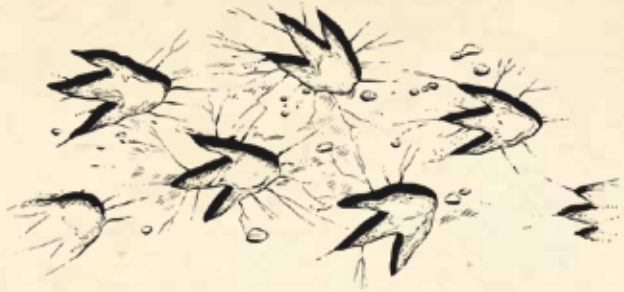

The path among the haphazard walls is quite cramped and the walls can easily tumble. Any character who takes an action other than a move action within the labyrinth must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid the falling debris. On a failed save, the character takes 10 (3d6) points or bludgeoning damage, becomes prone, and is restrained as it is covered by a barrage of falling objects. At the start of their turns, characters who are so restrained can make a **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb from under the rubble.

Scene

Diraru Dreadskull, the fear rager minotaur lairs in the paths of the labyrinth it has created for itself. If it hears any sounds of disturbance within his lair, it will hunt down intruders. It will attempt to intimidate and demoralize the characters while attacking in brute force. Diraru Dreadskull is reckless and quite single-minded. It will not hesitate to collapse the walls of its maze onto characters before attacking them from a superior position.

Diraru Dreadskull. Use the **minotaur** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Diraru Dreadskull has a Charisma score of 13.
- It has 92 hit points.
- ***Demoralizing Blow.*** Diraru Dreadskull can break the ferocity of those it attacks. As a bonus action, Diraru Dreadskull can choose a creature that it has dealt damage to with a melee weapon during its turn. If the creature can see or hear Diraru Dreadskull, it must succeed on a **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw or have a disadvantage on its melee attack rolls against Diraru Dreadskull until the end of its next turn.

Any character who studies the play and spends 10 minutes collecting props, can make a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to assemble right props for "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos", that is playing out on the scene in the auditorium.

Treasure

The small sleeping space of the minotaur has a collection of several valuables: 2 platinum pieces, 62 gold pieces, a silver knitting pin with engravings of flowers on its shaft worth 23 gold pieces, and an ivory snuffbox decorated with clouds worth 150 gold pieces.

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BREAKING THE LAMENT

Background

If the characters have secured the Eyrie of the Fabled by eliminating its threats, they can gather all of the Lament's victims into the theater's auditorium where the hall's darkwood soundproofing will suppress the effects of the song. The group must spend a full day within the auditorium for the energies of the crystal of the immortals to dissipate and for the Lament of the Dark Celestials to die down. However, the remaining despair giants in the city, and whatever hostile creatures remain, notice the streaks of shadow material disappearing above the theater and will rally their remaining forces in a desperate siege to reclaim the prisoners and keep feeding the crystal.

Environment

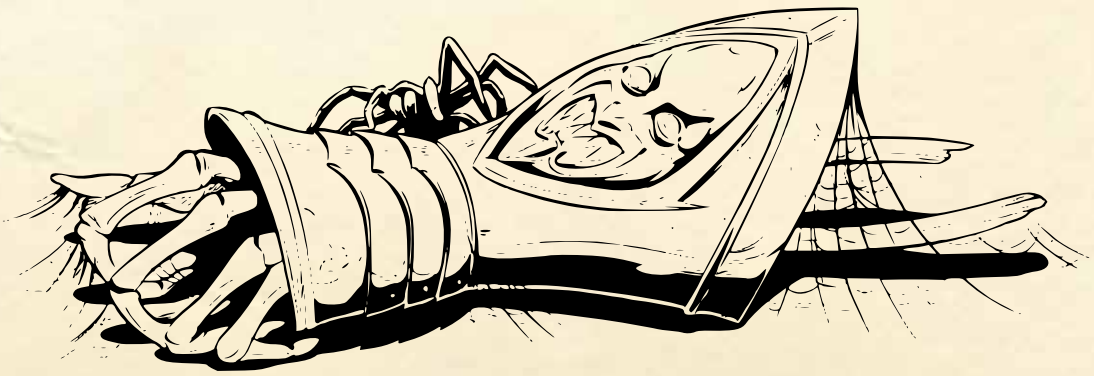
The auditorium of the Eyrie of the Fabled.

Scene

As the large group is assembled in the auditorium and the doors of the hall are shut, the wisps of shadowstuff suddenly cease to emanate from the victims of the Lament of the Dark Celestials and the gloom that has sat heavily on their shoulders is lifted. Their pallor is replaced by joy and excitement at their rescue but soon turns to worry and fear. Many are scared that they will be stranded on the Shadowrealm or attacked by some horrendous denizen of the plane. If characters don't suggest it, Sam 'Weaver' Ebonhilt or Samsadur will suggest locking the entrances and posting guards. It will be a long wait after all.

A few hours after the group secures the building, two **despair giants** and hostile forces assembled in the city from their faction assault the building. The giants split their forces, attacking both gates of the building by throwing boulders. Once they breach the building, all areas except for the auditorium and the stage are considered cramped spaces for the huge giants, who must squeeze into these smaller spaces and suffer the associated penalties.

The only spaces in the theater inaccessible to the giants are areas 6, 7 ,8, 9, 10, and the corridor connecting these areas. If the group flees to the back rooms, it takes 4 rounds for a single despair giant to break down a wall section, after which time it can reach the cowering victims within.



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Lair of the Eternal Hive

Background

Samsadur has visited the Shadowrealm on many occasions to mentor Zurafkira Shoemaker and uncover long-forgotten secrets and treasures or make deals with the powerful inhabitants of the plane.

Environment

Baendretarixus created its lair around a portal to the Material Plane at the bottom of an enormous, 100-foot deep crevasse, located 10 miles from the Shadowrealm version of Onadbyr. It is a barren environment with dry shrubs and a few dark, desiccated and warped trees. The crevasse gets deeper and wider from one end to the other with a slope that allows a fairly easy descent between the two steadily rising walls of rock that end in a wide-open space at its deepest end. The camps of the shadow elf hunters are spread out around the edge of the crevasse and consist of simple mobile tents made out of hides, surrounded by a few practical tools they use in their everyday lives. An enormous arch made out of massive stone blocks and engraved with magical runes stands at the bottom of the pit.

The Bow of the Night

Background

The rakshasa has struck a deal with Baendretarixus, and agreed to deliver the bodies of those who slew the sentient undead black dragon in exchange for the *bow of the night*. The sentience, which is made up by the death bugs inhabiting the dragon's body, enjoys its vessel but blames its slayers for not allowing it to grow larger while it was alive (see An Irrefusable Favor section for more background information on this event).

Scene

Samsadur guides the characters to the slope and raises a hand, signaling its peaceful intent to the shadow elves (use the **scout** monster entry with darkvision 120 ft.) guarding it. The elven hunters speak little. Instead, they nod for the party to descend, and follow Samsadur and the characters into the pit, while some stay on the edge of the crevasse.

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Baendretarixus, the Eternal Hive, makes a threatening display as it greets Samsadur in a hostile tone. The undead dragon roars while listening to the rakshasa's flattery as the fiend bows low and motions for the characters to do the same.

Samsadur cuts to the point as fast as possible and opens the chests, showing the two dead bodies inside. Baendretarixus roars in rage and demands the third body, that of Elcan the paladin. Samsadur excuses itself and tells the undead that it has been looking

"We are about to feed our body. Keep your story short this time, mortal!"

Baendretarixus greeting Samsadur and the characters.

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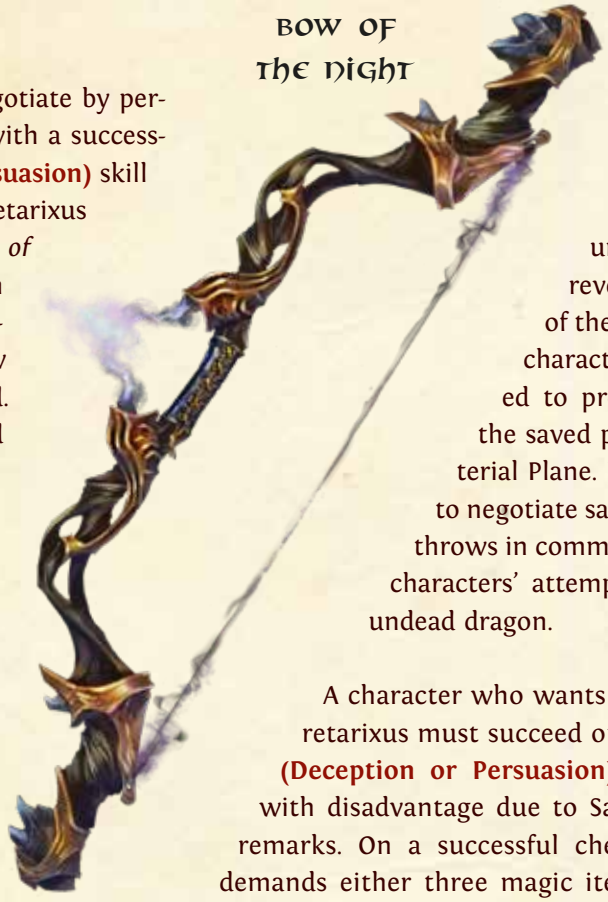
for Elcan for over a year but unfortunately could not find him, as he is not on the Material Plane. The fiend also threatens to take the two bodies away if the dragon will not give up the magic bow.

"One of my worst attributes is changing my mind too quickly."

Samsadur negotiating with Baendretarixus.

The characters can help Samsadur negotiate by persuading or deceiving Baendretarixus with a successful **DC 13 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check. On a successful check, Baendretarixus roars in rage and steps on the *bow of the night,* breaking it before flinging in front of Samsadur's feet with its tail. Attacks made with the broken magic bow have a disadvantage until it is repaired. The *bow of the night* can be repaired by a bower with the appropriate tools or a spell that repairs objects. Baendretarixus also asks Samsadur if it wants to pay to cross through its portal to get home, but the fiend swiftly refuses. Samsadur will happily sell the *bow of the night* to the characters for half of its original price. On a failed check Baendretarixus and its shadow elf hunters attack Samsadur and the characters and any of their allies present.

BOW OF THE NIGHT



Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can recover the *bow of the night* from Baendretarixus.

THE UMBRAL GATE

Background

The vampire drow conjurer, Faeryl Myrryn created The **Umbral Gate** to punish vampires and spawn servants by throwing them through the gate into the world of light.

Umbral Gate. A creature that passes through the Umbral Gate, a one-way portal to the Material Plane, appears on the other side of the portal that leads to a grove of elm trees, some 10 miles from the capital city of Onadbyr. The runes of the portal glow softly when it is daytime on the Material Plane.

Scene

Samsadur dislikes the fact that the undead dragon has revealed the purpose of the Umbral Gate to the characters because it wanted to profit from returning the saved prisoners to the Material Plane. If the characters try to negotiate safe passage, the fiend throws in comments that hinder the characters' attempts to convince the undead dragon.

A character who wants to convince Baendretarixus must succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check made with disadvantage due to Samsadur's opposing remarks. On a successful check, Baendretarixus demands either three magic items of at least uncommon rarity, or anything with a value of 3,000 gold pieces, or the lives of three humanoids for everyone's safe passage. If its demands are met, it lets the characters and their allies through the one-way Umbral Gate to the Material Plane. On a failed check, Baendretarixus and its shadow elf hunters attack Samsadur and the characters and any of their allies present.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they are able to pass through the Umbral Gate.

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GREED OVER REASON

Background

Baendretarixus has many draconic urges that still motivate its behaviour and one of those is its uncontrollable hoarding instinct.

Scene

The undead dragon catches a glimpse of one of the character's or ally's magic or valuable item and demands it be handed over in exchange for their lives. A character can make a **DC 18 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check depending on their approach to the situation. On a successful check, Baendretarixus backs off grudgingly but threatens to kill everyone if they meet again. On a failed check, the undead dragon and its shadow elven hunters attack the characters and their allies.

RETURNING TO A CURSED LAND

Background

Samsadur tries to benefit as much as possible from the events that take place in the Shadowrealm. It wants to return to the Material Plane with the *bow of the night* and to persuade Akuma, the oni, to join the leadership of the Golden Masks. However, what it wants the most is to get rid of the curse and the new regime of the queen in order to save and restore as much of the Golden Mask's operations as possible. Because of this drive, it is ready to support the characters and ally itself with anyone against the queen and her mother.

Through mind-reading and its vast network of spies, Samsadur has gathered enough information to understand that a yet unknown power player from the Feyrealm has brought the curse over Aglarion, probably King Dasmag, drawing on some reprehensible actions of King Waldrann Azennar. It believes firmly that King Waldrann's quest to the Feyrealm has something to do with the curse and is crucial to understanding it. Samsadur has not been able to visit the Feyrealm as it is blocked by the Matrons of Malice, of whom he has no knowledge. The fiend does not yet understand the actual goal of the scheme but it knows that it is a threat to the web of power it has built. The rakshasa knows of Master Eydan, as the only person still alive from those who accompanied King Waldrann Azennar to the Feyrealm on his quest to save Queen Lyrencia from King Dasmag. Samsadur wants to question the retired archmage, and use the information to end the Midnight Curse.

Scene

Samsadur openly tells all of his plans and information concerning the Midnight Curse. The fiend assures the characters of its support but still does not reveal its true identity and form.

Samsadur suggests that the characters visit the Arcane Tower and question Master Eydan about their quest and what he knows about the curse.

"It is in every sane person's interest to stop this magical catastrophe and those behind it. I have already allocated much of my resources to investigate and to intervene, and I will keep doing so, but I can't do it alone. Now it is your time to shine."

Samsadur presenting his case.

Even though Samsadur facilitates the investigation, the fiend insists on staying in Onadbyr and reasons that it has to manage the crisis within its organization or else it won't be able to help in the future. With the Shadowdome gone, the characters and their allies can leave the capital city and visit the Arcane Tower (see Kingdom of Aglarion location 50. and The Arcane Tower in Chapter 4).

Samsadur brings the characters back to the Material Plane and, if the Umbral Gate is not accessible, it ensures them that it will transfer all prisoners as its powers allow it.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can return the prisoners to the Material Plane.

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A Cursed Kingdom

Once the characters acquire the cursed *crown of the Azennars* and escape Onadbyr, they must travel the Kingdom of Aglarion in search of the vanished Arcane Tower, whence Master Eydan has retreated. Their travels will take them far and wide across the cursed realm during the hunt for the six *torcs of the tower,* which are needed to recall the Arcane Tower from the Astral Plane.

The Arcane Tower

The characters finally conjure the Arcane Tower, only to find it under siege by the Last Kiss, a flying ship commanded by Azaeresh the succubus pirate and its crew of incubi. Characters will find themselves within a time loop that repeats over and over again. The only way to reset the flow of time is to stop the archmage of the Arcane Tower, Master Zaophas, from casting *time stop* before the loop begins again.

Dreaming with the Archmage

With the demonic attack against the Arcane Tower repelled, characters can visit Master Eydan in his dreams to learn more information about the cause of the Midnight Curse and the way to travel to the Bleak Mire. However, first the dreamward protections have to be overcome even to reach the dreaming archmage, who is conversing with Father Lestor and the Tomelords of the Awakened Library in the Dreamrealm. Once the characters have met with Master Eydan, the exchange of information is cut short by the arrival of Krasnar and Maldreziret the Scaled Impostor. They fall onto the dreamers in forms magnified through their warped imaginations.

Stride of the Elders

After meeting Freall, learning the Druidic chant, and finding the location of the Stride of the Elders, an ancient druid challenge set by the Seven Flowers, characters must travel through the magical glades and face the ancient challenge themselves to reach the Hagtree.

The Hagtree

The only gateway to the Bleak Mire is the Hagtree. First, however, one must sacrifice a virtue to the hag souls within the tree to travel through the portal under its roots. Only then can they finally reach the Feyrealm.

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Chapter 4

The Vanished Tower

Characters should be level 9 when they start Chapter 4 of Crown of the Oathbreaker. The chapter contains only partial information on some of the locations. Please read the Kingdom of Aglarion section for background information on each location.

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A Cursed Kingdom

Background

The malicious scheming of the Matrons of Malice has grasped the Kingdom of Aglarion in its ugly vice. The Midnight Curse tortures the land and its inhabitants much akin to the natures of the midnight hags themselves, who crave the suffering of all creatures. As a result, the land has become a blight to all intelligent creatures that live on it, and with time, the curse will mercilessly eradicate them. See Appendix A: The Midnight Curse for more information on the effects and consequences of the curse on the Kingdom of Aglarion.

Torcs of the Tower

FINDING THE TORCS

Background

The characters have found out that Queen Aphinah and Dowager Queen Lyrencia are involved in bringing the Midnight Curse to the Kingdom of Aglarion. With the *crown of Aglarion* in their hands, they now have to find a way to remove the curse from the royal relic. From the journal of Lord Cyne Monder, the characters have learned the secrets of King Waldrann Azennar's tragic quest to the Feyrealm and about the only survivor who could know more, Master Eydan. The former archmage can be found at the Arcane Tower. However, when visiting the academy, the characters find it has completely vanished, with only its vaults still in place. In the vaults, they learn that they need to locate all six *torcs of the tower* to enact its ancient arcane safety protocol and recall it from the Astral Plane. Thus, they will need to search far and wide in the Kingdom of Aglarion, following those few clues that they can recover from the focus pedestal or the realm's inhabitants.

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Royal Accessory

The *mithral torc of the tower* is in the possession of one of the Queen Aphinah Azennars in the Royal Palace in Onadbyr. The characters might have retrieved it from her or might need to go back to the capital to do so if they haven't. If they haven't taken the torc, each time the characters see a *torc of the tower,* they can make a **DC 10 Intelligence** ability check to remember and recognize it being similar to Queen Aphinah's mithral torc. Returning to Onadbyr is a perilous task. The characters must infiltrate the Royal Palace again, avoiding the watchful eyes of the witchservant cultists and the werehellhound knights to recover the magic item.

The Lawgiver's Demise

The *adamantine torc of the tower* was inherited from her ancestors by a Red Cloak named Ha'aren Blackbone, a ranger from Harveston with a celestial sorcerer bloodline. Ha'aren Blackbone had recurring dreams about the deva loremaster Samkiel and its ziggurat prison and was obsessed with finding it. She eventually collected all three components that located and unveiled the ancient plane-shifting ziggurat to her. She found the first clue when she visited Cygnus at the Lodge of Wanderlust and became friends with the couatl, who also sought all knowledge related to the dark angels. Cygnus told Ha'aren Blackbone that one of the ancient ziggurats erected to honor the planetar generals of the Dark Star was called the Ziggurat of the New Moon and that this structure disappeared during the time of the dark angels. The Red Cloak did not yet know about the command phrase that forced the ziggurat to materialize or its location. The couatl offered Ha'aren Blackbone assistance in finding the ziggurat, but the Red Cloak declined Cygnus' aid and promised to return once her investigation came to fruition. She soon found out how Abulior Whitegate was expelled from the Arcane Tower for stealing an ancient parchment and visited the wizard. She cleverly recovered the dark celestial command phrase from the document in the wizard's possession that dated back to the time of the dark angels. The Lawgiver searched for almost a year to discover the location of Samkiel's prison, traveling all across Aglarion, but her efforts were in vain. Her harrowing investigation eventually took her to the Calhay Sea, where she entered the Ethereal Cloister and reached out to speak with Master Arlen's spirit. The wizard's spirit revealed the location of the ziggurat, and the excited Red Cloak took to the shore and hurried to investigate alone before regrouping with Cygnus. She arrived precisely at a new moon, which she took as a sign. She whispered the ancient celestial command phrase, and the ziggurat materialized in front of her. Ha'aren Blackbone could not resist entering the ancient building. She wanted to see if the ancient deva loremaster, Samkiel, advisor of the planetars, was indeed imprisoned inside. The Red Cloak entered the ziggurat and was consumed by the frightening emanation of the crystal of the immortals that served as the deva's prison. Her dead body lies in the Ziggurat of the New Moon, in front of the crystals at the feet of Samkiel, who continues its insane conversation with her decaying corpse.

House of the Entropists

The *silver torc of the tower* has been in the town of Gorso since it was bestowed upon Agratthys Vuelnor, a ranger of great renown. The Red Cloak trained his local successor, who then passed on the tradition to their chosen acolytes for generations. The latest Red Cloak who possessed the torc, Hastor Kaxtraver, was murdered in a fit of rage by Lord Ziademos Gorso shortly after the noble's pact with the forces of chaos. Lord Ziademos Gorso took the torc, unaware of its significance, and the mad lord wears it as a protective magic item, from which he is not willing to part.

Heroes of Virtue

Many generations after Jwarlea Jyle possessed it, the *iron torc of the tower* simply became lost. The Heroes of Virtue found it by accident in the lair of a monster, and currently, it is in the possession of Tasran Stonesplitter, the evoker wizard of the group. The Heroes of Virtue is a group of four villainous adventurers who originally banded together to form a mercenary

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company but soon realized that cheating frightened communities and individuals out of their gold pieces is more expedient and safer than actually solving their problems, especially during the Midnight Curse. They make money by releasing threats, mostly wild beasts and monsters, onto communities, then either take advance payment and disappear, or stop agitating the monsters that threaten their clients. The group's members are Tasran Stonesplitter, an evoker wizard, Sardius the Red Champion, a drunkard ogre barbarian, Uwalda de Santis Robarry, a resourceful rogue, and his brother, Zhorenim de Santis Robarry, a manipulative bard. The Heroes of Virtue can be found at the site of Almeiro Ronul's cache, which they are in the process of digging up.

Dwarves in Distress

The *stone torc of the tower* is held by Bakator the Onyx in Darkstone. It was in the possession of Odryk Nangrath, son of the aging Lord Arenbar Nangrath, who gave the torc to his son for protection on his rescue mission against the duergar vampires that kidnapped his love, Premil Ronul. Odryk Nangrath entered Darkstone and failed to rescue his beloved, becoming one of the favorite blood bags of Bakator and the other vampire spawn who regularly feed on the young noble dwarf. Lord Arenbar Nangrath and the embittered locals, based on their recent encounter with the Heroes of Virtue, are suspicious of the characters. The lord asks them to save the townsfolk and children from the hideous gargoyles before telling them about the cave where Odryk went many days ago to save his love. The elderly dwarven lord believes his son to be dead and wants proof of the character's good intentions before helping them recover the torc.

Lord "Dragonfriend" Arden

The *clay torc of the tower* is located in the Shrine of the Blind God, a cave system and former residence of Thelarmas, the bronze dragon, and its young offspring Selvaro. The torc was laid to rest with the mortal remains of Lord Arden, when the noble passed away in the dragon's company. However, the dragon's hoard was partly consumed by oozes, summoned by followers of the Blind God, a cult of ooze-worshipping clerics who invaded the lair and drove away the dragons. The clerics spent decades in their reclusive shrine before eventually sacrificing themselves to their ooze deity only to return as an incorporeal spirit that contains all of their souls. Selvaro waited and observed the cave while the cultists were active. The young dragon decided to reclaim its lair and investigate after seeing no movement from the cultists, but was instantly repelled and blinded by the gelatinous cube that guards its former lair. The young bronze dragon spends its days in human form at the bones of its father, the Bones of the Dragon as the locals call it, and advises all who seek its guidance to caution and foresight.

1. Onadyr

With the impact of the royal succession and the Midnight Curse, Onadyr shows a much less civilized and more oppressive face. Even with the Shadowdome gone, all life is slowly and painfully withering away just as initially planned by the Matrons of Malice. See Appendix A: The Midnight Curse for more details on the impact of the curse.

2. Tomb of the Constructor

(SECRET LOCATION)

The players have previously visited the tomb to find the *Master Key*. The tomb is a source of information on the Arcane Tower, the Ziggurat of the New Moon, and other magical lore.

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3. Ethereal Cloister

See the corresponding location entry in the Kingdom of Aglarion section.

Scene

A character who is able to spend one day underwater and listen to the whispers of the dead can slowly start to communicate with them. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Charisma** ability check can gain the trust of the spirits and communicate with them once per day as if it has cast the *commune* spell.

4. Willow Creek

Background

Willow Creek village is in the grip of Grorrarr, the owlbear druid, who falsely believes that the villagers have taken its young. In truth, the Heroes of Virtue stole its cubs and turned it against the village so they could pretend to save the villagers. Grorrarr has assembled a massive mat of vines from the village houses and has given it sentience, ordering it to encircle the village and catch the inhabitants in its deadly grip, allowing none to escape until its cubs are restored. Grorrarr visits the village every other day and demands the return of its cubs, pummeling the village with *sleet storm,* deadly *ice storm,* and *call lightning* spells infused with **hex lightning** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse), as the villagers are unable to comply. Grorrarr's cubs are actually held encaged in the northern hideout (Kingdom of Aglarion location 12.) of the Heroes of Virtue. The gang is secretly blackmailing the village to pay them to remove the threat that they have created.

Environment

As the farmers in Willow Creek are being held hostage by Grrorarr the Owlbear's magic, the fields around the village have become overgrown and are clearly not being tended. The entire village area is surrounded by a thick mat of entangled vines in a circle 20 feet outside the wooden walls of the village. Many of the houses bear the damage of hailstorms.

Scene

Characters can notice the thick vines that completely envelop the village from afar, as they seemingly writhe and twist around the walls and ground. The vines comprise the **encompassing creeper**, an awakened regenerative plant creature of gargantuan proportions that attacks any creature within its reach.

Encompassing Creeper (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **shambling mound** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The encompassing creeper is Gargantuan size.
- It cannot move.
- It has 208 hit points.
- ***False Appearance.*** While the encompassing creeper remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from normal vegetation.
- ***Regeneration.*** The encompassing creeper regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the encompassing creeper takes acid damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the encompassing creeper's next turn. The encompassing creeper dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

If characters can enter the village or hail the villagers from outside the surrounding vines, they are met by the representative of the village council, Rowan (use the **scout** monster entry) who shouts from the walls. Rowan is a reserved and resourceful human ranger who has failed to convince Grorrarr of the village's innocence. Rowan asks for aid in dealing with the owlbear druid that holds the village in its grip. She also mentions that the village council gave a pre-payment of 500 gold pieces to the Heroes of Virtue for taking on the challenge. She fears they have fallen to the owlbear's wrath, as they have not returned and the owlbear's attacks continue. Rowan doesn't not know that the Heroes were the ones that stole Grorrarr's young.

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ROWAN

"Your arrival is fortuitous but might not be enough against the wrath of Grorrarr the owlbear. The Heroes of Virtue have already accepted Willow Creek's gold for dealing with the mighty beast, but that was weeks ago and we are still under the terror of the owlbear's fell magics. We cannot offer you treasures, only a pledge that you will have the Creek's aid in return whenever you need it."

Rowan offering the village's commitment in return for aid.

5. GRORRARR'S LAIR

Background

The Heroes of Virtue have stolen Grorrarr's younglings and have hidden them away in their hideout to the north, then told the owlbear that the folks in Willow Creek took them. The evil group's devious plan and treacherous lies have driven Grorrarr to swiftly descend upon Willow Creek, encircling the village with a plant creature that the druid awakened to this purpose. Grorrarr waits for the villagers to return her cubs to the forest but visits Willow Creek every few days to enforce its demands.

Environment

Grorrarr makes its nest in a small cave in the thick of the King's Forest hidden by a permanent *hallucinatory terrain* spell, cast in ancient times by the Seven Flowers to conceal their sacred grove to make it look like an ordinary briar patch. Behind the illusion, a standing stone covered in Druidic runes stands in the center of the glade. Inside the cave, paw paintings depicting natural scenes adorned the walls.

Scene

On careful examination, characters can attempt a **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to disbelieve the illusion created by the *hallucinatory terrain* spell.

If found in its lair and if it hears anyone in the glade, **Grorrarr** will charge forth after casting a *barkskin* spell and drive away any intrusion. It sees enemies in everyone, especially humanoids who invade the forest to take its young. It will immediately think that the characters are responsible for the disappearance of its cubs and will demand their return. Unless characters bring the cubs or leave at once, Grorrarr attacks.

"Your mistake was coming back to my nest and not staying in your village as you should. Bring me my young at once or meet the wrath of the Eternal Mother!"

Grorrarr roaring at the characters.

If the characters return Grorrarr's cubs, it presents them with its magical amulet and offers its eternal aid if characters ever visit the King's Forest. It will not leave its lair and will continue to tend its cubs. Grorrarr usually stays clear of the Royal Hunting Lodge and does not know what has happened there.

Treasure

Grorrarr wears an *amulet of find the path*.

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Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they return Grorrarr's cubs.

6. Ronul's End

Background

Whoshinassh, the sea hag, and her mutated giant frogs have laid waste to the village of Ronul's End, settling an old score with the merfolk inhabitants of the village. A company of werehellhounds aided in the attack, offered by Blister for the task through an alliance between the two hags. A score of survivors has managed to flee the village to the north in a caravan, accompanied by the Heroes of Virtue, who were at the scene of the attack.

Environment

The village stands in ruins, with corpses littering the streets and all houses burnt to the ground, including the Ronul mansion formed out of the family's flagship, the Boundless Pearl, whose husk sits in the middle of the village.

Scene

Ten **mutated giant frogs** (see location 7.) are roaming the abandoned streets of the village, mostly near the shores of the North Bay. They are wild and hungry. The frogs will leap to attack intruders into the village and will swarm the characters.

If characters actively search for tracks, they must make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to uncover the trail of a caravan that leads north into the Talanar Hills, marking the escape of the few inhabitants who managed to flee the village to the Mossy Tower.

7. North Bay Lighthouse

Background

Whosshinassh, the sea hag, clashed with the Ronul family in the past century time and time again for killing its three sisters. Blister made a deal with the lesser hag to get revenge and cause terror and havoc in the North Bay. A few weeks ago, Whosshinassh assaulted and captured the lighthouse, massacred the lizardfolk family that lived there, and gained control of the giant frogs that were mutated to an even larger size by the Midnight Curse. The sea hag descended upon Ronul's End with her frogs, bent on revenge and devastation. After razing the town and driving off the survivors, it returned to the lighthouse, where it now keeps the dwindling supply of survivors as meat. The hag uses the lighthouse to lure ships close to the shore and assault them with the frogs.

The remaining survivors of Ronul's End are locked away in the reef-side cages that used to hold the giant frogs. One of the captives, Emina, the barmaid from the Mossy Plank Tavern in Ronul's End has overheard the Heroes of Virtue planning some kind of excavation in the northern part of the Talanar Hills.

Environment

A 70 feet tall lighthouse stands on top of an immense, rugged reef in the sea connected to the cliffs by a 100 feet long slippery rope bridge overgrown by moss. Below, strong currents break against the jagged reefs. Under the lighthouse, iron gratings cover multiple large cave entrances over the reef, with some of the grates open and creaking in the wind. Characters can hear intense croaking and wailing from that direction. Inside, the lighthouse has been transformed from a large lizardfolk living room into a butcher shop - salted humanoid parts tangled with seaweed hang from the ceiling everywhere, creating an intense stench.

A character must succeed on a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb down to the reef 60 feet below. On a failed check, the character falls and takes 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and lands prone on the jagged reefs. A character must succeed on a **DC 8 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check to cross the rope bridge or slip and fall, suffering the same fate as if they have fallen from the reef. The locked grates can be opened using thieves' tools if a character succeeds on a **DC 12 Dexterity** ability

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check or can be broken with a **DC 14 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

Whosshinassh the **sea hag** is happy to extend her food stockpile to her new domain with any intruders. The hag dispatches four **mutated giant frogs** to deal with threats. While the giant frogs engage, it makes use of *Horrific Appearance* followed by *Death Glare*. Whosshinassh seems very hungry and continuously licks its watery mouth and mumbles as if talking to someone.

Whosshinassh

"What is the taste of her calf, sister? Is that a fat belly? What spices do they eat that will flavor their meat?"

Whosshinassh musing to herself as characters enter her domain.

Mutated Giant Frog (CR 1, 200 XP). Use the **giant frog** monster entry with the following modifications:

- A mutated giant frog is Large and has a Strength score of 20.
- It has 54 hit points.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frog can't bite another target.
- ***Swallow.*** The mutated giant frog makes one bite attack against a medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the mutated giant frog, and it takes 10 (4d4) acid damage at the start of each of the mutated giant frog's turns. The mutated giant frog can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the mutated giant frog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.
- ***Standing Leap.*** The mutated giant frog's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 20 feet, with or without a running start.

Experience

Award the party 700 XP if they save the prisoners from their grisly fate.

8. Mossy Tower

Background

A small caravan of survivors from the massacre at Ronul's End, as well as the Heroes of Virtue, made their way to this watchtower. The leader of the group is Lord Dyzag Ronul, who hoped to receive aid from the soldiers stationed here who are led by Captain Brulax Mantenor. However, the soldiers have gotten greedy and decided to try to coerce Lord Ronul to reveal the location of Almeiro Ronul's fabled treasures. Unbeknownst to the soldiers, the Heroes of Virtue have already gleaned the location of the Ronul cache from Lord Ronul via enchantment spells on their way to the watchtower. The soldiers immediately imprisoned the villagers and tortured the unlucky souls to make the lord talk. The Heroes of Virtue struck a deal with the corrupt soldiers and departed north, leaving the villagers behind. Six of the soldiers from the company of twenty have been dispatched to the westernmost watchtower in the Talanar Hills and have not returned since. One of Lord Ronul's close aides, "Salty Eel" Sykes was able to escape the watchtower and now lurks in the vicinity, planning to rescue his liege.

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Captain
Brulax Mantenor

"Salty Eel" Sykes

Environment

The rolling Talanar Hills in this area is covered mainly by tall grass and large rock formations. The moss-covered stone watchtower stands 30 feet tall on the top of a hill and is surrounded by a partially crumbled, 10 feet tall stone wall, which is patched up in some places with wooden planks. Outside of the wall, several wagons and carts stand empty. Inside the wall, two dozen hungry villagers of all ages are locked into a large cage constructed of wooden planks with a couple of soldiers watching over them, and sounds of revelry can be heard from within the tower.

Scene

If the characters do not make efforts to hide their approach or if he notices them, "Salty Eel" Sykes (use the **bandit captain** monster entry) approaches the characters when they get within a mile of the tower. He tries to measure up the characters, and if they seem helpful he explains that his liege can pay a large sum if they rescue him. If they agree, he shows the section of the wall where he escaped. The wall section was poorly patched with a wooden plank that can be easily and silently removed. He is very concerned about initiating an all-out attack and asks the characters to formulate a rescue plan that would ensure the safety of everyone held hostage.

"My master will pay ye in hard gold if ye can help him, ye can be sure of that! The only thing is...he has to be alive to do so, eh?"

"Salty Eel" Sykes asking for help.

There are six corrupt Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) outside the watchtower, watching over the captives. Eight other Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) are inside, accompanying Captain Brulax Mantenor (use the **veteran** monster entry) and helping with the interrogations. Captain Brulax will use the lord and the other prisoners as shields.

"What do you know? They left for the farmhouse over a week ago. I bet you five Aphinahs that either the rain or a monster got them."

The Royal Swords on the courtyard lamenting to themselves on the fate of their comrades.

If the characters rescue the prisoners, Lord Dyzag Ronul (use **noble** monster entry) will be eternally grateful and will relate the attack on Ronul's End by a sea hag that led a troop of mutated giant frogs into the village from the sea, from the direction of the North Bay Lighthouse across the bay. He is also vexed by the betrayal o the Heroes of Virtue and is eager to secure the cache of his ancestor before the villains

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do. He pulls the characters and "Salty Eel" Sykes aside and explains that the Heroes of Virtue bent his mind to reveal the location of the cache before they departed to dig it up. The lord promises half of the cache to the characters if they can secure it from the Heroes of Virtue and return it to him. He also asks "Satly Eel" Sykes to accompany the characters as a guarantee. If characters agree, he draws them a treasure map marking the location of the buried (see location 11.) cache.

Lord Dyzag Ronul

"Almeiro's fabled treasures can recompense your aid in our time of greatest need and may yet save my ancestor's legacy. Half the cache is yours if you can secure it before those unvirtuous villains that call themselves heroes! I give my word as the patron of my House and may you do the same."

Lord Dyzag Ronul offering his terms.

The lord and the villagers remain in the watchtower until the characters return with the cache. At this point, the lord humbly begs the characters to clear Ronul's End and deal with the hag across the bay at the North Bay Lighthouse. He is willing to offer the other half of the cache to the characters if they have retaken the village and driven the hag away.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they save the prisoners from the clutches of the greedy soldiers. Award the party an additional 700 experience points if they clear the village of Ronul's End, deal with Whosshinassh the sea hag, and claim their reward from Lord Dyzag Ronul.

9. Well of Roaches

Background

The well of an abandoned farmhouse on the western reaches of the Talanar Hills has been infested by cockroach swarms that spread an unlikely curse of werecockroach lycanthropy as a result of the Midnight Curse. Six soldiers were dispatched to plunder the farms by their commander Captain Brulax Mantenor but the cockroach swarms killed two of their members and four succumbed to the curse of werecockroach lycanthropy.

Environment

The farmhouse was a simple, one-story longhouse now in ruins and just a husk of its former structure. Its walls and roof are partially collapsed, its doors and windows broken, and rubble covers the floor. The interior of the building counts as difficult terrain. The deep well is 20 feet from the ruined building, with its hatch open and the skeletons of two Royal Swords lying next to it.

Scene

When characters approach the well, four **lycanthropic cockroach swarms** erupt from inside and attack the characters.

Lycanthropic Cockroach Swarm (CR 1, 200 XP). Use the **swarm of insects** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The lycanthropic cockroach swarm's bite spreads **flesh rot** disease. A creature bitten by the swarm must make a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or become affected as if targeted by the flesh rot disease of a *contagion* spell.

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- Its bites also spread werecockroach lycanthropy. If a target that is bitten is a humanoid, it must succeed on **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or be cursed with werecockroach lycanthropy.

The four **werecockroach** soldiers hiding in the building are alerted to the characters and will join the fray from stealth in their hybrid forms.

Werecockroach. Use the **wererat** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The werecockroach has a climb speed of 30 ft.
- It is immune to disease.
- It has AC 16 (chain shirt, shield)
- It has a Strength score of 15.
- ***Shapechanger.*** The werecockroach can use its action to polymorph into a cockroach-humanoid hybrid or into a giant cockroach (use the giant wolf spider monster entry, but the giant cockroach lacks the *Web Sense* and *Web Walker* abilities and does not deal poison damage), or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form.
- ***Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).*** The werecockroach makes two attacks: one with its melee weapon and one with its bite attack.
- ***Spear (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only).*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.
- ***Bite (Giant Cockroach or Hybrid Form Only).*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or be cursed with werecockroach lycanthropy.

10. Monastery of Past Lives

Background

The monks of the Monastery of Past Lives were confidantes of House Karramosa and knew about the origins of the xorn under their home. Most of them drowned in the lake when they tried to flee the area and have returned as water ghouls, attacking every living soul within and around the lake.

Environment

A sizable damaged rowing boat, able to fit eight medium creatures, has been washed ashore on the southern shore of the pond.

The Monastery of Past Lives sits on a small island at the center of Talanar's Pond. It is in a hastily abandoned state, stripped of valuables and anything of use.

A secret door within a pantry leads to a staircase that descends 150 feet, deep into the ground, leading to an earth node. The node is composed of natural caves that sparkle with minuscule gemstones of various colors. The whole cave vibrates with energy, and the gems slowly pulsate with light in all colors of the spectrum.

Scene

If characters repair the boat to row across to the island or otherwise disturb the waters, eight **water ghouls** rise from the pond to attack them and try to pull them into the water to drown them. The ghouls coordinate their ambush and help one another to provide advantage to those who attack.

Water Ghoul. Use the **ghoul** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The water ghoul has a swim speed of 20 ft.
- It is immune to cold damage.

Characters who actively search the premises of the monastery can uncover the signs of a secret door behind a storage shelf if they make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The earth node under the monastery is the lair of **Luriana Karramosa,** who has transformed into a large xorn decades ago. The noble has gone completely insane in her transformation and will attack everyone who ventures into the node.

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Luriana Karramosa (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **xorn** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Luriana Karramosa is Large size.
- Its Strength score is 21.
- It has 91 hit points.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) piercing damage.
- ***Claw.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Treasure

Various gemstones can be harvested by a character proficient in smith's, mason's, or similar tools. A total value of 720 gold pieces can be collected from various gemstones and crystals over an hour's work.

11. Cache of Almeiro Ronul

(SECRET LOCATION)

Background

The Heroes of Virtue have secured the location of Almeiro's fabled cache and are currently in the process of digging it up. Sardius the Red Champion is digging the hole, Zhorenim de Santis Robarry kills time by practicing his whistling techniques, Tasran Stonesplitter is engaged in studying his spellbook, while Uwalda de Santis Robarry remains hidden and on watch at the top of one of the boulders by the site.

Environment

The secret treasure is buried 40 steps north from a sycamore tree that stands between two jagged boulders in the sloping hillside. A campsite is set up around a large hole in the ground that is being dug out by a large lumbering figure in red armor, while another looks on from the edge of the hole and whistles a tune, and two other figures are seated by the campsite, one playing with a dagger, the other studying a book.

Scene

Unless characters approach in stealth and succeed on a **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check, Uwalda de Santis Robarry notices them and alerts his companions, who prepare for the character's arrival. The group will first try to drive the characters off, and if the matter of treasures is raised, the Heroes of Virtue will defend their claim.

Sardius the Red Champion

Sardius the Red Champion (use the **ogre** monster with plate armor and AC 18 and wielding a large magical greataxe that deals 17 (2d12 + 4) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) lightning damage) will engage the characters in raging melee with his magic greataxe.

Uwalda de Santis Robarry

Uwalda de Santis Robarry (use the **spy** monster entry with 42 hit points) attacks from stealth or from Sardius' side.

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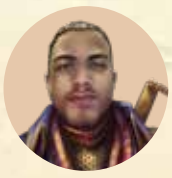
ZHORENIM DE SANTIS ROBARRY

Zhorenim de Santis Robarry (use the **minstrel of the college** monster entry with 27 hit points) will support his brother with his spells and ranged attacks.

TASRAN STONESPLITTER

Tasran Stonesplitter (use the **mage** monster entry) will hang back and rely on his damaging spells. The wizard uses the *iron torc of the tower* to defend himself.



"We are not in the mood to share! Get lost or we will fill this hole with your dead bodies!"

Zhorenim de Santis Robarry shouting at the characters at the top of his lungs.

If captured and interrogated, characters must succeed on a **DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation)** skill check to get the Heroes of Virtue to reveal the location of their secret hideout and the kidnapped owlbear cubs (see location 12.) The shifty villains will still look to make deals to save their skins and will only disclose the information in exchange for a payment of 500 gold pieces per member of their group, as well as safe passage. Naturally, the Heroes of Virtue will grasp at every opportunity to double-cross the characters and advance their own treacherous goals.

Almeiro Ronul's treasure is buried some 15 feet below ground and is hidden in a giant living clam in hibernation that is about 2 feet in diameter. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check knows that the clam would enter a euphoric state and open if a large amount of salt was applied to it. Otherwise, it requires a **DC 20 Strength** ability check to force it open. When forced in such a way, or if attacked, the giant clam releases a 15-foot cone of oily acid spray that deals 7 (2d6) acid damage per round for 10 rounds or until washed off by at least half gallon of any type of liquid. A character in the area of the acid spray can make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw to reduce the damage to 3 (1d6) per round. The clam has AC 17, 24 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage.

Treasure

Tasran Stoneplitter wears the *iron torc of the tower* on his wrist. Almeiro Ronul's cache consists of a small golden tobacco box worth 310 gold pieces, a bejeweled spyglass made out of ivory worth 670 gold pieces, a large number of pearls of various sizes worth a total of 3,500 gold pieces, and an *eyepatch of charming* (that functions as an *eyes of charming*).

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they recover Almeiro Ronul's cache and an additional 700 experience points for recovering the *iron torc of the tower*.

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12. Abandoned Lodge

Background

The Heroes of Virtue have captured the younglings of Grorrarr the owlbear druid from the King's Forest and keep them here in their secret vault. The Heroes of Virtue are usually on the road, undertaking their schemes and evil deeds. A couple of their henchmen guard the younglings in their absence, but they have no idea about the cache under the building.

Environment

A small mountain lodge constructed of stone blocks stands on a hill, a short walk from a crumbling watchtower. Smoke rises from its chimney, and sounds of raucous behaviour can be heard from within. Inside, the cabin is sparsely furnished. A cage with two owlbear cubs sits in a corner with a bag of dried meat next to it. The place smells of animal fur and sweat.

Scene

The Heroes of Virtue have hired four thugs (use the **bandit** monster entry), Gilas Ghurt, Salis All-Smiles, Borto the Fist, and Falvor Stickyhands, to look after the owlbear cubs until they return. The four bandits are usually engaged in drinking and playing games of dice that often lead to violent outbursts. As a result, the characters gain advantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks when approaching the building. The bandits only fight half-heartedly and surrender immediately if one of them takes any damage.

The secret vault of the Heroes of Virtue is well-hidden and well-defended. Characters must search the room and succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to find the hidden hinges on the wooden planks covering the floor in one of the corners of the cabin. The hatch is also trapped with a poisoned blade that slices the fingers of anyone who opens it without first pressing it down three times. Characters can notice the blade under the planks with a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check and may attempt a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to trace the wiring connected to the blade, followed by a **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check using thieves' tools to cut the wires and disable the trap. If the trap is not disabled, the razor-sharp blade springs out and deals 22 (4d10) slashing damage to the character that opened the hatch. The character must also make a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw or gain the poisoned condition. While poisoned, the character feels nauseated and has disadvantage on all saving throws for one hour.

The hatch leads to a steep, 20 feet long staircase dug into the ground. Tasran Stoneplitter has placed a *glyph of warding* spell at the bottom of the stairs, which triggers a *confusion* spell (**DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw) if anyone other than the Heroes of Virtue approaches the bottom of the stairs. Characters can find the glyph with a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

The stairs open to a small cellar, where piles of valuables and several small chests take up the entire space. An additional trap has been placed among the treasures, in a small container filled with **burnt othur fumes**. The container is connected by razor-thin wires to the pieces of treasure and their containers and is set to open and release the fumes if they are disturbed. Characters can notice the wires under the treasure with a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check and may attempt a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to trace the wiring, followed by a **DC 17 Dexterity** ability check using thieves' tools to cut the wires and disable the trap. Additionally, every item, storage container, and coin has been treated with **crawler mucus** poison. Characters can notice the thin layer of mucus on the items with a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. If a character touches any of the valuables with bare hands, they are subjected to the poison.

Treasure

The treasure of the Heroes of Virtue is made up of a sack of 512 silver pieces, three small chests filled with a total of 2,977 gold pieces, a small box that contains 13 platinum bars, a pouch filled with various small gems worth a total of 550 gold pieces, and a beautifully decorated wooden box inlaid with silver worth 50 gold pieces that holds six *potions of greater healing*.

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13. Royal Hunting Lodge

Background

Garandis Truefort, the leader of the clerics entombed below the Hunting Lodge by the Order of the Eternal Light has risen as a wraith and massacred the residents of the lodge, who now roam the building as specters. The wraith has claimed the lodge as its own and kills all living beings who seek shelter within the building.

Environment

The forest trail that leads to the Royal Hunting Lodge ends at a high fence with guard posts at the gate to a fortified compound. The guard posts are empty, as is the compound and the lodge itself. The whole area is eerily silent, only pierced by the droplets of rain on the foliage. The fence can be climbed with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Inside the compound, the doors of the lodge hang ajar. The two-story hunting lodge is a lavish affair, decorated with trophies and hides of all manner of beasts and monstrosities. The bodies of several servants, hunters, and travelers lie decaying in the grand dining hall of the lodge.

Scene

Garandis Truefort haunts the central dining hall of the lodge. The ex-cleric is hesitant to leave the lodge and is biding its time to emerge from the building and explore a land it has not seen for a millennium. It gathers information about Aglarion before slaying its victims. Seven **specters** emerge from the walls at Garandis Truefort's command to underpin the threat that it poses. When it has gleaned enough information, it becomes bored with the characters and attacks.

Garandis Truefort. Use the **wraith** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Garandis Truefort doesn't have *Sunlight Sensitivity*.
- It is surrounded by a permanent *fire shield* spell effect that deals 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

"Why are you not wearing the insignia of the Order? When did you perform your last holy sacrifice to the Eternal Light?"

Garandis Truefort interrogating the characters in an ancient dialect.

Treasure

If the characters search the building for at least 10 minutes, they can uncover a few items of value, including a carving knife fashioned from the antlers of a stag worth 10 gold pieces, an elaborate wooden vase with inscriptions in druidic language worth 20 gold pieces, a cigar cutter inlaid with diamonds worth 250 gold pieces, and two *scrolls of heroes feast*.

14. Thick of the Woods

Background

Since the Midnight Curse has taken hold, a magical effect makes it extremely hard to find one's way through the woods - the illusion makes people believe they are traveling on the road, but instead, they are going around in circles, and an illusionary road leads them deep into the forest. Only expert survival skills or strong magic will allow creatures to progress along the road.

Environment

The Green Road that crosses to Nangrath between the King's Forest and the Thornwoods is soaked and covered with puddles, tree branches arching over the meandering road.

Scene

The Midnight Curse has enchanted and hidden the Green Road behind a veil of illusionary terrain, where the woods are the thickest. The effect is similar to a *mirage arcane* spell. The illusionary but seemingly real road takes the traveler deep into the King's Forest and continues to meander forever in the hex on the eastern side of the road. Characters might get trapped on the road forever and not realize that they are traveling in circles within the woods if they fail

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on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check. On a success, the character can discern their relative location in the forest and return to the right path by stepping off the road into the actual forest. A *find the path* spell also ends the effect for the character.

15. NANGRATH

Outside the Walls

Background

The plight of Nangrath is doubled. On the one hand, the region is the target of constant attacks by gargoyles from Fort Blackbell (location 17.) who kidnap victims by snatching them into the air with nets. On the other hand, it is mysteriously raided for valuables and prisoners at night by a threat unknown to the villagers. These night attacks are orchestrated by Bakator the Onyx and its duergar vampire spawn brethren from the mining post of Darkstone (location 18.). The defenses of the fortified village are inadequate against the flying monsters and the vampires, who come at night, climbing over the walls under cover of darkness and invisibility. So far, over a hundred citizens have been taken by the two forces. As a result, the villagers are in terror, suspicious of everyone, shuttered inside, and the majority would leave the settlement as soon as the cursed rains subside. The aging dwarf leader of the village, Lord Arenbar Nangrath, is helpless against the double threat. He is in grief over the disappearance of his younger son Yarik, who went to investigate the nighttime kidnappings. And soon afterward, his elder son Odryk returned home from Onadbyr in the company of Premil Ronul, who was soon also kidnapped by the vampires. Odryk gathered a force of soldiers, adamant about rescuing his lover, and Lord Arenbar Nangrath gave his son the *stone torc of the tower* as protection. While eager to send another force after his sons, the lord cannot spare more soldiers and is resigned to losing his heirs, only daring to hope that they will return, unaware of the nature of the vampire threat. He is more concerned with the more tangible assaults of the gargoyles and the numerous prisoners they have kidnapped from the village. He distrusts adventurers, especially after news of the extortionist tactics of the Heroes of Virtue from the south. He will not reveal any information about Odryk or the *stone torc of the tower* before the characters mount a rescue effort to Fort Blackbell, especially for the children recently taken by the gargoyles.

Environment

Nangrath has seen better days. The fortified village was built out of well-crafted stones, in the dwarven style. Most buildings are sturdy and have withstood the elements well over the millennia since their construction. Some houses are empty and abandoned, and a large part of the old stone wall has been taken apart and used as a resource for repairing Nangrath Bastion, which rises over the circular village.

Scene

As the characters arrive at Nangrath, they notice a dwarf trying to lead a baying mule towards the gap in the village wall. Brungor (use the **commoner** monster entry) has been caught outside of the walls, and four **Fort Blackbell gargoyles** - Drox, Ptang, Halja, and Wirkol - from Fort Blackbell have marked him as easy prey. The gargoyles are 200 feet from Brungor and 100 feet from the characters as they fly 15 feet above ground towards the dwarf, who is shouting for help as he notices the characters. The gargoyles will easily subdue Brungor and snatch him up in their nets unless the characters intervene. The monsters will choose burlier, stronger targets as victims and try to kidnap characters rather than kill them. If reduced to half their hit points, the gargoyles will fly away towards Fort Blackbell.

Fort Blackbell gargoyle. Use the **gargoyle** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Lance.*** *Martial Melee Weapon:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage.
- ***Net.*** *Martial Ranged Weapon:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one target.
- It wears a **bloodstain lilac wreath** around its neck (see area 2 in location 17.).

After the characters have dealt with the gargoyle raiding party and saved Brungor, the dwarf introduc-

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es himself and hurriedly leads the characters to the gap in the wall, where four **guards** arrive hastily. At Brungor's insistence, they show the characters to the central keep of the village under armed escort. Brungor hurriedly excuses himself and runs home.

"Thanks be to ye! I hopes ye may beseech Lord Arenbar to grant ye safe haven. Ye will need it, and best ye stay indoors! It be a double plague on Nangrath, from the air and at night."

Brungor stuttering as he hurries home from the keep.

Council with Lord Arenbar Nangrath

Scene

The keep's gates are locked from inside and are soon opened to the characters, where an additional four **guards** lead them to a council chamber decorated with dwarven heirlooms and antique furniture. The wizened Lord Arenbar Nangrath (use the **veteran** monster entry) shuffles in after a few minutes, looking worn and pale. The Lord is accompanied by **Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer,** the somewhat shabby-looking commander of the Nangrath soldiers, a battle-hardened dwarf in armor with a half-smoked cigar in his mouth. Lord Arenbar Nangrath is engrossed in the problems faced by the village and looks with distrust on all outside influences, like the characters. At first, Lord Arenbar will tersely ask the characters to introduce themselves and their reason for visiting Nangrath. If they mention the torcs of the tower, the Lord withdraws even further into himself and will not share any information about the torc or his son Odryk. He explains that the village is plagued by the constant attacks of the gargoyles from Fort Blackbell and strange disappearances at night that are not surely connected to the flying raids of the gargoyles. The characters can provide him with an easy solution to the first, more concrete problem. He will keep the information about Odryk and the torc as leverage against the characters until they assist the village.

CAPTAIN ICK FORGE-N-HAMMER

"We can't spare any more soldiers on deadly errands, my Lord. We must do with what we have as always, and do we will! Let my back break and beard fall out if we don't!."

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer encouraging the aging Lord.

LORD ARENBAR NANGRATH

"It pains me to force your hands, but I will not take you upon mere words. You must first aid Nangrath against the gargoyle menace that has worn our ranks thin, and only after you have proven yourselves reliable, will I reveal what you seek."

Lord Arenbar Nangrath setting an ultimatum when characters first meet him.

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Once the characters defeat the gargoyles at Fort Blackbell and return with the survivors, Lord Arenbar will share the details regarding the disappearances of his son Yarik and Premil Ronul, as well as Odryk's excursion with a force of soldiers, wearing the *stone torc of the tower*. He shares his suspicions that the threat originates in the north, probably from the caverns under the Vordan Mountains that were dwarven mining sites in the times of his forebears. He fears some dark force ascended from the deeper caverns of the mountains. He will gladly offer directions to mining posts, including Darkstone, and promises the torc to the characters as payment if they can find out the nature of the threat and recover those who have disappeared.

"I can only hope that you will find Yarik and Odryk, if the Inevitable has not yet claimed their souls. But beware the dark passages. Our kin have long abandoned them to the hazards of the deeper caverns. If you can deal with them, and reclaim the torc, it is yours to keep."

Lord Arenbar Nangrath sharing his knowledge of the mines around Darkstone after the characters have defeated the gargoyles.

Once characters have defeated Bakator the Onyx and the vampire spawns, have collected Yarik's body, and have recovered the *stone torc of the tower* from Bakator, Lord Arenbar Nangrath keeps his word. He is eternally grateful for the characters' heroic exploits. He gives the torc to them as promised, along with a favor that they can claim in the future.

"Nangrath thanks you for your deeds that have been forged in steel and stone. It is only fitting that I bestow the stone torc of the tower to you, as a symbol of your steadfastness and the favor that our town owes you. I pledge our hands to you. Raise the torc, when you will, and Nangrath shall stand with you!"

Lord Arenbar Nangrath pledges the aid of the village to the characters after they have dealt with both the gargoyles and the vampire spawn.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they rescue the prisoners from Fort Blackbell and 700 experience points if they rescue Odryk and recover the *stone torc of the tower* from Darkstone.

16. Fort Stormbreaker

Background

The two Vordani families stationed at the ruins of Fort Stormbreaker in large tent dwellings have been hard-hit by the effects of the Midnight Curse. They have sent a few family members north across the mountains, some of them have been taken by Bakator and the vampire spawns to Darkstone, and now only a lone watcher, Sarfag Fiveteeth remains at the ruins. The old Vordani is disheartened by trauma and being stranded at the fort, under the nighttime attacks.

Proctor Zacchaeus Bael is a member of a sect of the Efficient Master called "The Pure." He arrived with four acolytes recently and is camping at the ruins. The Pure are capable of spellcasting just like any other priest, but they refrain from using magic to advance themselves in life. Proctor Zacchaeus Bael, the soft-spoken half-orc cleric, a considerate person of great wisdom, has come north and plans to cross into Vordan Mountains to evangelize the Vordani

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family tribes one by one and turn them to the faith of the Efficient Master. Unfortunately, King Ralukkar of Vordan has learned about the missionaries and forbade them to enter his mountainous lands. Proctor Zacchaeus Bael tries to calm Sarfag with reason, which he is unable to do. Two acolytes - Jimri and Hora - have been taken by the vampires on a recent raid, and the cleric is planning a rescue mission to save his missing acolytes.

Environment

Four tents are set up by the ruins of the ancient fort that was dismantled over a hundred years ago to commemorate the truce between Vordan and Aglarion. Two of the tents are huge yurt-style tents made of linen that housed the two Vordani families living here, while two are merely smaller camping tents that have been set up alongside the larger ones.

Scene

Sarfag Fiveteeth can be found in one of the large yurts, mumbling to himself about grey dwarves that come in the night and snatch the members of his family with inhuman strength, taking them towards the canyon to the northwest. The aged barbarian is stubborn but indecisive, and is distraught, not having slept for days.

Sarfag Fiveteeth. Use the **berserker** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Safrag Fiveteeth has a Strength score of 12, Dexterity score of 8, and Constitution score of 13 due to his age.
- He has 49 hit points
- ***Vordani Ripper.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d8 + 1) slashing damage.

SARFAG FIVETEETH

"Grey dwarves in the black night, with a white gleam in their eyes, red blood! I saw them I tell you, harbingers of the red moon they are! Demons and devils spawned by the mountain!"

Sarfag Fiveteeth ranting with crazed eyes.

Proctor Zacchaeus Bael (use the **priest** monster entry) emerges to greet newcomers to the camp, along with the two remaining **acolytes,** Kirzan and Operin. They do not know of the nature of the vampire threat, since their fellow sect members were taken from their tent in the night, silently and without any traces. Proctor Zacchaeus Bael tries to apply logic and reason to the situation but is yet undecided on believing the mad mumblings of the old Vordani barbarian.

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PROCTOR ZACCHAEUS BAEL

"Measure the Vordani's words with grains of salt. The poor soul has lost his flock and has been emptied of the Efficient Master's inspiration. Can one translate the words of a mad man? And can one believe them? What do your insights tell you?"

Proctor Zacchaeus Bael explaining his dilemma to the characters and his acolytes.

Proctor Zacchaeus Bael and his acolytes join the characters if they tell them about the disappearances in Nangrath and the path Odryk Nangrath took to save his love.

17. FORT BLACKBELL

Background

Almost a century ago, Fort Blackbell served a critical role in the wars against the Vordani invaders from the north, alerting the chain of battlements to the coming of the barbarian hordes with a magical bell that rang out along the fortified border as far as the Talanar Hills. After the truce of King Boldizzar with Vordan, the fort was gradually abandoned, its walls still intact and functional, the gargoyle statues silently keeping watch on the northern mountains.

The Midnight Curse has had an unusual effect on the statues that decorated the ramparts, turning them into living gargoyles that hunt the surrounding area and prey on the citizens of Nangrath. The gargoyles have lured a gorgon into the central tower of the fort and locked it in. The flying monsters deposit captured victims they deem worthy - those they don't eat - into the tower, where the gorgon turns them to stone. Due to the curse, the petrified victims are immediately transformed into more gargoyles to perpetuate the tribe. The gargoyles also cultivate a narcotic flowering plant called bloodstain lilac that they use to more easily subdue their victims and snatch them from the surrounding lands.

Environment

The fort's massive walls enclose an area 200 by 300

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feet in length, with a central watchtower that rises to a soaring height of 60 feet. The walls are mostly intact, as are the fort's gates, but they have been overgrown by vines on the inside, destroying the wooden ramparts and the stairs to reach them. Some broken and intact gargoyle statues decorate the tops of the walls and towers, sitting lifeless and guarding the fort.

Walls. The imposing wall around the fort was built out of basalt blocks. It is 20 feet high and 10 feet thick. Due to the many holes and its chipped surface, it only requires a successful **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb it.

Gates. These massive, enforced double wooden gates (20 by 20 feet) can be locked by a heavy sliding bolt latch of rusty iron. They have AC 17, 70 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage. They can be forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

If alerted or if they notice the characters, the two **Fort Blackbell gargoyles** (see section Outside the Walls in Nangrath) guarding the northern gate tower fly out to attack, joined by two additional **Fort Blackbell gargoyles** from the southern gate tower. The rest of the flock, including the alpha of the tribe, **Blackwing Solara,** arrive after 3 rounds.

Their tactics involve using their long spears to keep their distance and attack from reach of their **bloodstain lilac wreaths** to exhaust their victims, who can then be snatched up with nets and thrown to the gorgon in the central watchtower, or even dropped to their deaths from great heights.

1. Outbuildings

Background

The tower's outbuildings housed the service staff and workshops of the fort, including woodworking, weaving, smithing, and leatherworking shops.

Environment

The buildings have mostly crumbled through a century of neglect, just shells without ceilings. The walls and door of the larger lumber shop have withstood the elements and are still intact.

Jammed Door. The door to the workshop opens inwards and is made of thick, sturdy wood fitted with iron hinges and handles. It is not locked, but it is jammed after becoming waterlogged over the years. It can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength** ability check. The door has AC 15, 25 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Well. The well at the yard of the outbuildings is filled with water but tainted by **sight rot** disease.

Scene

A flock of crows nest in the larger building. Unless a character opens the door with a successful **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check, the birds are disturbed and take to the skies through the empty ceiling, alerting the gargoyles in the fort to the intrusion.

Treasure

The workshops still contain some of the tools used for repairs, which were too cumbersome to carry or no longer needed as spares. These include sets of carpenter's tools, smith's tools, leatherworker's tools, and weaver's tools.

2. Northern Gate Tower

Environment

The massive gate fortifications still stand, their gate tower rising to 20 feet. However, time has ravaged the insides of the tower once the ceiling collapsed, letting the elements into the building. The circular stairs leading up to the battlements along the inner walls of the tower have collapsed and are unusable. The door of the tower is closed but not locked.

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Fort Blackbell

1 tile = 10 feet

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Scene

Two **Fort Blackbell gargoyles,** Sharz and Trokk, sit motionless at the tops of the towers, seemingly part of the decorations. If alerted to intruders, the gargoyles fly out to attack when the characters reach the gates or disturb the workshops.

Bloodstain Lilac Wreath. This wreath of flowers emits a sweet odor for one day after being freshly woven. The odor drains the energy from anyone in their vicinity. Any creature within 10 feet who can smell the flowers must make a successful **DC 8 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned. As long as the creature is poisoned, it gains three levels of exhaustion. Bloodstain lilacs can only impose up to three levels of exhaustion on a creature, even with multiple exposures. The creature remains poisoned until a long rest.

3. Southern Gate Tower

Environment

The southern gate tower is the same as the northern tower gate.

Scene

Two **Fort Blackbell gargoyles,** Dreela and Groff, are fighting over the right to eat a helpless dwarven potter from Nangrath, Killgream Druntak (use the **expert** monster entry), who lies unconscious within the tower. If alerted to intruders, the gargoyles leave Killgream's body and fly out to join the fight to defend the fort.

4. Charnel House

Background

This large squat building served as the fort's barracks, housing hundreds of soldiers in times of war. Now, the building is a charnel house, where the monsters keep prisoners, who are not deemed appropriate for transformation into their ranks, as food sources. Kidnapped victims are held exhausted in shoddy cages, and the unfortunate ones who are chosen for daily feedings are slaughtered, butchered, and devoured in front of their eyes.

Environment

The charnel house is a 15-foot tall building, whose floor is covered in blood and gore, with butchered corpses strewn around. The doors of the building hang ajar. Inside, the gargoyles collect inedible parts in a mound in one corner and the skulls of their victims as trophies in another. The stench of rotting meat permeates the room, churning the stomach. Five cages hold the prisoners.

Scene

There are four victims in the cages - two children named Cleoror and Pollanrda, a wizened dwarf carpenter named Theodron Turmash, and a young accountant named Vivee Rose (use the **commoner** monster entry for each of them). The prisoners are traumatized, famished, disease-ridden, and exhausted, forced to eat raw meat thrown to them by their savage guards. A single **Fort Blackbell gargoyle,** Krinshor, guards the prisoners and is engaged in cleaning the skulls of victims for the trophy mount. If alerted by sounds of battle outside, the gargoyle flies out to join the fray.

5. Lair of the Alpha

Background

This building functioned as the smithy and armory of the fort. It now serves as the lair of the alpha of the flock, Blackwing Solara, a female of the tribe who has slain the previous alpha male to become the leader. Solara spends her time weaving the wreaths of bloodstain lilacs when not engaged in transforming prisoners into gargoyles or feeding on them.

Environment

The door to this large squat, 20-foot tall building is open and ajar. The building's corner foundations have collapsed in a few places, causing the walls to lean in slightly. A large furnace stands in shambles along the northern wall. The body of a male gargoyle lies on the floor in a dried pool of blood, kept as a reminder to the rest of the tribe of Solandra's dominance.

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Scene

Blackwing Solara nests in this building and weaves her wreaths. She emerges to decide the fate of new victims brought to the fort and oversees the transformations of worthy specimens into new gargoyles. If alerted by sounds of battle outside, Blackwing Solara flies out to lead her tribe.

Blackwing Solara (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **gargoyle** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Blackwing Solara's Strength is 19.
- It has 86 hit points.
- It has AC 16
- ***Lance.*** *Martial Melee Weapon:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage.
- ***Net.*** *Martial Ranged Weapon:* +6 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one target
- It wears a **bloodstain lilac wreath** around its neck.

"You came to join the flock and you shall be transformed by the beast!"

Blackwing Solara intimidating the characters before battle.

6. Bloodstain Garden

Background

The former stable of the fort is now a prison for those victims of the gargoyles who are awaiting their transformation, the largest of the monsters' prey. A patch of bloodstain lilac grows in the corner, where the roof had collapsed long ago. Three prisoners are held here in the enervating fumes of the flowers.

Environment

The building is messy and ramshackle. Its large northern door is open, while the southern door is shut. The ceiling has collapsed in the southeastern corner of the room, and a large, 20-foot wide bush is growing, sprouting blood-red flowers that perfume the room in a sweet odor. The room contains three cages with prisoners slumped inside.

Scene

The three prisoners are all from Nangrath, singled out by the gargoyles for their large statures. The prisoners are a burly dwarven soldier named Larkorg Tighboot (use the **guard** monster entry), a **bugbear** smith named Kranfar Burr, and an **orc** maid named Shurgarsh Muskbone. They are all exhausted and have suffered three levels of exhaustion due to the effects of the bloodstain lilac and whimper weakly for aid when the characters approach.

Bloodstain Lilac Bush. The flowers of this large bush emit a sweet odor that drains the energy from anyone in their vicinity. Any creature that enters the room must make a successful **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned. As long as the creature is poisoned, it gains three levels of exhaustion. Bloodstain lilacs can only impose up to three levels of exhaustion on a creature, even with multiple exposures. The creature remains poisoned until a long rest. The bloodstain lilac flowers continue to emit their odor for one day after being picked from the bush.

7. The Gorgon's Lair

Background

The 60-foot tall central watchtower of the fort was a place of military command and the host of the magical bell that was used to alert the north to the arrival of the Vordani hordes. The tower was abandoned long ago, crumbling and in serious disrepair. After the Midnight Curse took hold, the awakened gargoyles found a gorgon at the foothills of the Shandar Mountains. They managed to lure the beast into the fort to imprison it in the central watchtower by barricading the tower's gate with boulders. Those "lucky" victims lowered into the tower that aren't immediately slain by the trampling charge of the raging beast are transformed into gargoyles when they succumb to the gorgon's petrifying breath. The gargoyles fly into the chamber of the tower from its top and throw victims to the ground from 10 feet in the air, out of reach of the gorgon's horns.

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Environment

The outer gate of the tower is unlocked but entirely blocked by an immense mound of stone blocks. Inside, the remaining furniture, stone statues of warriors, and marble columns lie scattered and broken around the room as a result of the rampages of the gorgon. Corpses litter the ground, mangled and bearing signs of the gorgon's gore attacks, partly obscured by a thin mist that sits at the bottom of the tower, filling the chamber with an acrid odor. A huge black bell dominates the center of the room, broken from its fall from the ceiling above, which has also collapsed over the years.

Scene

Two **Fort Blackbell gargoyles,** Kila and Forgo, sit motionless on the parapets of the watchtower, seemingly part of the decorations. Kila is surveying the eastern approach while Forgo looks west. The pair fly out to join their tribe if alerted.

The **gorgon** is trapped in the tower. It stomps its hooves and assumes a charging stance when any creature appears at the top of the tower. The beast has not been broken by its confinement and rages around the room, seeing red, and attacking anyone and everything in its path.

If the gorgon's petrifying breath turns a humanoid creature to stone, they transform into a gargoyle at the start of the following round. The target's game statistics, including mental ability scores, alignment, and personality are replaced by those of a gargoyle. A *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell or other magic that removes petrification can reverse the transformation.

Treasure

The **Black Bell** of the tower is cracked in many places from the fall from the rafters. However, it still retains a magical aura that can be discerned with *detect magic*. It is possible to repair the bell. However, characters would need to transport it to the smithy outside the fort and to get the furnace working again. The bell weighs 2000 pounds.

The Black Bell. If repaired and hoisted once per day, the bell can be rung to create a toll that reverberates across the land. The low humming sound of the bell can be heard and felt clearly for 100 miles despite the distance.

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18. DARKSTONE

Background

The ancient and well-fortified dwarven mining and trading post is now inhabited by duergar vampires, spawns of the drow vampire conjurer, Faeryl Myrryn, who has sent orders from the Abyss to her spawn to emerge from their stronghold lair below the Vordan Mountains. The group is led by Bakator the Onyx, who was turned by Faeryl Myrryn over five centuries ago. Bakator and its tribe are kidnapping villagers from Nangrath to sate their blood hunger and glean information about the Midnight Curse. They have grown bolder with the arrival of the curse, as the villagers of Nangrath and the Vordanis at Stormbreaker fort are essentially held in place by the **choking rain**. Among their first targets was Lord Adebar Nangrath's younger son Yarik, whom Bakator drained on the way back from a raid, and hid his corpse under a rock. On the next raid, the vampires kidnapped Thermerson the Wise, looted his magic shop, and also snatched Premil Ronul, the young noble from Onadbyr who fled to Nangrath with his lover Odryk Nangrath. The vampire spawn have been kidnapping victims from both locations almost on a nightly basis.

Odryk, distraught and headstrong, decided to act. He convinced a group of young soldiers to join him in tracking down the menace with hopes of saving his brother and Premil. Seeing his son's unshakable resolve, Lord Arenbar Nangrath agreed to the expedition and gave the *stone torc of the tower* to Odryk as protection. They managed to find tracks that led to the ancient mining areas and to Darkstone. However, their assault on the fortified trading post failed miserably, and the vampires captured Odryk. His only solace is to be united with Premil in imprisonment. So far, over fifty citizens have been snatched by the vampires from Nangrath, along with several Vordanis from the ruins of Stormbreaker Fort. Most have been drained of their blood but some have been kept alive as blood banks for later feedings.

Environment

Darkstone is located deep underground, accessible from one of the many caves that mark the lower slopes of the Vordan Mountains. To reach the abandoned onyx mine, one must delve deep below the surface, a journey of almost a mile in the natural and artificial rock tunnels. The 60-foot wide tunnel that arrives at Darkstone from the surface leads into the cave on the north. The architecture of all buildings is of sturdy dwarven design that has withstood the ages. The chambers have a silent, abandoned feel, made gruesome by the myriad corpses that litter the ground, pale and drained of their blood.

Doors. These massive stone doors in areas 2, 3, 4, and 6 can be locked by heavy sliding bolts latches made of iron. They have AC 17, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing,

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poison, and psychic damage. They can be forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

On the way to Darkstone, a character who makes a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice the toes of a boot sticking out from under a boulder on the side of a mountain pass. The stone weighs 450 pounds and can be lifted with a successful **DC 20 Strength** ability check, to reveal the pale corpse of a young dwarf, seemingly crushed by the rock. The clothes of the young dwarf are of exceptional quality and feature the crest of Nangrath with the monogram Y.N. Upon closer inspection, a character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check can discover two small bite marks on the corpse's neck. A character who makes a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check can diagnose the cause of death as blood loss rather than the crush of the rock.

1. Darkstone Cavern

Background

The main cavern that houses the trading fort is a vast cave that the dwarves of Nangrath have long abandoned. It has a dead, empty atmosphere. Eight quasits were granted to Bakator by Faeryl Myrryn as spies. The minor fiends are in bat form, hiding among the hundreds of bats on the cave ceiling.

Environment

The cave is still fortified, its passages guarded by an immense wall on the southern side where the exit from the cave continues into deeper regions and a natural stalagmite obstacle in the north where the tunnel from the surface enters. The cave reaches a height of 40 feet, its ceiling a rough surface of stalactites covered by bats. Fresh and decaying corpses, bones, and large pools of dried blood cover the ground. Some corpses are impaled on the stalagmites that rise to block the northern passage into the cave.

Southern Gate. These massive stone gates (25 by 20 feet) can be opened and closed using a winch wheel on the inside wall of the cave. The gate has AC 17, 150 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They can be forced open with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The area covered by the stalagmites of the northern entrance to the cave count as difficult terrain.

Scene

Four **swarms of bats** are resting, hanging from the stalactites of the cave's ceiling. The bats will swarm to attack living targets who approach the gate to the mine proper (area 5) or the area between the two guard towers.

The eight **quasits** hide within the bat swarms, attacking the characters in bat form. Each swarm hides two quasits. Characters can make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check after each successful hit from the demons every round to pinpoint a quasit among the bats and be able to target it.

2. Northern Guard Post

Environment

The guard posts of the caves have stood the test of time, monuments to the craftsmanship of dwarfs from centuries past. The posts are 20 feet tall, with battlements on the top that can be reached through ladders and trapdoors from the ground floor. Ramps lead to the entrances of the towers, which are shut from the cave by heavy stone doors. A heavy ballista turret sits on top of each battlement, featuring a seat, a long box, and a churning mechanism with multiple wheels and pedals built into its frame.

Scene

Gorank, a **duergar vampire spawn** guards the cave, sitting in the functional automatic heavy ballista pointed toward the northern entrance. As soon as the characters enter the cave, Gorank starts firing at them and alerts the other vampires in area 4.

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DARKSTONE

1 TILE = 5 FEET

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Duergar Vampire Spawn. Use the **vampire spawn** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The duergar vampire spawn has AC 18 (scale mail).
- It has damage resistance to poison.
- It speaks Drawish and Undercommon.
- It has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.
- While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks that rely on sight.
- ***Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest)***: For 1 minute, the duergar vampire spawn can increase in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, it is large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks, and makes Strength ability checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If it lacks the room to become large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.
- ***Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest)***: The duergar vampire spawn magically turns Invisible until it attacks, casts a spell, or uses its enlarge ability, or until its concentration is broken, up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment it wears or carries is invisible with it.

Heavy Ballista Turret. A heavy ballista made of metal and wood, featuring mechanical firing and loading parts, is mounted on a turret's top of the guard tower. A heavy ballista turret is a large object that has AC 18, 95 hit points, damage immunity to poison, psychic damage. It is a ranged weapon that fires heavy bolts with a range of 150/600 ft. that deal (22) 5d8 piercing damage. For a shooter sitting in the chair affixed to the ballista, it takes one move action to load the weapon by cranking a wheel, and one attack action to aim and fire it. The turret provides three-quarters cover from any ranged attacks launched from the direction it faces.

3. Southern Guard Post

Environment

Same as area 2, but the door to the tower is open. The heavy ballista turret is pointing to the southern gate and is broken, its string snapped, chains hanging loose, and wooden parts charred.

4. Trade Hall

Background

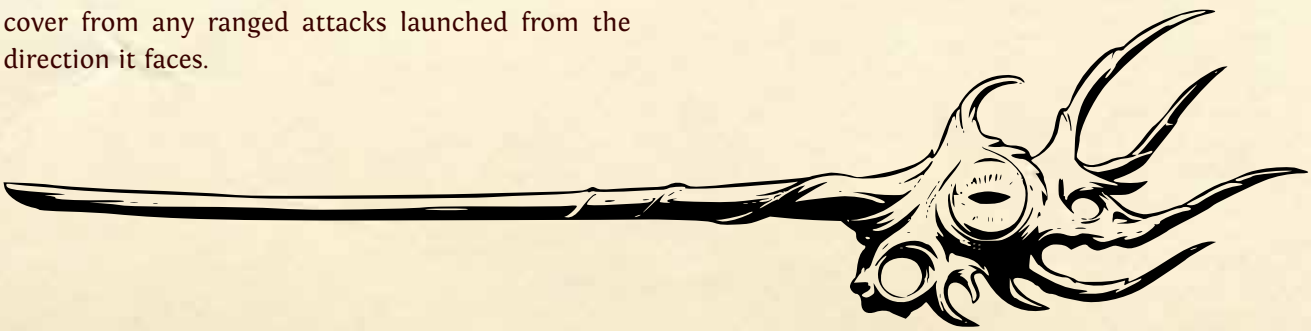
The immense central building of the mining base was used to store, measure, and trade the uncut carts of onyx that were mined below the outpost.

Environment

This large hall is 15 feet tall, constructed of onyx. Inside, the chamber is mostly empty, dominated by a massive equal-arm beam scale that can measure 1,000 pounds of weight. Several iron cubes of different sizes sit next to the scale - standardized counterweights. A few mining carts are spread around the room, some empty, others still holding their cargo of uncut onyx stones, one with spilled contents. Half a dozen corpses in various stages of decay are spread along the ground, lying in pools of blood, seemingly drained of their blood.

Scene

When not resting in the boxes stored in the secret cache chamber at area 7, **Bakator the Onyx** and two other **duergar vampire spawns** named Forgaz and Klengart, can be found here, plotting their next raid on Nangrath. If altered by Gorank, the three spawns rush out to attack intruders.



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Bakator the Onyx

"This is our domain now and the place of your demise! Give your blood willingly or die to feed the thirst of the Blood Queen!"

Bakator the Onyx before it engages the characters.

Treasure

Bakator wears a suit of *demon armor,* bestowed to it by Faeryl Myrryn, the key to area 5 on a chain, and the *stone torc of the tower*. The crates of uncut onyx are worth 200 gold pieces and weigh 100 pounds.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for recovering the *stone torc of the tower*.

5. Onyx Mine

Background

The mines of Darkstone were abandoned long ago due to mysterious circumstances and the mines were collapsed by the dwarves (see Darkstone Mines in Chapter 6).

Environment

The mineshaft begins behind a closed stone gate, for which Bakator holds the key. The shaft runs for 80 feet before ending in a crumble of stones. It features a rail for mining carts and is supported by stone pillars and arches. The shaft is empty and dead silent.

Secret Door. A secret door leads to the hidden cache of the miners and the coffins of the vampire spawns. Characters must make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to find the small hand-size panel on the wall that can be pressed to open the door to area 7.

6. Blood Bank

Background

Used as a resting chamber for the miners in the past, the room currently serves as a blood bank for the vampires, where they hold victims to slowly drain them of blood before they eventually perish from exhaustion. Currently, only the two nobles - Premil Ronul and Odryk Nangrath - and Thermerson the Wise are alive and manacled among the corpses that litter the room. The vampires interrogate them regularly about the events and powers in Aglarion, while feeding on their blood.

Environment

The chamber is filled with the stench of death and excrement. Corpses litter the ground, and the entire room is covered in blood, gore, rags of clothing, and mold.

Scene

The two young **nobles** Premil Ronul and Odryk Nangrath are sitting along the walls, in manacles, whimpering and cowering in each other's embrace. They are famished, exhausted, and near death but still clinging to life together. Thermerson the Wise, the elderly **mage,** lies unconscious but still alive in a corner.

When rescued, the nobles and the wizard are eternally grateful and request protection until they reach the walls of Nangrath. Thermerson the Wise is also concerned for the safety of his employee Maximus Labramen, who ventured to the Battlefields of Torak (location 24.). before the wizard was captured. He is cloaked and mysterious, usually waiting to speak when everyone has finished and after he has had a chance to evaluate all angles first. He is a planner and strategist and uses cunning and wit in the weaving

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of his plans, often advising Lord Arenbar Nangrath or the mage's old friend Captain Ick Forge-h-hammer, the commander of the Nangrath soldiers.

THERMERSON THE WISE

"Blessing of the Wondermaker for rescuing the young Lords and I. Not sure how long we would have lasted if you hadn't come. Those damned blood suckers stole my wares, which I must find in all haste! They are yours at half price if you help me find them."

Thermerson the Wise offering a discount to the characters for retrieving his magical goods.

7. SECRET CACHE

Background

The secret cache room of the mine has been turned by Bakator into the place of the vampire spawns' coffins.

Environment

Four stone boxes with plain lids and metal hinges sit in this room. The walls of the room are completely covered in blood and the spaces between the boxes are filled with dead bodies - some freshly slain, some rotting away, and some merely shriveled husks.

Treasure

The coffins contain 682 gold pieces, 421 silver pieces, 42 beautifully cut onyx stones, each worth 10 gold pieces. Bakator's coffin additionally contains the inventory stolen from Thermerson's magic shop: an *arrow of giant slaying, a decanter of endless water, a water elemental gem*. On the top of the treasure lies the onyx statuette of a female demonic drow figure, with bat wings and pointed fangs, bearing a rune done in seemingly fresh blood on a marble plate on its base. Characters with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (History or Religion)** skill check can recognize the symbol of Faeryl Myrryn, the ancient drow vampire conjurer known as the Blood Queen. The statue is worth 250 gold pieces.

SYMBOL OF FAERYL MYRRYN

19. CROSSROADS

Background

A venerable oracle named Cloviart has gone completely mad due to the Midnight Curse and the maddening dreams he has started to experience recently. He also suffers from a severe case of insomnia. The old prophet has settled next to the crossroads in a small shanty he made for himself out of branches. Out of hopelessness, Cloviart started venerating all the deities indiscriminately, claiming that the gods instructed him to find a place where he could give people directions.

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Environment

A small hovel has been erected haphazardly by the large signpost at the crossroads that has all the signs removed. A man sits inside, sheltered from the rain. The man wears rags and holy symbols from all the gods of Aglarion, as well as some amulets that don't belong to any deity, ranting madly with a crazed expression.

Scene

Cloviart, the mad oracle, stands when he sees travelers approach. He starts ranting vehemently about his dreams and portents of doom. He is eager to give directions, inspired by real and made-up deities, and confidently points the characters in random directions. He says he hears a continuous cackle in his dreams, making him unable to sleep, but that the voices have inspired him to divine powers.

Cloviart. Use the **acolyte** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Cloviart has the following cleric spells prepared:
  - Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, thaumaturgy*
  - 1st level (3 slots): *create or destroy water, detect evil and good, sanctuary*

Cloviart

"Do you hear them as well? Cackles in your dreams...laughing at our misery...commanding you to their divine will? Do you? I, Cloviart, can interpret their voices and show you where you must go."

Cloviart ranting to the characters.

20. Gorso

Background

The Midnight Curse has only exacerbated the already unraveling conditions in Gorso. Many of the villagers and even some members of the Gorso household have fled the village after the arrival of the curse and due to the unnatural behavior of the noble house. Lord Ziademos Gorso has been orchestrating a scheme to impregnate as many of the women who live in the village or come through in their travels. He also goads his plentiful offspring to bear progeny, thereby spreading his bloodline of chaos. These individuals are often offered relatively large sums for the "honor" of bearing a Gorso heir, and women are usually put up in the keep until the child is born. However, Lord Ziademos Gorso has also passed a new decree that demands that the populace offer a receptacle for his seed every week and has forbidden abortions. This edict has caused even more schisms in the village, as many families are unwilling to offer their daughters or wives to the mad lord.

Lord Ziademos Gorso has finally acquired a unicorn in his mad quest to dominate the elements of Law, procured by Frumby Goldtooth from the Feyrealm. Lord Ziademos Gorso and his immediate family are now tormenting and experimenting upon the shackled and paint-covered creature, which is in a most pitiful state.

Wild Tale, a flamboyant catfolk merchant and con artist, has recently settled in the town, hoping to capitalize on the Gorsos' madness. Wild Tale is usually at the village's gates, trying to spot travelers and arrange liaisons with the Goros for a finder's fee.

Gianas Lor'Ghianki, the owner of the Flirty Nymphs brothel is happy for the lucrative business of the Goros. However, he has a serious issue with many of his female employees becoming pregnant by Lord Ziademos Gorso or his sons. Gianas is concerned for the safety of his employees as well as his purse.

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Environment

Gorso is a village that has withdrawn into itself and the madness of the noble house. It has severed ties with the outside after the family's hasty swearing of allegiance to Queen Aphinah. The great lumber yards of the village are inoperational, with vast stacks of timber soaking in the rain. The ferry still runs, however travelers must get approval and pay an exorbitant fee to cross, arranged by the Gorso in their keep. The ruins of a clocktower stand next to the motte-and-bailey keep that dominates the center of the village. Several families hurry about their daily tasks on the streets, eager to get out of the **choking rain** and safely inside their houses. The village has an unnaturally large number of children, many of whom conjure cantrips at will. They all bear similar traits that hint at their shared bloodline.

Entering Gorso

Scene

When characters approach the massive stone walls of the village, they are hailed by a guard captain (use the **knight** monster entry) of House Gorso from the parapets, who demands the characters' names and reason for visiting Gorso. He explains that the gate tax is 5 silver pieces per traveler and 1 gold piece for vehicles or mounts. If characters pay the toll, the gate is opened, and characters are free to enter the village.

Inside of the gate, Wild Tale (use the **spy** monster entry) calls to the characters and approaches. The catfolk will see an opportunity in the characters' arrival and seek to arrange procreations with members of the Gorso family, especially if characters are female. He tells that Lord Ziademos Gorso is a wielder of mighty magics who can bestow magical powers through his progeny and is always eager to provide his seed for a reward. He makes no mention of the lord's erratic and often malicious behavior. However, he can confirm that the lord wears a silver torc on his wrist only if the characters specifically inquire about the torc or Lord Ziademos Gorso's physical description. The catfolk will lead the characters to the Flirty Nymph brothel and ask them to wait there until he secures a personal audience with Lord Ziademos Gorso.

"Greetings to you all, and fortunes soon to come! You look healthy and capable. If you want to earn some gold and don't disdain carnal pleasures, I can make it worth your while. I mingle in the highest circles of the local nobility, even with Lord Gorso himself. Come, we can arrange terms in the Flirty Nymph."

Wild Tale leading up to his offers of matchmaking with the Gorsos.

Characters can hear the music and rowdy shouting from inside the Flirty Nymph brothel from afar. The establishment is the only one that is open and serves as the village's only inn. If characters visit the brothel, Gianas Lor'Ghianki (use the **noble** monster entry), the establishment's proprietor will welcome them as new guests and potential customers. Many of the female employees of the brothel are pregnant. Gianas seems cheerful and is exceptionally deferential to new guests and regarding the Gorsos. However, characters can attempt a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice that the tiefling is trying hard to hide his worries and misgivings about the lord. A successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check is required for Gianas to share the circumstances of his situation.

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If he opens up to the characters, Gianas explains the current events in and surrounding Gorso. He relates the lord's madness and the new edicts in a hushed voice. He tells of the recent expedition of Wynterheart the traveling counselor and healer, a most kind and knowledgeable elf, into the haunted Thornwoods to uncover the nature of the disappearances in the woods.

Gianas Lor'Ghianki

"Lord Gorso hasn't been the same since the death of the Highlady Urmissa and his seclusion afterward, some decades ago. They say he locked himself up for three years and would not open the door. Not for food, drink, or personal contact. He emerged different, touched by madness and in service to chaos."

Gianas Lor'Ghianki opening
up to the characters in whispers.

A Wielder of Chaos

Background

Lord Ziademos Gorso can usually be found in Gorso Keep, communing with the Elemental Chaos and procreating to spread his bloodline. The lord is also engaged in tormenting and experimenting on his prized trophy, Preonad, a unicorn with a broken horn and fully covered in green paint, held in the family's private stables in the village. Lord Ziademos Gorso owns the *silver torque of the tower* from which he is unwilling to part but does not know about its true purpose.

Environment

Gorso Keep is in severe neglect and disrepair. However, its stone walls still project an imposing image as they loom over the village. The family's house guards patrol the battlements and gate of the keep at all times. The keep itself is a relatively simple affair with a large hall on the ground floor, the family quarters on the second floor where Lord Ziademos' numerous children and grandchildren live in crowded chambers, and the lord's private chambers on the third floor.

The Gorso stables are just a short walk from the keep. The large enclosure features a training ground and a huge open-sided barn, where a dozen horses, a few farm animals, and Preonad, the unicorn, are kept under the close watch of some guards.

Scene

If the characters wait for Wild Tale's return or approach the keep themselves, they can relatively easily request an audience with Lord Ziademos Gorso. They are led into the keep under an escort of six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry). They are soon met in the lavishly decorated but decrepit foyer by Acantha, the eldest Gorso daughter (use the **heir of entropy** monster entry). The noble leers at the characters and gauges her chances of siring children by them. If the characters pique her interest or request to see her father, the lord, she leads the characters and the guards into the large hall of the keep. **Lord Ziademos Gorso** is engaged in a heated conversation with his son, Xennos, and his grandson Polyeidos (use the **heir of entropy** monster entry). The three nobles are watched over by Herondar, the lord's bodyguard (use the **knight** monster entry), and four house soldiers (use the **guard** monster entry).

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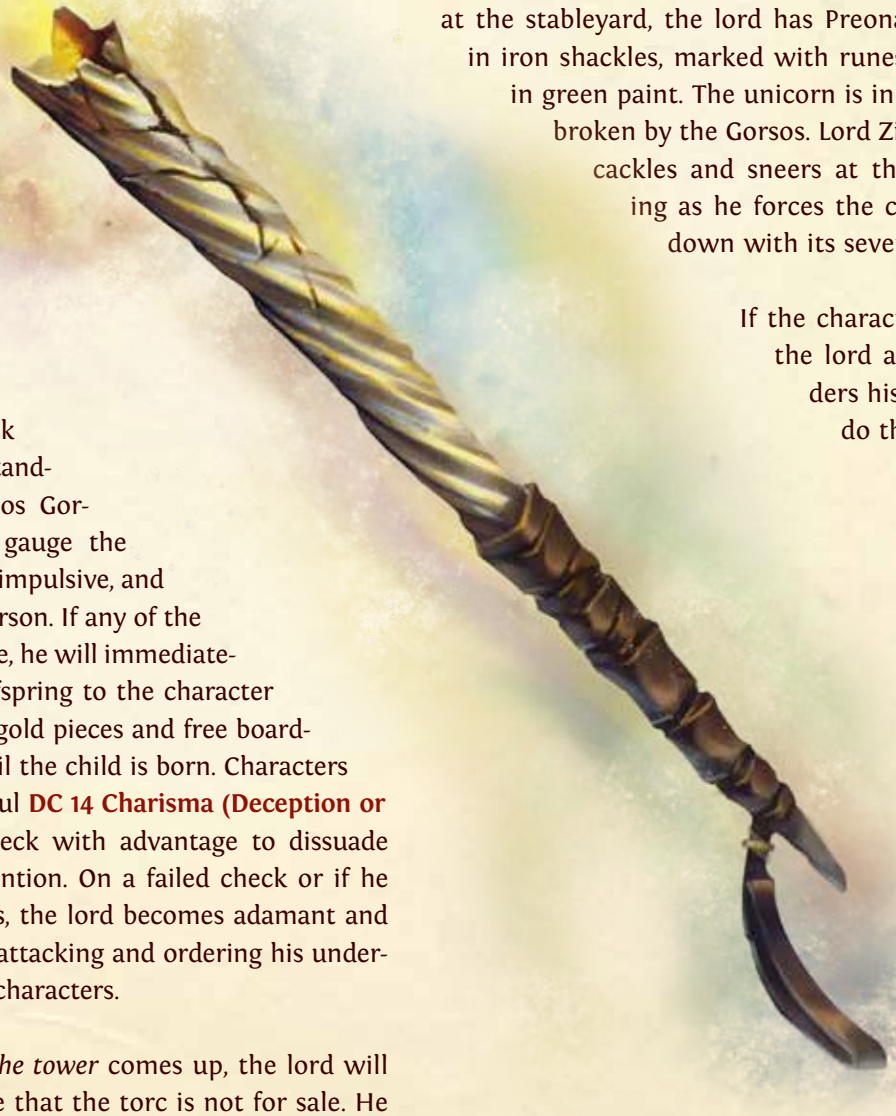
Lord Ziademos Gorso is disheveled, his toga dirty and torn, his open torso covered with sigils. A character can identify the markings as those of the Elemental Chaos with a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check. He grips the horn of a creature and holds it as a cudgel, waving as he gestures. Characters who succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check can determine that the horn is that of a unicorn. The lord also wears the *silver torc of the tower* on his wrist. In a totally self-assured and haughty demeanor, Lord Ziademos Gorso is quite insane in his quest for chaos. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can gain an understanding of Lord Ziademos Gorso's character and gauge the lord as a dangerous, impulsive, and morally unbound person. If any of the characters are female, he will immediately offer to father offspring to the character for payment of 500 gold pieces and free boarding in the castle until the child is born. Characters can make a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check with advantage to dissuade the lord of this intention. On a failed check or if he senses unwillingness, the lord becomes adamant and will force the issue, attacking and ordering his underlings to subdue the characters.



Unicorn Horn Cudgel

If the *silver torc of the tower* comes up, the lord will categorically declare that the torc is not for sale. He will get agitated if pressed and will hear no more of the issue.

In either case, Lord Ziademos Gorso will invite the characters to see his most prized possession in the family's stables. He giggles madly and will not reveal what it is, savoring the surprise. **Lord Ziademos Gorso** leads the characters to the Gorso stables outside the keep, accompanied by his three family members (use the **heir of entropy** monster entry), six **guards,** and Herondar, his bodyguard (use the **knight** monster entry). On the way, the lord boasts that he saw the coming of the Midnight Curse through the void, as well as the arrival of the characters and the test of their natures. He has cryptic answers to everything, sometimes in gibberish. When the company arrives at the stableyard, the lord has Preonad led to him, in iron shackles, marked with runes, and covered in green paint. The unicorn is in a pitiful state, broken by the Gorsos. Lord Ziademos Gorso cackles and sneers at the celestial being as he forces the creature's neck down with its severed horn.

If the characters intervene, the lord attacks and orders his underlings to do the same.

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LORD ZIADEMOS GORSO

"I see all through limbo and know all that is, was, and will be from Creation in the churning vortex to the return to the nothingness that is Chaos! My line cannot be interrupted, you fools!"

Lord Ziademos Gorso laughing madly at the characters.

If combat breaks out in the keep, an additional Gorso heir arrives (use the **heir of entropy** monster entry) along with two house soldiers (use the **guard** monster entry) every 1d4 rounds. Likewise, if combat breaks out in the village, two additional Gorso heirs arrive (use the **heir of entropy** monster entry) along with six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) every 1d4 minutes.

It is quite easy to secure a "private" meeting with Lord Ziademos Gorso in the case of anyone who can bear him a child. These affairs are conducted in the lord's private chambers, with Herondar (use the **knight** monster entry) standing guard next to the lord's bed.

If characters remove the shackles from Preonad, it immediately teleports away after bowing and telepathically giving thanks.

Treasure

Preonad is manacled by a set of *dimensional shackles*.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for rescuing Preonad and an additional 700 experience points for recovering the *silver torc of the tower*.

21. TRAPPED WOODS

Background

Tonk Wildwander, archdruid of the Seven Thorns, has tasked one of the other gnome druids, Jelsa Glittergem, to cover the Thornwoods with additional

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spell effects that trap and murder anyone passing through the forest. The forest is the hunting ground of Jelsa Glittergem, who usually patrols the woods in the form of an eagle, spotting intruders from afar.

Environment

The brambles of the aptly named Thornwoods are challenging to traverse. The woods are eerily silent until the roar of an animal pierces the silence from afar, and the sense of being hunted hangs in the air.

Scene

The overgrown area is considered as difficult natural terrain. Jelsa Glittergem (use the **seven thorn** monster entry) has created **spiked pit traps** all over the forest floor enhanced by her druidic magics.

Spiked Pit Traps. The 20-foot deep and 5-foot wide pits have been fashioned by magic and are placed in natural chokepoints in rocky areas of the forest. The areas around the pits have been treated with *plant growth* spells that slow movement and create a thick covering of underbrush over the pits. A successful **DC 19 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check discerns the pits under the foliage. On a failed save, the character falls 20 feet and lands prone onto sharpened wooden stakes that are covered with **serpent venom** poison. The stakes' attack modifier is +10. On a hit, the stakes deal 16 (3d10) piercing damage and the character must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The characters soon gain the attention of three **dire wolves,** drawn to any commotion in the forest. The wolves follow the characters and try to break members off from the group and attack using pack tactics. Jelsa Glittergem also arrives at the scene. However, she tries to stay hidden and uses spells from afar before entering the fray in the shape of a dire wolf alongside the pack. If reduced to half her hit points, she retreats and flees to warn her circle. If captured and interrogated, she remains a true fanatic and would rather die than betray Tonk Wildwander and the Seven Thorns.

22. Circle of the Seven Thorns

Background

As the Midnight Curse takes hold, the Seven Thorns have fallen into discord and turned to violence as their majority believes that the curse is caused by the anger of the Eternal Mother towards those who befoul nature and who do not abide by the druids' ways. One of the druids, Semolah Bitterleaf, fled the circle and hid in the Maze of Flowers after he failed to challenge Tonk Wildwander for the archdruid position, which he was craving long before the Midnight Curse struck. The Seven Thorns hunt anyone who comes into or near the forest in dire wolf shape, leading to several disappearances of loggers from Gorso.

Wynterheart, a courageous traveling counselor and healer, ventured into the forest recently, searching for the cause of the recent disappearances, and is now the captive of the entangling protection of the druids' forest.

Environment

The forest becomes heavily overgrown as one approaches the central location of the druid circle. The undergrowth grows to a height of 10 feet and forms an almost impassable 300-foot thick wall of branches and dry sickly vines covered by barbed spikes.

The gnomes that comprise the Seven Thorns live around an ancient druid circle of standing stones in tents covered by animal hides. The henge is intact, its ancient stones overgrown with a thick layer of moss. Druidic markings cover the entirety of the stones under the moss.

Scene

The approach to the ancient standing stones is guarded by secret druidic magics that have been in place for millennia and are only known to the members of the druid circle, passed down since the time when the circle was known as the Seven Flowers. The warding protections affect anyone who has not been initiated

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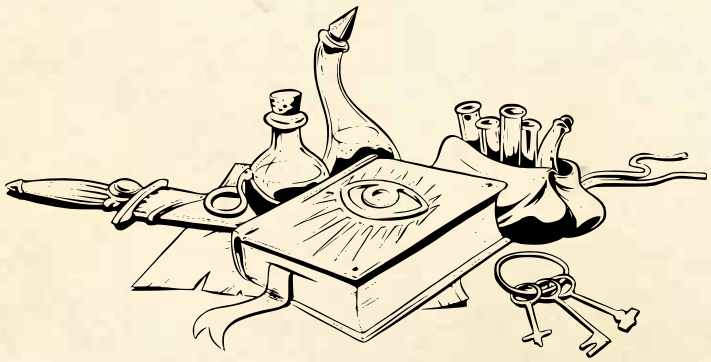
with a ritual known only to the members of the druid circle.

An area with a radius of 300 feet around the stones had been infused with a permanent *spike growth* spell that caused the thick vines of ivy covering all the trees in this area to sprout hand and sharp spikes. Characters can make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Nature or Perception)** skill check to recognize the terrain as hazardous before entering it. The area is considered difficult natural terrain.

An area with a radius of 150 feet from the stones has been infused with an additional permanent *entangle* spell that has caused the thick vines of ivy covering all the trees in this area to animate when outsiders approach. For every 5 feet characters travel within this inner area, they must succeed on a **DC 16 Strength** saving throw or be restrained. A character restrained by the plants can use its action to make a **DC 16 Strength** ability check to free itself.

Wynterheart (use the **priest** monster entry) is trapped in the forest by the wards of the stones some 200 feet from them and moans weakly when the characters approach. The elven counselor has been stuck for days, shivering under a makeshift cover, and is eager to escape.



WYNTERHEART

"Pleeease show kindness and it shall be returned in bounds by the Eternal Mother... Help me, I can't...can't move..."

Wynterheart begging for aid.

When freed, Wynterheart is gracious and offers her help to explore and eliminate any threats that have befallen the Thornwoods. She accompanies the party but retreats from danger when she falls below half of her maximum hit points.

Five members of the Seven Thorns (use the **seven thorn** monster entry) are present in their campsite at the center of the standing stones. Tonk Wildwander leads the group and directs the druid circle to attack intruders on sight. The druids' favorite tactics are casting protective and area control spells, then transforming into dire wolves or giant eagles to attack.

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TONK WILDWANDER

"How dare you invade our sacred forest and bring your curse on our lands! We are the Seven Thorns! The forests are rightfully ours! And our's alone!"

Tonk Wildwander as he notices intruders to the sacred druid circle.

Once defeated, the zealous gnomes remain reserved and hateful, hardly speaking or expressing their pain or feelings in any way. A character must succeed on a **DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation)** skill check to pry out information from the fanatic Seven Thorn druids. On a success, the seven thorn proudly confesses how they avenged trespassing from Gorso, instructs the characters on the history and purpose of their circle, and reveals the locations of the Maze of Flowers (location 23.) and the Garden of Plenty (location 27.).

Treasure

A small wooden bowl contains 34 blackberries harvested from the Garden of Plenty by the druids. The berries function as those from a *goodberry* spell without any time constraints.

Experience

Award the party 700 XP for rescuing Wynterheart.

23. The Maze of Flowers

Background

As a side effect of the Midnight Curse, the magical flower maze of the Seven Flowers tries to protect itself and the shrine and has spawned several shambling mounds that patrol the hedges, keeping telepathic contact with each other. Semolah Bitterleaf, the renegade Seven Thorn druid, has fled to the shrine and is hiding here, contemplating his next step. He is unaware that the Portal of the Elements can be activated and opened to the mysterious pathway where the Stride of the Elders starts.

Environment

The magical maze covers a large expanse of the Thornwoods, in a diameter of a mile. The maze walls are thorny bushes, its floors thick vines, and branches cover its ceiling. Flowers continuously blossom and die within their confines in the span of a few minutes, as if time flows faster in this location. The smell of decay is heavy in the air, mixed with the perfumed aromas of flowers. The plants continuously grow and move, closing up or opening passages as if the maze itself was alive.

The shrine at the center of the maze, hidden from above by the cover of the plants, is dedicated to the Eternal Mother. It is a small square building made up of living plants. Four braziers stand in front of the open arched doorways leading into the shrine on each of its sides, displaying the four elements in constant motion - an ever-burning flame, a churning clog of earth, a pool of swirling water, and a dancing puff of wind. Inside, the shrine is just a small chamber where a beautiful multi-colored orchid grows at its center in front of a large stone disk decorated with a tree and the four elements surrounding it.

Portal of the Elements. This two-way portal can be activated by applying the four elements to the stone's surface - fire, earth, water, and wind. If all four elements are applied to the stone simultaneously, the portal opens and remains open for two rounds.

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A creature that passes through the Portal of the Elements appears on the other side of the portal where the Stride of the Elders begins (location 43.).

Scene

Whenever a character enters the maze and inhales the fumes within, it must make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell for one hour. A character can attempt a **DC 20 Intelligence** ability check every hour to navigate the maze and find the shrine at its center. If a *speak with plants* spell is used to communicate with the maze, the plants will automatically guide the visitors to the shrine.

Two **shambling mounds** with telepathic abilities have spawned in the maze as its reaction to the Midnight Curse. The shambling mounds obey the command of the maze and will be directed to attack intruders, knowing the exact location of their targets. The maze can spawn up to two new shambling mounds every hour to replace one that has been killed off.

The four elements continuously respawn in the braziers and cannot be extinguished or removed from them.

The small shrine at the center of the maze is the refuge of Semolah Bitterleaf (use the **seven thorn** monster entry), who has fled here from his adversaries. He wants to be left alone to commune with nature, and he is wary of the characters. Characters can get him to open up with a successful **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. On a failed check, Semolah demands the characters leave the sacred shrine. If the characters refuse, he casts a protective spell, changes into a dire wolf, and attacks. On a successful skill check, he reveals that he has challenged the leadership of the circle and vies to control the Great Woods, as he calls the area covered by the Thornwoods, Wedgewood, and the King's Forest. He is willing to exchange information, but he is bitter and grievous. He knows all locations within the three forests - the Circle of the Seven Thorns (location 22.), the Garden of Plenty (location 27.), the Grorrarr's Lair (location 5.), and the Royal Hunting Lodge (location 13.). However, he doesn't know about the Stride of the Elders, or how the Midnight Curse the affected these places, except for the machinations of her druid circle at their camp.

SEMOLAH BITTERLEAF

"Outsiders are not welcome. Be thankful that the Seven Thorns are now six and that I just want to be left alone. Be on your way, or suffer the consequences..."

Semolah Bitterleaf warning the characters to let her be.

The orchid in the shrine is a divine flower, blooming eternally. A character who waters the flower or casts *druidcraft* on it gains the **boon of nature.**

Boon of Nature. You have been kind to the Eternal Mother and can gain insight into the inner workings of nature. You can cast the *commune with nature* spell once. A character may only gain the boon of nature once in their lifetime.

24. BATTLEFIELDS OF TORAK

Background

As a result of the Midnight Curse, some of the Blood

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Wheels, an ancient Vordani chariot unit that perished here, have returned as skeletons with their mounts and have started to replay the battle, again and again.

A quiet archivist, linguist, and archeologist from Onadbyr, Maximus Labramen, was employed by Thermerson the Wise of Nangrath (location 15.), to find magic items at the battleground. Maximus arrived recently and fled the skeletons into a nearby cave, but as he searched the deeper caverns, he found an ancient idol of an ooze creature with multiple eyes, each notched with two strokes across its iris. The eyes of the idol flared with a hypnotic pattern, and the archeologist was trapped in its glare.

Environment

The rugged ground at the feet of the Shandar Mountains is barren, having been doused with the blood of thousands when the armies of Aglarion destroyed the Vordani horde. A monumental slab of stone that is 30 feet across bears the names of all those fallen in the battle on both sides of the conflict.

Characters can notice the small opening of the cave with a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Scene

Thirty **Vordani skeleton** foot soldiers and five mounted **Vordani skeletons** on **warhorse skeletons** patrol the battlefield, seeking opponents to crush. The skeletons will attack anyone who ventures on the ancient battlefields.

Vordani Skeleton. Use the **skeleton** monster entry with the following modifications:

- A Vordani skeleton has AC 14 (armor scraps, broken shield)
- ***Vordani Ripper.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) slashing damage.

Maximus Labramen is stuck in a larger cave 60 feet from the cave entrance, staring at the idol whose eyes shine with hypnotic patterns. Characters who enter the cave and see the pattern in the eyes of the ooze idol must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, they become charmed. While charmed, they are incapacitated and have a speed of 0. Characters can reroll a failed saving throw every day. The effect ends on the target if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake it out of its stupor. A character who succeeds on the save is immune to the idol's effects for 24 hours.

Helping Maximus makes him eternally grateful, and he is happy to share his knowledge of the area and its history, especially the areas around Nangrath and the Dragon's Bones (location 25.).

Maximus Labramen

"Most fortuitous that you arrived in time, most fortuitous. I am afraid I fell into the eternal folly - I chose my purse over my safety. But no magic trinkets here, only death."

Maximus Labramen thanking the characters for their timely arrival.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for rescuing Maximus Labramen.

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25. THE DRAGON'S BONES

Background

Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden was the closest ally of Thelarmas, the ancient bronze dragon. Upon the noble Red Cloak's death, he bequeathed his fortune, including the clay *torc of the tower,* to the dragon who added it to its hoard. Centuries later, Thelarmas met its fate at the foothills of the Shandar Mountains by the edge of the River Nenock. When the dragon's lair was invaded by worshippers of the ooze deity known as the Blind God, the dragon failed to protect its horde and was infested by a black pudding that implanted its corrosive substance within the dragon's bowels. Forced to flee its lair, Thelarmas could only fly a short distance before it was corroded from the inside out. Now, only the bones of the ancient dragon remain, a famous landmark all over the Kingdom of Aglarion. Selvaro, the youngest offspring of Thelarmas, also fled the caves with its father. When it returned to scout the lair, which was by then converted to the Shrine of the Blind God, it ran into the Utter Blindness, an unholy gargantuan gelatinous cube that took its sight. Selvaro fled again and is making its camp beside the bones of its father, living in human form as a hermit knight, offering advice to those that come to pay their respects to the dragon's bones. The Heroes of Virtue have recently visited the site, only to be driven away by Selvaro, who perceived their devious motives.

Environment

The gargantuan skeleton of a bronze dragon lies on a rocky ledge by the shores of the river that cascades into the woods below. The dragon's bones are polished and don't bear signs of the mossy covering on the rocks beside it. The ledge provides a cover from the elements to the small indent underneath, where an armor-clad figure sits at a campsite.

Scene

When characters approach the ledge, **Selvaro** greets them, a blind young bronze dragon with premature shape-changing powers in the human form of a knight who has made camp here. Selvaro seeks its father's hoard that lies in the haunted Shine of the Blind God, where his eyes were burned out when he tried to retake its inheritance. The dragon now stays in its camp, contemplating its misfortune, as it tends its father's bones. Selvaro is cautious and advises caution in all things. It will not reveal its true form until it trusts the characters and plays the role of the hermit knight dedicated to the legacy of Thelarmas.

Selvaro will recount the dragon's exploits in old times, including the ancient dragon's human companion, Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden. It will also relate the death of Thelarmas at the hands of a sect of blinded worshippers of an ooze entity, who drove it from its lair and implanted a corrosive substance in its stomach that burned the dragon's body from the inside. If the characters mention Lord Arden or the *clay torc of the tower,* Selvaro explains how the torc probably ended up in Thelarmas' hoard in its former lair. He tells the characters that it tried to enter the caves but was immediately attacked by a gigantic gelatinous cube that blinded it, forcing it to retreat.

Selvaro is hesitant to reveal the location of the lair and is inherently suspicious of the characters. Characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check to convince Selvaro of their good intentions and that they are not seeking Thelarmas' hoard. If convinced, Selvaro will reveal its true form to the characters and offer his help in recovering the *clay torc of the tower* and forgoes Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden's personal treasures in exchange for its father's hoard. Selvaro can show the way to the Shrine of the Blind God (location 26.), accompanying the characters on their journey.

Selvaro. Use the **young bronze dragon** monster entry with the following modification:

- ***Change Shape.*** The dragon magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast with a challenge rating no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form,

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the dragon retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except for any class features or legendary actions of that form.

SELVARO

"If you seek the tomb of Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, you seek the lair of Thelarmas - once the mightiest bronze in the skies of Aglarion. But beware, lest you be blinded like me, and step with caution into the caves that are no longer the dragon's."

Selvaro as it leads the way towards the peaks of the foreboding mountains.

26. Shrine of the Blind God

Background

Thelarmas, the ancient bronze dragon, made its lair in a natural cave high on the ridge of the Shandar Mountains, where it guarded its hoard in a secret tunnel system. Thelarmas was famous for its exploits as an adult dragon during the fall of the Order of the Eternal Light, through its close relationship with Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, who was a staunch supporter of the young Razmyrel Melkar and would later become a founder of the Red Cloak Lawgivers. The dragon allowed Lord Arden to ride its back and indulged the Red Cloak in lengthy conversations about his cases, giving advice to the noble and helping him in his interviews with people. The two became friends and solved many cases together in the Kingdom of Aglarion until the death of Lord Arden, who was the last of his noble lineage.

Without heirs, Lord Arden decided to relinquish his worldly possessions and title and came to spend his final days with Thelarmas to pass away in the dragon's lair. His body was entombed by the dragon's horde, along with the *clay torc of the tower*. Over five hundred years passed and Thelarmas grew to ancient age, living out its years in the company of its youngest son, Selvaro, within their shared cave. However, Selvaro was never allowed into the secret inner chambers and soon grew too large to enter the corridors.

When the ancient dragon was reaching twilight and was about to pass away, a cult of worshippers of an ooze entity - the Blind God - arrived at their lair, driven by mad visions from their dark deity. The two dragons were forced to abandon their lair, which was invaded by the oozes and the blinded clerics that summoned them. Thelarmas could only fly 25 miles before perishing from an ooze that infested its bowels and corroded it from within.

The cult of the Blind God, a group of self-blinded fanatics, took over the lair and started to prepare a ritual of amalgamation where they would transform many gelatinous cubes into a gargantuan specimen - a manifestation of the Blind God itself. The ritual required the mass self-sacrifice of the entire cult, feeding the new entity with their own flesh. The transformation was successful, but the souls of the cultists would be cursed to eternal worship, and they rose as a spectral congregation at the unholy altar to their deity.

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Shrine of the Blind God

1 tile = 5 feet

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Distraught, Selvaro attempted to storm the lair and take back its rightful inheritance, only to be blinded and beaten off by the gargantuan gelatinous cube at the entrance to the caves. Since then, the young dragon has assumed the human form of a knight and lives as a hermit at the bones of its father, relating the exploits of Thelarmas and offering the advice of caution in all things to anyone who seeks its wisdom. The dragon keeps everyone away from the Shrine of the Blind God, lest they meet the same fate as its father or itself.

Environment

The entrance to the outer natural caves of the lair are high in the cliffs of the Shandar Mountains, at the end of a narrow mountain trail carved from the rocks, and marked by a waterfall that cascades down a sheer drop of 100 feet. The surfaces of the entire lair are wet, and moisture permeates the air. Ceilings in the natural caves (areas 1, 2, and 3) and three inner chambers (areas 6, 7, and 8) are 40 feet high where not specified otherwise. In contrast, the flooded tunnels and chambers are only 5 feet tall and are considered cramped space for a medium or larger creature.

Secret and Trap Doors. All the secret doors and secret trap doors within the lair are well hidden. The buttons that open them are fashioned to resemble the natural rock face into which they are carved, requiring a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice, except the secret door to the northern passage at the entrance to the caves, which requires a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice but only if a character actively searches the cliff face. The secret trap doors open to hatches that connect to the flooded corridors below, while the secret doors between the tunnels and lightning chambers (areas 4 and 5) are vertical openings. Once the buttons are pushed, the doors remain open for two rounds and automatically close at the end of the second round. The doors are made of stone and can be opened with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The doors have AC 17, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

1. The Utter Blindness

Background

One of the few who dared the mountain passes to reach the lair of Thelarmas was Lord Eard Wytas Arden, who befriended the ancient dragon, and as a monument to their friendship, his statue used to stand guard at the passage into the caves. After the cult of the Blind God drove the dragons away, they dismounted the statue of the Red Cloak and soon raised stone altars in the chamber to create a magical circle. Then, they undertook their vile ritual, created the gargantuan gelatinous cube, and only their skeletal remains bear witness to their ultimate deed.

Environment

The entry to the lair of Thelarmas is a 25-foot wide and tall passageway, its sides thick with moss and large fungi in patches that have seemingly been burnt away in a straight line down the center of the passage, which is littered with the skeletons of large animals, corroded to the bone. An ancient, painted stone statue of an armored warrior with a red cloak lies outside the cave opening on a ledge, having been broken off its pedestal that stands a few feet away.

Further into the cave, the height of the ceiling rises from 25 feet to 40, where a circle of stone monoliths rises out of the ground, seemingly growing out of the stone, with runes and geometric forms within their circumference. Each monolith bears the same symbol, an eye with two slashes across its surface. Corroded skeletons litter the ground within and around the columns.

A secret trap door can be found at the cave entrance and another one in front of the southern wall. The trapdoors lead to the flooded tunnel system that is 10 feet below the level of the floor.

Scene

The Utter Blindness, a gargantuan gelatinous cube

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infused with the essence of the Blind God, sits in the center of the cave, almost invisible to the naked eye. If characters approach it within 10 feet, it moves to attack and engulf its targets. If characters have learned of the cube from Selvaro, they may make their Wisdom (Perception) skill checks to notice the transparent cube with advantage.

2. The Wellspring Vortex

Background

This cave served as a natural underwater obstacle that led to the dragons' nest further into the cave.

Environment

Three springs feed the pool at the bottom of this vast chamber, collecting in a swirling vortex 20 feet under the level of the passage that leads into the cave from the west. The pool opens towards the cliff face from its bottom, under 40 feet of water, forming the gushing waterfall that can be seen from outside the caves. A 20-foot wide tunnel leads to the lair of the dragons from the bottom of the pool, but it cannot be seen from above due to the turbulent waters.

Scene

When a character enters the pool for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, they are immediately taken up by the treacherous currents, heaved around, and sucked underwater. They must make a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw. On a failed save, the character takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and is caught underwater in the vortex of the pool. On a successful save, the character takes half damage and isn't caught in the vortex. A creature caught in the vortex can use its action to try to swim free but has disadvantage on the **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to do so. If a character fails this Strength (Athletics) skill check three consecutive times, they are sucked out of the pool and tumble down the cliffs outside through the waterfall, taking 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

3. Lair of Dragons

Background

This cave was the lair of the pair of dragons - Thelarmas and its young offspring Selvaro, before being taken over by the cult of Blind God, who used it for summoning oozes.

Environment

The cave's surfaces drip with water, and the air is heavy with vapor. Two immense bronze disks decorated with draconic motifs cover the ground, formerly the sleeping mats of the dragons when they laired here. The room was converted to a summoning chamber where the cult set up monoliths around the disks. Ghosty flames that don't emulate any heat twinkle in the darkness of the chamber. If a character searches the room, they can find several scales of various sizes in the disks or under them. With a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check, a character can discern that they belonged to bronze dragons, with a **DC 21 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check that the dragons were young and ancient (Large and Gargantuan size).

Scene

Four **unholy flesh-eating gray oozes** still occupy the cave, hiding as puddles on the ground, stains on the wall, and in the bronze disks. The oozes wait motionless until targets are within striking distance.

Unholy flesh-eating gray ooze (CR 1, 200 XP). Use the **gray ooze** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Aura of Bane.*** Every creature that can see the ooze within a radius of 20 feet must make a **DC 13 Charisma** saving throw every round. Whenever a creature that fails this saving throw makes an attack roll or a saving throw, the target must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from the attack roll or saving throw. If a creature makes its saving throw, it is immune to the *Aura of Bane* effect for 24 hours.
- ***Corrode Flesh.*** Any organic material that touches the ooze corrodes. If any creature touches the ooze or attacks it with natural weapons, their Consti-

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tution score is reduced by 1. The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. The target creature regains 1 Constitution score after each long rest. This ability replaces the *Corrode Metal* trait.

- ***Pseudopod.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target's Constitution score is reduced by 1. The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. The target creature regains 1 Constitution score after each long rest. This attack replaces the *Pseudopod* action of the ooze.

4. Flooded Tunnels

Background

Thelarmas constructed the tunnels that led to its lair painstakingly over hundreds of years. The tunnels are completely flooded from the pool in area 2, and one can easily find themselves trapped underwater if they stay too long in the tunnels.

Environment

The water in the tunnels is murky, and the entire area is lightly obscured by the muck floating in the water. Razor-sharp **wall blades** protrude from the walls at different heights in every tunnel, making swimming here a treacherous endeavor.

Scene

The flooded tunnels are lightly obscured areas.

Wall Blades. Any character who moves in a corridor must make a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw or suffer 9 (2d8) points of slashing damage.

5. Lightning Chambers

Background

Thelarmas collected five *javelins of lightning* and plunged them into the bedrock, unleashing their magical energies to create additional deadly obstacles to its hoard.

Environment

The water in the tunnels is murky, and the entire area is lightly obscured by the muck floating in the water. The murk regularly flashes with bluish light and the water vibrates with electricity. In the center of the room, a javelin protrudes from the rock, which is cracked from the force with which the weapon was stuck into the ground.

Javelin of Lightning. The *javelin of lightning* discharges its energy every round in the room. A creature in the room takes 14 (4d6) lightning damage at the start of its turn, or half that amount if it succeeds on **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw. The javelin can be removed from the rock with a **DC 20 Strength** ability check, which will only end the discharges if removed from the water.

Treasure

The *javelin of lightning* is fully functional after being removed from the rock.

5a. The Split Jelly

Background

Two ochre jellies were brought into this chamber by the cult of the Blind God as a form of worship to proliferate them into numerous smaller jellies.

Environment

Same as area 5.

Scene

There are eight **ochre jellies** floating in the room. Each is Small size and has 12 hit points.

Treasure

Same as area 5.

6. Shrine of the Blind God

Background

This vast chamber, able to comfortably accommodate an ancient dragon, was where Thelarmas amassed its horde. It is also where the ancient bronze dragon met

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its doom when the cult of the Blind God stormed the lair at the command of their unholy deity. A black pudding infested the dragon in the chamber, and after it fled with its young Selvaro, the ancient dragon succumbed to the pudding that corroded it from inside out.

The pudding quickly eroded the dragon's impressive horde to a mound of orange dust, and the cult turned the chamber into their main shrine by raising a monolith and desecrating the room with a *hallow* spell so it would be a bane to those that enter. The cult used the room to commune with their otherworldly deity, who communicated to its worshippers by using oozes for etching strange markings and instructions into the floor with acid that the cultists could interpret by touch.

After the mass ritual self-sacrifice of the cult, the spirits of all of its members were drawn to the focus of their faith - the monolith to the Blind God - and rose in undeath as a spectral congregation, rewarded by their unholy master with the chance for eternal worship.

Environment

A strange monolith rises to a height of 10 feet in the center of the room, growing from the stone floor and covered in runes and the symbol of an eye with two scars across its iris. A mound of orange rust lies along the western wall. The room is sparsely furnished with ornate pieces that are mostly broken and decrepit due to decades of disuse.

Scene

The room is under the effect of a *hallow* spell, cast using a 5th level spell slot, which has infused the room with unholy power. Any creature in the room gains energy vulnerability to acid damage.

A **spectral congregation** hovers above the monolith, composed of the souls of dead cultists. The faces that form the entity shriek in silent rage, a green glow emanating from their jaws, and empty eye sockets that seem to follow one's gaze.

The chamber is also home to an unholy infesting black pudding that sits on the mound of rust.

Unholy infesting black pudding. Use the **black pudding** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Aura of Bane.*** Every creature that can see the ooze within a radius of 20 feet must make a **DC 13 Charisma** saving throw every round. Whenever a creature that fails this saving throw makes an attack roll or a saving throw, the target must roll a d4 and

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subtract the number rolled from the attack roll or saving throw. If a creature makes its saving throw, it is immune to the *Aura of Bane* effect for 24 hours.

- ***Infesting Pseudopod.*** Whenever the ooze scores a critical hit against a creature with its pseudopod, in addition to dealing damage, the pseudopod can try to force a piece of itself down its victim's throat. The target must make a successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. On a failed check, the target suffers 1d4 points of acid damage at the start of every turn as its insides corrode away. A *lesser restoration* or higher level curative spell ends the effect.

7. Library

Background

This room used to be the library of Thelarmas, housing tomes and scrolls that the dragon collected over long centuries. The cult turned the room into their sleeping quarters and burned all the parchments in the library as kindling.

Environment

Simple wooden planks with bedding covered in mildew are spread around the room. The shelves hold empty scroll cases, and a layer of ash covers the ground.

Treasure

A character that makes a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice the wooden handle of a *slime slinger* that slightly sticks out from under a dirty pillow on a bed. The weapon was discarded here before its owner's demise.

8. Tomb of Lord Arden

Background

This chamber houses the mortal remains of Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, who was laid to rest here by his friend Thelarmas. As the cultists didn't covet material things in their mad goal of self-annihilation, they left the remains of the Red Cloak alone and used the chamber for meditation.

Environment

A large stone tomb whose lid depicts Lord Arden lies along the room's western wall with an engraved text on its side. Several monoliths rise on the opposite side of the room, carved with strange runes and symbols. Candles burn in front of the monoliths with ghostly flames that don't emit any heat. A large chest sits by the northern wall, containing the now decomposed personal items of Lord Arden

"Faithful friend and confidant, Lord Eard Wytas Arden"

The writing on the side of the tomb.

Treasure

The tomb contains the body of Lord Arlen, clad in his plate armor embellished with the noble crest of House Arlen, with his *+1 longsword* and *+1 shield* clasped in its skeletal hands together with a Red Cloak Lawgiver amulet. Both armaments bear the symbol of House Arden. The *clay torc of the tower* encircles the dead lord's wrist.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for recovering the *clay torc of the tower*.

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27. GARDEN OF PLENTY

Background

The Midnight Curse has manifested in the Wedgewoods in a way that every living creature has become insatiably hungry - nothing they can eat will sate their appetites, leading them into a bloodthirsty rage. As a result, wildlife has mainly become extinct, with the remaining alpha predators roaming the forest hunting for meat. A magical garden at the center of the woods has also been affected. The magical berries create an urge to eat even more of them, and anyone who succumbs to the magic stays in the glade, forever stuffing the berries into their mouths. The huge bear of the garden has eaten most of the berries and has become enraged that it cannot satiate its hunger for more.

Environment

The rotting carcasses of the previous wildlife, chewed down to the bone, can be found everywhere in the Wedgewoods. They become more frequent in the deeper parts of the woods and especially around the Garden of Plenty.

Scene

When characters enter the Wedgewoods, they soon experience the curse of the forest. Every time characters consume food as part of a short or long rest within the Wedgewoods, they must make a successful **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the food doesn't offer nourishment, the character doesn't gain the benefits of resting, and stays hungry. A remove curse spell ends the effect and allows the character to rest.

The Garden of Plenty lies in the center of the forest, in a secluded depression. It is home to a **huge brown bear** that has come to dominate the surrounding area. The bear is starving and bloodthirsty, as it has eaten all the magical berries from the bushes that it can reach. It will guard the glade with a savage fury.

Huge Brown Bear (CR 2, 450 XP). Use the **brown bear** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The bear has two levels of exhaustion.
- It is Huge size.
- Its Strength score is 23 and Constitution score is 20.
- It has 128 hit points.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage.
- ***Claws.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) slashing damage.

The magical bush at the center of the glade has been stripped of its berries, except a few at the bottom of the bush. Characters can find twelve ripe berries with a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The berries function as those from a *goodberry* spell without any time constraints. However, these berries also bear the cursed nature of the woods. Any character who consumes the berries must make a successful **DC 12 Wisdom** saving throw or become charmed on a failed save. While charmed, the character will not leave the area of the Garden of Plenty and will seek to eat all the remaining berries. The effect is permanent but can be removed with a *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell, or a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check to cleanse the character of the fruits.

28. WATERS OF WRATH

Background

The waters of the pristine lake are cursed and whoever drinks from the waters is affected by an uncontrolled rage, trying to kill everyone they see. A gelatinous cube from the Shrine of the Blind God (location 26.) has slithered down from the mountains and now makes its lair in the pond.

Environment

The shores of the pond are littered with the savagely mangled carcasses of various animals. There is a clearly visible trail leading from the northeast corner of the pond towards the Shandar Mountains, where the ground has been corroded by acid.

Scene

An enraged **giant boar** (use the rage ability of the Barbarian class) is roaming around the western shore

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of the pond, searching for things to kill. In addition, a **gelatinous cube** lurks in the **raging waters** and attacks anyone who approaches the shore.

Raging Waters. If any character drinks from the clear waters of the pond, they must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or rage uncontrollably for 24 hours, attacking the nearest creature. This rage otherwise functions as the *Rage* ability of the Barbarian class. A *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell otherwise ends the effect.

The trail burned by acid leads up the mountains and can be easily followed to the Shrine of the Blind God.

29. Smokestone Mine

Background

Ilberd Serpentpike, the halfling chief engineer of the mine, has recently started seeing visions of a vein of mithral and has pushed the already exhausted and scared miners to the brink of rebellion. The miners worry for their families, who are mostly in Onadbyr and are unwilling to continue work, but they cannot leave due to the **choking rain**. They have locked up Ilberd Serpentpike.

Environment

A large stone gateway leads into the depths of the mining tunnels deep below ground, ending in a couple of enormous excavated caves where the richest veins were found. A few wooden cottages and a larger communal building stand near the entrance. The place is dirty, downtrodden, and neglected but still functional.

Scene

The twenty-three frustrated miners (use the **expert** monster entry) spend most of the days in the communal building that serves as a canteen, discussing plans to reach Onadbyr. They have locked up the furious Ilberd Serpentpike (use the **expert** monster entry) in his private cottage and regularly provide him with food and drink. Characters can convince the miners to release the chief engineer with a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check, but they also ask the characters to provide a safe passage to Onadbyr or at least to Gorso.

The local miners or Ilberd Serpentpike have never heard of the *torcs of the tower* or Jwarlea Jyle, the Red Cloak Lawgiver who was stationed at this mining town, which used to be a much more densely populated settlement in her time over six hundred years ago.

Experience

Award the characters 700 experience points if they convince the miners to release Ilberd Serpentpike and an additional 700 experience points if they escort the miners to a large settlement.

30. Nest of the Cackling Crows

Background

The roc that nests on the western borders is known to many in Aglarion for the occasional disappearance of caravans in the Ardens or entire barges from the River Halueth that the colossal raven snatches up. Most folks try to steer clear of the bird under the forest cover and pray that the roc doesn't spot them on forest clearings or the river. The roc has been named the Cackling Crow by the locals, as it voices the cackle of several witches with its *mimicry* ability when it swoops down to attack. In reality, it mimics the cackling of the Matrons of Malice, who had visited the nest from time to time.

The nest is actually the prison and place of survival for Freall, the bird-creature, whose tragic fate is closely tied to the machinations of the Matrons of Malice. Freall lived in the Arden Forest in total isolation, in a wood cabin with her elven father Elayros. Elayros showed the young girl all the secrets of the forest and trained her as an expert ranger. He even led the girl to a most ancient and sacred place, the Stride of the Elders, but warned Freall not to undertake the path until she was ready. Then tragedy befell the family. A roving band of spriggans sent by

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Nest of the Cackling Crows

1 tile = 5 feet

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Blister to the Material Plane as scouts stumbled upon Elayros and Freall in the Arden Forest. They captured the rangers, took their treasure, and brought them back to the Feyrealm through the Hagtree. Elayros was surprised to see that the spriggans could directly reach the tree by bypassing the Stride of the Elders, and this thought lingered in his mind even when the pair of rangers were brought in front of the Matrons of Malice. The midnight hags read his thoughts like a book and learned that the ranger knew a secret path to the only portal to their Feyrealm domain. They extracted Elayros' soul before his daughter, whom they banished back to the Material Plane to suffer from the shock and terror of the last thing she saw. The girl went mad with paranoia and wandered the Arden Forest alone, like a hunted beast, reliving the horrific events every night in her dreams.

Over 10 years ago, Splinter appeared to Freall and tasked the terrified girl with meeting a company of men at the edge of the Arden Forest - a king, a prince, a knight, a wizard, and a priest - and leading them to the Stride of the Elders. She was ordered not to speak of the Hagtree, the Bleak Mire, or the Matrons to the company, enforced with a *geas* spell to ensure her silence. She did as told, met the royal company, and led them to the secret path while reciting the druidic chant. The king and his companions followed the sacred trail into the forest and soon disappeared deep into the woods.

Soon after, the Matrons of Malice appeared to Freall to get rid of her, as she was the last person to know about the location of the Stride of the Elders, the only way to their treasured Feyrealm domain. The panicked and confused Freall attacked the midnight hags, who just cackled and subdued her with their powerful spells. The hags transported the helpless woman to the cliffs of the Mountainfall, to the nest of the roc, and cast a wicked curse on her that would slowly transform her into a roc and strip her of intelligible speech.

Freall withdrew deep into the nest, out of the reach of the birds, and has gone insane after years of confinement under the rocs and the maddening cackle of the giant crow. Unable to leave, she has eked out a meager survival in her prison and dedicates her existence to mad prayers to the Inevitable for her father's soul. She has set up a network of chambers, out of the reach of the giant bird and its three hatchlings, sustaining herself on scraps that fall into her lair from the prey of the birds - primarily parts of corpses of large animals but sometimes civilized folk. Compounding her madness, Freall is incredibly bitter, vengeful, betrayed, and paranoid. She will not abide intruders into her isolation and has set traps all around her lair to keep everyone out.

The druidic chant was erased from Freall's memory by the Matrons of Malice, but she still knows the exact location of the Stride of the Elders that she learned from her father. However, she must be forced or tricked into leading the characters there unless her madness is cured.

Environment

The nest is located on a ledge 12,000 feet above the canyon floor. It is a thick mass of large wooden branches and debris. Under and inside the nest, Freall has constructed her makeshift home out of a wagon, parts of a river barge, and the bones of large animals. The rocs can peck into the tumble of the body of the nest in a few open holes, where debris and food waste fall down to Freall's chambers.

Body of the Nest. Tiny creatures can move through the nest by squeezing within its structure amongst the logs and debris. For medium or larger creatures, all chambers are considered cramped spaces.

1. The Nest

Environment

The upper portion of the nest is a tangle of wooden logs and branches, sometimes entire trees, bones of large animals, including skeletons of huge fish and reptiles, as well as parts of vehicles that the roc has swept up. The nest is covered by a layer of guano, the soft feathers of the hatchlings, and the giant feathers of the Cackling Crow that are 12 feet in length.

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Scene

The mother roc, the **cackling crow,** is in her nest. It flies out regularly to stalk the area from above. Make sure characters see the bird from afar so they can plan their move. A fully-grown roc is an overwhelming challenge for the characters at this level, as this monstrosity can lift objects the size of wagons and boats in its talons. With a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (History or Nature)** skill check, characters would recall that the roc hunts large beasts and enjoys preying on huge transport vehicles like caravan wagons or boats, especially if they have shiny parts or cargo that glitters. The bird snatches up these vehicles, takes them to its nest, and nibbles on the helpless victims inside at its pleasure, feeding its young. The bird could easily be lured from its lair if a suitable and clearly visible target was displayed to it, far from its nest. This would give characters enough time to traverse the cliffs and meet Freall before the bird returns.

If characters haven't lured away the Cackling Crow, it is in its nest, guarding its three **roc chicks** in the upper portion of the nest. The hatchlings are constantly ravenous. They are flightless but can move around within the perimeter of the gigantic nest.

Cackling Crow. Use the **roc** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Mimicry.*** The Cackling Crow can mimic simple sounds it has heard, such as a person whispering, a baby crying, or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check. The Cackling Crow mimics the cackling on the Matrons of Malice, in three tones that resemble the midnight hags' cackles.

Roc Chick (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **roc** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The roc chick is Huge size.
- It has AC 13.
- It has 57 hit points.
- It has a Strength score of 22.
- ***Beak.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 +6) piercing damage.
- ***Talons.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the roc chick can't use its talons on another target.

2. HOLE OF FILTH

Background

Freall scavenges the Hole of Filth for meager scraps of food or useful items that fall into the chamber from above.

Environment

The cavern smells of decayed flesh and the pungent, musty, and acrid odor of bird droppings covering the floor. The entire chamber is littered with the carcasses of animals and other creatures that have been nibbled clean by the birds above or only partially consumed before they fell down the hole.

Scene

Noxious gases have built up in the chamber, filling the air with a stench that brings tears to one's eye and turns the stomach. At the start of its turn, each creature in the chamber must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw against poison. On a failed save, the creature spends its action that turn retching and reeling. Creatures that don't need to breathe or are immune to poison automatically succeed on this saving throw.

The rocs can reach into the chamber from above, threatening the areas marked with light on the map.

3. STORAGE HOLE

Background

The chamber is used for storage by Freall for useful resources she has collected from anything that has fallen into her lair. In her paranoia, Freall has also trapped the entrance to the room, careful to stay out of the reach of the rocs.

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Environment

A range of items are spread around this cramped room - barrels of water and spirits, sacks of various grains, a selection of weapons including three longswords, two shortswords, two hammers, two battleaxes, and two flails, as well as a shield and a full plate armor on a long-dead warrior.

Scene

Freall has trapped the four tiles at the entrance to the chamber with a falling net trap, constructed from a fine mesh of fabric that she has covered in tar. The rocs can reach into the chamber from above, threatening the areas marked with light on the map.

The three **roc chicks** will attack any character that steps onto the tiles marked in light.

Falling Net. This trap uses a tripwire to release a net suspended from the ceiling. The tripwire is 3 inches off the ground and stretches between two wooden logs at the entrance to the room. The net is hidden by foliage and sticks on the ceiling. Creatures can make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to spot the tripwire and net. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check using thieves' tools can sever the trip wire harmlessly. Without thieves' tools, a creature can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. When the trap is triggered, the net is released, covering a 10-foot-square area. Those in the area are trapped under the net and restrained, and those that fail a **DC 10 Strength** saving throw are also knocked prone. A creature can use its action to make a **DC 13 Strength** ability check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. The net has AC 10 and 20 hit points. Dealing 10 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) destroys a 5-foot-square section of it, freeing any creature trapped in that section.

Treasure

Any character that spends at least 10 rounds rummaging through the contents of the room can assemble each of the seven equipment packs found in the Player's Guide. Any character who makes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice a small bag that has fallen deeper under the room's floor. The bag contains twelve beautifully chiseled obsidians, each worth 24 gold pieces. Additionally, it contains a metal disc made of blackened steel with a black diamond at its center - a holy symbol of the Darkness Within - as well as the inscription "The Gate to the Darkness awaits." The symbol is worth 150 gold pieces.

4. Altar to the Inevitable

Background

Freall uses this chamber to find solace in prayers at an altar she has constructed from skulls, consecrated to the deity of the death, the Inevitable. She pleads for her father's soul and a chance for him to be reborn. Freall has also fashioned a library of sorts, composed of books with pretty pictures, assembled on the deck of a riverboat that has collapsed into the chamber from above.

Environment

This chamber is bare and dark, except for an altar constructed of skulls lit up by candles burning in candelabras. The back portion of the room features the bottom half of a riverboat that has sunk into the chamber from above. On its benches, Freall has assembled some books she scavenged over the years.

Treasure

The books are all illustrated tomes. Three are of a considerable rarity - "The Divine Among Us: Deities of Aglarion", "The Mechanics of Traps", and "Heraldry of the Realm: Houses under Queen Linolu." All volumes are worth 100 gold pieces to the right buyer.

5. Freall's Chamber

Background

Freall has made her lair in this chamber, making it as comfortable as possible despite the cramped conditions. When not praying or looking at pictures in area 4, she spends her time sleeping, scribbling mad

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notes and geometric signs at a makeshift desk, or shooting bolts at a corpse she has slumped against the wall for target practice.

Environment

The entrance to the chamber is covered by a tapestry. Beyond, the room contains a makeshift bed made of animal skins and a small writing desk with some parchments, a bottle of ink, and a crow quill on its surface and a stool beside it. Several branches hold drying clothes, and some targets are placed throughout the chamber, one of them the corpse of an adventurer who tried to infiltrate the roc's nest for treasure a few years ago.

Freall has constructed a deadly trapdoor at the entrance to her chamber that opens to a vast plummet of 200 feet to the jagged slopes below the nest.

Hidden trapdoor. This trapdoor is constructed from a wooden panel, covered by branches and foliage to look identical to the floor around it. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check discerns the wooden plank that is hidden under the foliage. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check is necessary to confirm that the trapped floor section is actually the cover of a hole.

When a creature steps on the cover, it swings open, causing the intruder to fall through. Once the trap is detected, an iron spike or similar object can be wedged between the pit's cover and the surrounding floor in such a way as to prevent the cover from opening, thereby making it safe to cross. The cover can also be magically held shut using the *arcane lock* spell or similar magic. Any creature that falls through can make a successful **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw to hold onto the edge of the opening or catch a branch to escape the deadly plummet of 200 feet that deals 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage.

Scene

Freall has an indefinite madness that manifests as paranoia. The cursed bird-creature retreats to her chambers if alerted to intruders, waiting for her traps to do the work and lying in wait behind her desk with her crossbow. She attacks any creature that steps into her chamber with a barrage of bolts but retreats to the corner and cowers if she falls below half of her maximum hit points.

Freall (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **priest** monster entry with the following modifications:

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FREALL

- Freall has a fly speed of 60 ft.
- She has skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5.
- She has a Dexterity score of 14.
- She has an AC of 13 (leather armor).
- She wears a *ring of shadow manipulation*.
- ***Keen Hearing and Sight.*** Freall has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.
- ***Multiattack.*** Frealll makes two melee attacks with its claws or ranged attacks with a heavy crossbow.
- ***Claw.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.
- ***+1 Heavy Crossbow of Mischance.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage. On a roll of 13 and if the attack is a hit, the damage is increased by 7 points of piercing damage.

The characters can ease her paranoia and manipulate Freall into leading them to the Stride of the Elders with a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check followed by a **DC 13 Charisma (Deception** or **Persuasion)** skill check. Freall's paranoia takes over if the Charisma skill check fails and she attacks the characters.

If she regains her mental faculties, she will first be hesitant to converse with outsiders after long years of solitude. Still, if questioned about the Stride of the Elders, she will become animated, spitting ferociously.

Freall's motivations are to escape her prison, find her father's soul, and get vengeance on the Matrons of Malice. If convinced to assist the characters, she will eagerly show the way to the Stride of the Elders (location 43.) and even join the characters to the Bleak Mire in her quest for vengeance .

"I will lead you... Chirp... to the Stride of the Elders whence we will travel... Chirp... Chirp... through the ancient hidden pathways of the Seven... Chirp...Flowers to the World of the Fey."

Freall once convinced to lead the characters to the Stride of the Elders.

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Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can secure Freall's aid in finding the Stride of the Elders.

31. Gate to the Darkness Within

Background

After the banishment of the Dark Star, it's dark planetar generals and their dark deva army, the forces of the Order of the Eternal Light purged the followers of the fallen angels. A small surviving cell, composed of the dark angel's most zealous and privileged loyalists, fled to the Mountainfall to escape the searing flames of their formerly suppressed slaves. The priests of darkness raised a monumental gate with magic and opened a portal to the darkest section of the divine realm of the deity known as Light and Darkness to follow their banished masters.

Illiandro, the most celebrated painter of the Kingdom of Aglarion, tries to flee from the Midnight Curse and the reign of Queen Aphinah as far as he can. He discovered the Gate to the Darkness Within and was amazed by its sheer size and the shapes that move within its dark confines. Having nowhere to go, he decided to settle at the feet of the monument and create a series of paintings inspired by it.

Environment

An immense dark gate stands on the top of a mountain plateau. This colossal stone gate and the embossed inscriptions on it were obviously created by powerful magic. The thick pillars and the lintel are 100 feet wide, framing a 180 feet tall and 180 feet wide gate that is filled with unnatural darkness. Ominous dark grey shapes can sometimes be seen within the darkness that form as quickly as they disappear. The surrounding area is covered in eerie silence. A small camp with a tent stands not far from the gate.

The Gate to the Darkness Within is a two-way portal for all mortals but celestial and immortal creatures can't pass through it from any direction.

Scene

Illiandro (use the **expert** monster entry) is happy to see other civilized beings but he is also in a philosophical mood and in deep despair. He sees the mystic occurrences of the Midnight Curse as the beginning of a new apocalypse and considers the gate as both the memento of an ancient cataclysm and as a symbolic final exit from life itself, would one not be able to withstand the hardships of this world. Illiandro is able to provide generic information about most of the publicly known landmarks and settlements within the kingdom of Aglarion.

ILLIANDRO

"We are forced to live under these dark violet skies but our choice to end all this lies right in front of our eyes. Do we die a certain death here or enter the ominous unknown?"

Illiandro lamenting on the options he perceives.

A character who crosses the Gate to the Darkness Within appears in a dark, barren and open environment on the divine plane of the combined entity called the Light and Darkness. One's eyes can hardly separate the dark stones of the ground from the dark starless sky above. A small flickering light is visible in the distance where the domain of the Shining Light begins but it is so far that it is but a mere mirage that can never be reached. Only creatures with dark-

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vision can make out their surroundings and see several dozen skeletons that lie on the rocks, all dressed in rotting ceremonial black garments of an ancient age. These are the remains of the mortals who followed the dark angels through the gate that they had raised. The cultists were slain by their former dark celestial masters for daring to enter their domain. Their souls have hunted this site ever since and rise as eight **specters** when mortals approach.

A non-celestial, non-undead creature that uses the portal can return to the Material Plane through the gate at any time. A non-celestial, non-undead creature has its maximum hit points reduced by 1 hit point at the start of its turn while it remains in the divine realm.

After one minute, a pair of dark devas (use the **deva** monster entry with an alignment of *lawful evil and replace radiant with necrotic damage*) arrive and attack without any desire to converse with the characters.

Treasure

Illiandro carries a *wand of lightning bolt* as a form of self defense. In his waterproof tent, Illiandro stores 12 complex studies of the gate done in charcoal, each worth 100 gold pieces to the right buyer. In a waterproof chest the master painter stores eight completed paintings of the gate that are each worth 500 gold pieces to an art collector.

32. Abulior Whitegate's Workshop

Background

Abulior Whitegate was one of the four academicians of the Arcane Tower and a protege of Master Eydan. After Master Eydan's retirement, Abulior Whitegate was warned many times by Master Zaophas, the new archmage of the academy, not to meddle with the lore of the ancient fallen angels. However, one day, after a heated argument with the archmage, Abulior Whitegate stole an ancient parchment recovered by Master Arlen hundreds of years ago and fled the academy to hide in the wilderness. The motivation behind Abulior Whitegate's actions came from a frantic admiration for Master Arlen's work, and the young wizard madly craves the knowledge of the first and greatest archmage of the realm.

Abulior's secret research led him to realize that the source of Master Arlen's incredible power was one of the ancient fallen angels, named Samkiel, the deva loremaster of the Dark Star who was imprisoned by the dark solar for foretelling its inevitable banishment from the Material Plane. The parchment he stole contains the secret celestial phrase that summons the Ziggurat of the New Moon that serves as Samkiel's prison. Abulior Whitegate has yet to uncover the ziggurat's location, and he does not know that the ziggurat can only be summoned at the culmination of the new moon.

Ha'aren Blackbone visited Abulior Whitegate a year ago and used guile and trickery to converse with the wizard and gain access to the information within the dark celestial parchment.

Environment

A small wooden hut stands next to a neatly arranged pile of large logs. The hut seems accurately designed and built with well-crafted features, like glass ceiling windows with remotely operable shutters and a small wind turbine on the roof. The inside of the house looks more like a mechanic's workshop than a home, with workstations, crafting resources, and tools taking up most of the space. The wizard sleeps in a gallery above the main room, accessible via a retractable staircase.

Scene

Abulior Whitegate (use the **academician of the Arcane Tower** monster entry with an alignment of *lawful evil*, and the spell *animate object* prepared instead of *legend lore*) welcomes the characters in a morose tone and is suspicious about their motivations. He comes out of his hut to talk and has more questions than answers. His **homunculus,** Retriever, stands by his side at all times. A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can convince the wizard that they mean no harm or are not after him and can make the wizard open up. On a failed

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check, the wizard asks the characters to leave him alone and shuts the door in their faces.

Even if the characters gain Abulior Whitegate's trust, he does not tell the characters why he has left the Arcane Tower. However he is motivated to help the characters conjure the academy and talk to Master Eydan. Secretly, he wants to reinstate the old archmage if possible and continue researching Samkiel, who he thinks holds all of the answers he seeks. A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can deduct that the wizard has other motivations than what he presents.

Abulior Whitegate does not comprehend the true significance of the parchment he stole from the Arcane Tower but considers it an important relic that bears notes by the hand of Master Arlen himself. The parchment is written in dark Celestial and contains unholy scripts about the planetar general Morkiel with a highlighted phrase: "The darkness shall feed their fears." The parchment also contains notes by Master Arlen.

DARK STAR PARCHMENT

Abulior Whitegate gets overly excited if he learns that the characters know about the location of the Tomb of the Constructor or the Ziggurat of the New Moon. He wants to visit both locations immediately because he knows that they will hold even more of the first archmage's secrets. The wizard goes to extreme measures to acquire this information. He will follow the characters using multiple *invisibility* spells and even casting *dominate person* on the most susceptible character from hiding when the opportunity arises. Abulior Whitegate will try to flee with the use of *dimensional door* and *fly* spells if discovered, but he returns soon and will retry his tactic later. If cornered, he will fight the characters in his mad desperation.

Abulior Whitegate knows about and has seen the Colossus and is eager to learn how to control it. He has found the Golemcraft Cave of Master Arlen but was unable to understand the arcane control formula that was lost to the teeth of time, so he eventually gave up trying.

If asked about Ha'aren Blackbone or the *torcs of the tower,* the wizard tells the characters that he has met the Red Cloak Lawgiver, who visited him over a year ago. He confirms that they had a long discussion, but he does not attribute much importance to the event. The wizard even adds that he has found the visit strange and seemingly pointless.

ABULIOR WHITEGATE

"The Red Cloak visited me over a year ago. She wore the adamantine torc of the tower. But besides that, it was a relatively unimportant meeting and a dull conversation about the kingdom, King Waldrann, and other everyday topics. She didn't even ask about the academy."

Abulior Whitegate speaking about meeting with Ha'aren Blackbone.

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If the characters ask Abulior Whitegate about Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden then he can confirm that both the noble Red Cloak Lawgiver of old and his close ally, the bronze dragon Thelarmas, died long ago and he can relate tell the location of the Dragon's Bones (location 25.) to the characters.

"This is your only chance to reveal the location of the tomb. I will not ask you twice."

Abulior Whitegate threatening the characters.

Treasure

Abulior Whitegate's personal treasure consists of 211 silver pieces, 893 gold pieces, 3 platinum bars, and a *ring of free action* that he wears at all times.

33. Greymoss Clan Lair

Background

The stone giants of Greymoss Clan used to be reclusive and calm creatures who rarely interacted with the small folk and stayed out of others' affairs as much as they could. They have recently developed an unnatural fear of tiny vermin, ever since a pack of rats has infested their lair. The stone giants have fled their lair and are hiding in the area at the feet of the mountains, hoping that someone will aid them in their dire situation.

Environment

The giants have carved several enormous gateways and halls into the side of the mountain. The halls, which are spartan in their furnishings constructed of boulders, are connected with tall and wide corridors.

Scene

Eight **stone giants** approach the characters cautiously as they pass near their lair and try not to threaten them with their mere presence. Their leader, Vorold, asks for the character's aid and promises to pay them with raw ores if they get rid of the rats in their lair. Volord and the other stone giants - males, females, and children - seem to be genuinely terrified of rats, which is evident even as they speak about them.

VOROLD

"A carpet of furred beasts. The harbingers of doom. They crawl, and they chew. A curse that plagues our home and our minds."

Vorold describing the swarm of terrifying rats.

Soon after the Midnight Curse engulfed the realm, the lair of the Greymoss Clan was overrun by a large **swarm of terrifying rats** that have developed a magical ability to cause fear in those who look into their eyes.

Swarm of Terrifying Rats (CR 2, 450 XP). Use the **swarm of rats** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The swarm of terrifying rats is a Huge creature.
- It has 96 hit points.
- ***Terrifying Gaze.*** A creature that can see the eye of one of the rats of the swarm of terrifying rats must make a **DC 14 Wisdom** saving throw or become frightened and must use its action and movement each round to flee from the source of their fear.

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Lodge of Wanderlust

Ground Level

Top Level

1 tile = 5 feet

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A creature frightened this way can stop fleeing if it loses sight of the swarm of terrifying rats, but it will not be freed from the frightened condition until it finishes a long rest.

Treasure

The stone giants present the characters with 400 pounds of high-grade raw silver veins embedded in several large stone blocks that weigh 20 to 50 pounds. The silver deposit is worth 1,000 gold pieces and can be extracted by an expert with sufficient tools and techniques.

34. Lodge of Wanderlust

Background

The Lodge of Wanderlust has been a permanent fixture in the Arden Forest since anyone can remember. The lodge is an adventurer's guild established by Cygnus, the couatl paladin of the Shining Light, over a thousand years ago to hunt down all traces of the dark angels that ruled over Aglarion. The guild employs adventurers to find and notify Cygnus of any information about the Dark Star or the Darkness Within, allowing Cygnus and its allies to investigate the finds further. One such adventurer was Ha'aren Blackbone, a Red Cloak Lawgiver in possession of the *adamantine torc of the tower,* who visited the lodge recently and befriended the couatl. The two were united by their shared goal of finding Samkiel's fabled ziggurat prison, which was unveiled in secret by Master Arlen centuries ago. Cygnus knows that the ziggurat is hidden and is somehow tied to the darkest phase of the new moon, information that the legendary creature shared with Ha'aren Blackbone. Ha'aren Blackbone searched for the exact location and the command phrase that conjures the ziggurat, but she refused aid offered by Cygnus to accompany her. Instead, she told the couatl that she would return with any information she found. Cygnus has not heard from Ha'aren Blackbone since.

A druidic circle worshipping vermin called the Initiates of the Swarm has chosen the lodge as the target of a raid, coveting the knowledge stored within the building and aiming to make it the nest of their fire beetle thralls. The circle has charmed a ginormous fire beetle that has been infused with magical energies. The beetle spawns swarms of fire beetles, commanded against the building in full force by the druids. Cygnus is trapped within, fighting to repel the invading vermin.

Environment

The Lodge of Wanderlust, whose walls could tell many tales about the past, is an ancient but well-maintained building along the Trade Road in a valley clearing of the Arden Forest. The building is constructed as a fortification, its walls made of 10-foot thick, sturdy granite blocks. The sides of the building are lined with small arrow slits that cut through the stone wall. Streams of ivy partially cover the walls and roof, growing on the brick-red shingles.

Windows. The thick wall of the building features windows that sit in the inner slot of the walls, which open in cones to allow the defense of the building. Each window can be locked with fortified shutters and latches from the inside. They have AC 18, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. The latches can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Scene

Characters can see the lodge from a fork in the road, lying below them in a small valley. Protruding from the smashed riders' gate of the building stands an immense black and red **ginormous magic-infused fire beetle.** The beetle glows with bright light and will attack anyone who ventures within range of its sight or attacks it.

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Ginormous Magic-Infused Fire Beetle (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **giant fire beetle** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The ginormous fire beetle is Huge size.
- It has 132 hit points.
- It has a Strength score of 16.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3).
- ***Spawn Fire Beetle Swarms (Recharge 5-6).*** A swarm of magic-infused fire beetles bursts from the abdomen of the ginormous fire beetle.
- ***Infused with Magic.*** The ginormous fire beetle's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

1. Riders' Gate

Background

The fortified riders' gate is used for travelers arriving on horses to the lodge.

Environment

The riders' gate is completely destroyed, as is the inner door leading to area 3. All the looseboxes are empty, except for the southwestern one, where the carcass of a horse lies sprawled out, mangled and half-eaten, entirely covered by fire beetles. Two open storage closets are used to store hay and water.

Scene

The ginormous fire beetle stands in the doorway, its mandibles clamping at the air outside. It is spewing forth swarms of smaller beetles of the same species from its abdomen into the building. A **swarm of magic-infused fire beetles** crawls on the horse's carcass and will attack moving targets that enter the stable area.

2. Adventurers' Gate

Background

The main entrance to the lodge is where visitors would gain entry by ringing the bell outside.

Environment

The massive iron-wrought wooden doors of the building are shut. A bell in the shape of a coiled serpent hangs next to the door.

Doors. The reinforced doors that lead into the lodge can be locked with a key carried by Cygnus. They have AC 17, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They feature masterfully crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

3. Hall of the Hearths

Background

This grand hall is the lodge's central meeting and feasting room, where travelers can rest after their long journeys across the continent. The meal of the current visitors of the lodge was interrupted by the attack of the druids, and they fled from the beetles to the second floor.

Environment

This immense room is illuminated by two hearths from the western side of the room and lit torches on the walls, giving the hall a homely and comfortable atmosphere. A huge table dominates the room, able to seat a score of guests. A few places on the table are set and show meals that have only partially been eaten. The decorations - rugs and tapestries - around the room are of exceptional quality and from a wide variety of styles from exotic faraway places. A few coats hang on pegs by the eastern entrance to the room, where a large bench welcomes visitors to clean their boots after their travels.

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Scene

Two **swarms of magic-infused fire beetles** crawl around the room and on the table and attack moving targets entering the hall. The swarms are charmed by two **Initiates of the Swarm** members - Kelfar the Spider and Formjas the Mite - who are standing at the bottom of the stairs, hesitant to attack Cygnus in the room above.

Initiate of the Swarm. Use the **druid** monster entry with the following modifications:

- It has the following druid spells prepared:
  - Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, guidance, poison spray*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, cure wounds, jump, speak with animals*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin, hold person*

4. Kitchen

Background

Cygnus enjoys serving delicious meals to the rare visitor, using exotic spices and ingredients collected from far and wide, over millennia. One of these meals has been interrupted by the vermin, leaving the kitchen unattended.

Environment

This large kitchen is a chef's paradise. It features a table of the finest rosewood, where gourmet meals can be prepared from the dazzling array of ingredients laid out on shelves. The smell of burnt food fills the room, from the meats charing away on the flat top and the pot of soup that has overflown.

Treasure

Some dried, pickled, smoked, and otherwise preserved ingredients are extremely rare and valuable. If a character succeeds on a **DC 10 Intelligence** ability check and spends at least 10 rounds selecting the rarest and choicest ingredients, they can assemble a collection of delicacies worth 500 gold pieces.

5. Guest Rooms

Background

The lodge has seven guest rooms to welcome adventurers and guild members mid-assignment to rest and recuperate. Currently, only one of the rooms is occupied, by Safary Rosemerry, a traveling ranger who has been exploring the western reaches of the kingdom.

Environment

The guest rooms are comfortably furnished in an eclectic style of furniture, mostly antiques and from distant lands. Beds are sturdy and comfortable, washbasins with clear water are prepared for use, and decorations convey a sense of home.

Treasure

Safary Rosemerry's belongings can be found in the north-western guest room on the first floor. She has left her explorer's pack in the room, including her valuables: 243 gold pieces, a yew wand druidic focus, a finely carved totem of an owlbear worth 25 gold pieces, *two potions of animal friendship,* and a *figurine of wondrous power (ivory goat - goat of travail)*.

6. Hall of the Lands

Background

This hall is a spacious lounge where adventurers can relax amidst the lavish decorations of the hall. Currently, Cygnus is making a stand against a barrage of fire beetle swarms, overwhelmed by their onslaught.

Environment

The hall of the lands got its name from the paintings that cover the walls of the grand room, depicting exotic landscapes and cityscapes from far and wide. Many paintings are from neighboring kingdoms and even further from lands known only to a few in Aglarion. Armchairs and tables are spread around the room, many of them overturned during the ongoing melee.

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Scene

Cygnus is fighting off three **swarms of magic-infused fire beetles.** The couatl is in the form of an armored human knight, hard-pressed and severely wounded by the vermin, with scores of the bugs at its feet in a pool of greenish ichor. Cygnus only has 43 hit points remaining.

"The rampage of the illuminated beetles has not been seen for a thousand years! Witness the shining glory that is holy and fight light with light at my side! To the corridors, quick! The druids that led this swarm are threatening my guest within!

Cygnus smiting the vermin and urging the characters to come to its aid.

Once the fight concludes, and the characters have rescued Cygnus and its guest from the invasion of the Initiates of the Swarm, the couatl offers the characters safe haven and the chance to converse about matters that all parties might find helpful. Cygnus knows a vast deal about the history of Aglarion, dating back to the time of the Dark Angels, and about important sites, particularly those that pertain to the Dark Star or the Darkness Within. These include the Gate to the Darkness Within, Groaning Pillar, Cairns of Bone, and Cloud Peak. Cygnus knows of Samkiel. However it does not know the location of the deva, only that it was exiled by the Dark Star and connected to a place called the Ziggurat of the New Moon in the dark Celestial language, according to ancient lore. If such locations are brought up, Cygnus will share this information and tell of Ha'aren Blackbone, who was also looking for Samkiel's fabled ziggurat. The couatl also mentions that some sort of command phrase is needed to conjure the ziggurat. If the characters reveal the location to Cygnus, it will want to immediately visit the site at the time of the next new moon, along with the characters. The couatl will not trust the characters outright, especially during the Midnight Curse, and will not reveal its true form to them until they have gained its trust. Its primary motivation is the banishment or destruction of Samkiel, but at least the curtailing of knowledge about it.

If the characters ask Cygnus about Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, the couatl can confirm that both the noble Red Cloak Lawgiver and his close ally, the bronze dragon Thelarmas, have passed away ages ago. Cygnus can direct the characters to the Dragon's Bones where the tehy may find the skeleton of the dragon.

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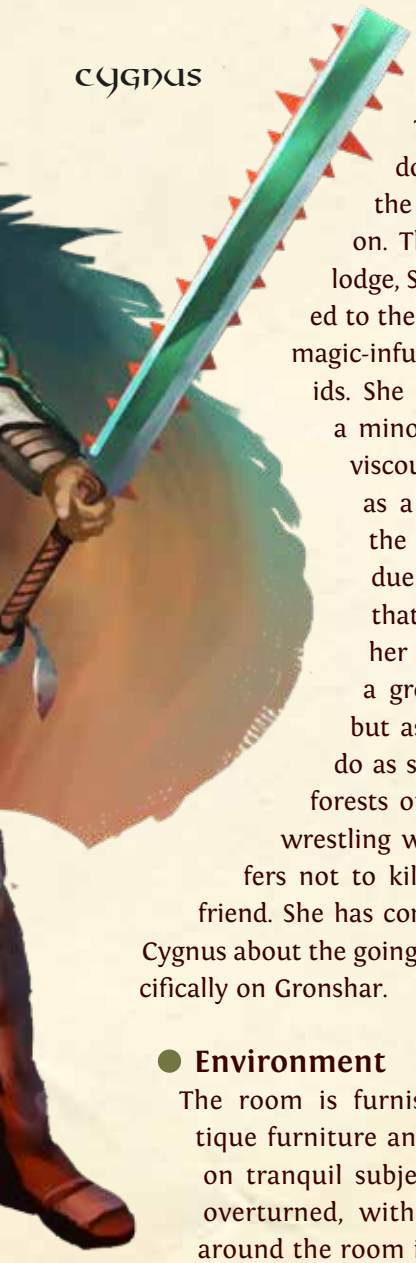
Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for gleaning the time when the Ziggurat of the New Moon can manifest on the Material Plane.

7. Study



Cygnus

Background

The study is where Cygnus documents information about the various locations in Aglarion. The sole current guest in the lodge, Safary Rosemerry, has retreated to the study, chased by a swarm of magic-infused fire beetles and two druids. She is the eldest daughter from a minor noble family, her father a viscount in Onadbyr. She was born as a tiefling, and as such she is the black sheep of the family due to her father's indiscretions that led to her birth. Because of her appearance and the rumors, a groom has been hard to find, but as such, she is mostly free to do as she pleases. Safary roams the forests of Aglarion, frequently enjoys wrestling with animals, whom she prefers not to kill but instead study and befriend. She has come to the lodge to report to Cygnus about the goings-on in the Arden Forest, specifically on Gronshar.

Environment

The room is furnished with comfortable antique furniture and decorated with art pieces on tranquil subjects. A large writing desk is overturned, with sheets of paper scattered around the room in pools of ink. A 10-foot tall statue of two angels in an embrace stands in a corner, one angel black, the one white. Stragely, the statue was somehow chiseled from a single block of marble.

Scene

Safary Rosemerry (use the **scout** monster entry) is Cygnus' most recent guest. The ranger is crouching behind the desk, covered by a **swarm of magic-infused fire beetles,** while Trigg the Fly and Klaia the Cricket (use the **Initiates of the Swarm** monster entry) are trying to quickly rummage through the books in the room, searching for tomes in druidic language.

Safary Rosemerry

"Thank you kindly! I hate when someone takes advantage of poor animals. It's not their fault when driven from their natural habitats. But I guess this blasted rain will cause desperation in all but a few."

Safary Rosemerry dusting herself off after the druids have been defeated.

Safary has recently visited Gronshar and knows about the Mothfangs, and she has also seen the Trails of the Colossus across the Trade Road. Additionally, she has spent considerable time in the King's Forest. She knows Grorrarr the Owlbear Druid personally, even wrestling the owlbear once after a friendly wager, which resulted in one of her horns broken and cracked.

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8. Map Room

Background
The map room contains one of Cygnus' most prized possessions - a detailed and labeled map of Aglarion showing all public and several hidden locations.

Environment
A table sits in the middle of the room where a large map of Aglarion is laid out. The map shows all topographical features and many locations.

Scene
The bookshelves contain notes by Cygnus on all locations shown on the map, ordered alphabetically with meticulous precision. The locations on Cynus' map are:

- Gate to the Darkness Within (location 31.)
- Golemcraft Cave (location 36.)
- Cairns of Bone (location 47.)
- Groaning Pillar (location 46.)
- Shrine of the Blind God (marked as Thelamar's Lair; location 26.)
- Grorrarr's Lair (location 5.)
- Vaddon's Abode (location 59.)

9. Workshop

Background
Cygnus' workshop is used mainly as an alchemical lab, where visitors of the couatl can experiment with rare reagents and unique combinations of ingredients.

Environment
The room features a complete alchemy lab, with beakers, pipes, pipettes, and other equipment needed for concocting alchemical materials. A stove stands along the wall, bookshelves between the windows hold notes on topics of alchemy and poisons, while a small table and two chairs offer a place to study and take notes.

Treasure
The lab contains a complete set of alchemist's supplies, along with four vials of acid, five flasks of alchemist's fire, three vials of antitoxin, two flasks of holy water, two vials of basic poison, and alchemical components worth 200 gold pieces.

10. Shrine to Light

Background
The shrine dedicated to the Shining Light is a beautiful chamber used by Cygnus for its prayers or any guest who wishes to pay homage to the light aspect of the Light and Darkness.

Environment
The floor of the room is tiled in alabaster and gold, decorated with an ornate image of the sun at its center. A white alabaster altar sits under the win-

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dows of the room. The window panes are stained glass and break the incoming light into a myriad of multicolored beams that are further bent by the northern and southern walls of the room that are entirely covered by mirrors.

35. Overpass of the Giants

Background

When the doppeldrake Malzdreziret ravaged Aglarion over half a century ago, the doppeldrake laid an egg under the Overpass of the Giants. The egg fell into the river and sank in the muddy bottom, lying dormant for decades. That is until the Midnight Curse transformed the egg and caused it to hatch as a monstrous half-doppelrake hydra that has made the bridge its lair.

Environment

The bridge arches over the deep river canyon below, half a mile long and 200 feet above the rushing waters. Parts of the balustrade have been shorn off, and several wagons and caravans lie broken on the bridge, smashed to pieces.

Scene

The mutated many-headed offspring of Malzdreziret is a half-dragon hydra that lairs in the waters under the bridge. If any creature or object traverses the bridge, the shapeshifting hydra will fly out of the water and attack.

Half-doppeldrake hydra (CR 9, 5,000 XP). Use the **hydra** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The half-doppeldrake hydra has a fly speed of 80 ft.
- It has blindsight 10 ft.
- It has resistance to damage depending on whatever color it changes into:

Color	Damage Resistance
black or copper	acid
blue or bronze	lightning
brass, gold, or red	fire
green	poison
silver or white	cold

- ***Breath Weapon (Recharge 5-6).*** It has the breath weapon of whatever dragon it changes into, as the breath weapon of a young dragon. It uses all of its heads when using its breath weapon.
- ***Shapeshifting.*** As an action, the half-doppeldrake hydra can assume the characteristics of any young dragon. In a new form, the half-doppeldrake hydra retains its game statistics and doesn't gain the actions of the new form, however it gains the movement types of the new form and the traits **Amphibious** or **Ice Walk** if the new form allows. It reverts to its true, lizard-like form if it dies.

36. Golemcraft Cave

See the corresponding location entry in the Kingdom of Aglarion section.

Scene

The inscriptions on the wall are part of a detailed spell that operates the Colossus. The only portion that remains is on stopping or starting the movement of the Colossus. Characters who succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) skill check can deduce the command word to either halt or begin the movement of the Colossus. An ancient and rusty **daedal wright** is still operational and will move to attack anyone who enters the cave.

37. Barrow of the Colossus

Background

Master Arlen created a colossal construct to aid King Razmyrel Melkar and the rebellion against the

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Order of Eternal Light. After the fall of the theocracy, he deemed the golem too powerful to fall into the wrong hands, but he did not want to destroy it. Instead, he ordered the monumental construct to bury itself in a remote location at the edge of the Arden Forest. The Midnight Curse has animated the colossal construct, which emerged from its barrow and walks aimlessly in the region, leaving a swath of destruction in its wake.

Environment

A 60 by 40 feet pit lies at the edge of the Arden Forest surrounded by large mounds of earth and fallen trees that have burst outward from the pit's center as if something had emerged from beneath the ground. A trail of gigantic block-shaped footprints leads into the forest through trampled vegetation.

38. Trails of the Colossus

Background

The Colossus has trampled over the trees and is set on an oval path in the Arden Forest, from the Barrow of the Colossus and to the south of the Lodge of Wanderlust, to Abulior Whitegate's Workshop, and returning to the south to the River Halueth and back to its burrow. It continues on this path endlessly.

Environment

The block-shaped footsteps are 2 feet deep, 10 feet long, and 3 feet across. A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can determine that a construct of immense size left the prints.

Scene

The Colossus does not take notice of anything or anyone nearby or in its path. It attacks any creature that damages it, but does not pursue fleeing opponents. Once left alone, it continues on its infinite circular path.

39. Waylaid Pilgrims

Background

The small pilgrim caravan of the thick-bearded giantkin evocation wizard, Vaven Fallspell, is stranded next to the road. The evocation wizard and his followers are members of a small cell of religious fanatics from the city of Lakrian in Drayl, who worship the Darkness Within. The pilgrims were on their way to the Gate to Darkness Within (location 31.) to sacrifice one of their unsuspecting members to the powers of darkness. However, they were robbed at swordpoint by the Blackfurs a couple of days ago, who demolished their carriages. Lacking the expertise to fix their wheels easily, they have been struggling with the task for days now.

Environment

A small camp of a few tents stands next to a carriage with a broken wheel and a large tarp suspended above it, partially blocking the rain. A few humanoid shapes linger under the makeshift roof while others are watching them from their tents.

Scene

The six pilgrims (use the **cultist** monster entry with an alignment of lawful evil) and Vaven Fallspell (use the **mage** monster entry with an alignment of *lawful evil*) are happy to see the characters and ask for their help. Vaven Fallspell tells them about their encounter with the Blackfurs and their leader, a druidic warrior of half-elven and half-orcish descent, whose name he does not know.

The wizard and the cultists keep their destination secret and will not willingly divulge it. A character who succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check notices their hesitation when asked about this. Vaven Fallspell takes over the conversation and lies that they are on their way to the Mountainfall to conduct geological research. If the characters ask too many questions, the pilgrims bid them farewell and say that they will manage with the broken wheel on their own.

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VAVEN FALLSPELL

"We were heading north to conduct geological research on behalf of my master, Hlurion Pansyrr, the great elementalist. We were robbed, our carriage was damaged, and we can't return to Lakrian without the samples we were tasked to retrieve."

Vaven Fallspell telling their false narrative.

The Blackfur bandits have stolen Vaven Fallspell's *necklace of adaptation* and all of the pilgrim's money, totaling 58 copper pieces, 61 silver pieces, and 329 gold pieces.

Treasure

If characters recover the stolen treasure, Vaven Fallspell gives them 100 gold pieces as a sign of his gratitude.

40. MOTHFANG FAMILY RESIDENCE

Background

The exiled goblin family of the Mothfangs, former residents of Gonshar, are still harboring their hatred for Lord Kabok Goldtooth after their failed attempt to wed Zikniq Mothfang to the lord with the use of a *philter of love* magic potion. Zroct Mothfang, the brother of the supposed bride, has learned about the secret of the illusory gold dragon Xycot that Lord Kabok Goldtooth created. He also knows of the raid the Blackfur bandits have attempted against Gonshar, and the young goblin has left the family residence to find and inform them about the fake guardian, hoping that they would launch another attack on his hometown.

Environment

The current residence of the Mothfang family consists of a few wooden cottages suitable for small creatures. Thin pillars of smoke rise from some of the huts, and a small number of livestock wander around the buildings aimlessly, looking for food.

Scene

The Mothfang family numbers fourteen **goblins** in total, including eight children. The elder of the family, Rashuk Mothfang is old and bitter, so he tries to avoid the characters if they approach their settlement. Rashuk Mothfang or Zikniq, his eldest daughter, are not willing to divulge the reason for the exile and current hatred against Lord Kabok Goldtooth. The younglings start to throw rocks at the characters, and the women shout loud threats to chase the characters away.

"Go away! Murderers!
Rob someone else!
Filthy bastard whores!"

Female and children goblins shouting insults at the characters.

A character who catches one of the adults and succeeds on a **DC 9 Charisma (Deception, Intimidate,** or **Persuasion)** skill check can talk some sense into them and learn about their story.

Treasure

The Mothfang family has 74 copper pieces, 27 silver pieces, and 44 gold pieces in total.

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41. Gonshar

Background

Gonshar is the ancestral home of House Goldtooth, a lineage of goblin nobles. The current lord of the village is Kabok Goldtooth, a cheerful goblin illusionist, specialized in the school of shadows. The noble tries to protect his town from the Midnight Curse as best he can, but trouble just keeps pouring through his gates. Years ago, Lord Kabok Goldtooth created the illusory persona of Xykot, the gold dragon, to scare away possible intruders. He convinced the residents of Gonshar of his allegiance with the dragon to plant the lie deeply and to ease the goblins' worried minds. Xykot served its purpose during the recent raid attempt by the Blackfur bandits. However the illusionist knows very well that someone will eventually see through his magic, and then, the safety of his village will depend solely on his magical capabilities. Therefore, Lord Kabok Goldtooth is desperate to get outside help to deal with the bandits before it's too late.

Environment

The town's muddy streets are full of large puddles due to the constantly pouring **choking rain**. A large number of sturdy log houses, which traditionally feature a large, covered balcony and terrace, sit in circles around a central wooden log palace decorated with a multitude of shields bearing the symbols of House Goldtooth.

Scene

The residents of Gonshar keep to their houses and only emerge on the terraces or balconies during the day, venturing further away from their home only if absolutely necessary.

The defenses of the town are simple. They are stationed in front of the residences in the outer circle of the buildings, spread out evenly in six locations. There are a **bugbear** and two armed **goblin** guards at each location at all times. They alert each other with horns if intruders approach from any side of the town, and they will gather at one spot within 2d4 + 2 rounds if alerted. The guards are suspicious of the characters but can be convinced of their good intentions with a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Deception** or **Persuasion)** skill check. On a failed check, the guards urge the characters to leave and alert the other guards to attack if they enter the town despite their warnings. If in grave danger, the six guard posts can summon another four **bugbears,** four **hobgoblins,** and twelve committed **goblin** residents. The rest of the village are non-combatant goblins and other humanoids (mostly human) commoners.

Spell Focus of the Shadowcaster

Lord Kabok Goldtooth's simple wooden palace is guarded by six of his most trusted **hobgoblin** soldiers who are by his side at all times. The goblin wizard remains cheerful despite the curse and the recent attacks on his town. He welcomes the characters cordially when they are led to his residence by the town guards. The Supreme Wizard of Gonshar, as he calls himself, tells the characters about the latest bandit attack and his worries about their return and asks if they could help prevent the attack or if they would be willing to stay to protect their town.

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The goblin noble explains that he has an excellent rapport with the legendary dragon, whom he can call in times of trouble. Lord Kabok Goldtooth fears that the dragon might be too far away when needed and that it would not arrive in time to save everyone. He doesn't want to risk the life of his subjects by entirely relying on the magnificent creature. He is ready to pay the characters a total of 1,000 gold pieces if they accept his request. A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can sense that the noble is overly assured about his relationship with the dragon.

If the characters ask about Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, Lord Kabok Goldtooth can tell the story of the famous Red Cloak Lawgiver and his close ally, the bronze dragon Thelarmas, who used to lair somewhere at the western portion of the Shandar Mountains. The goblin wizard knows that the former noble and dragon of legend had perished long ago and can relate the location of the Dragon's Bones (location 25.) to the characters.

Lord Kabok Goldtooth. Use the **mage** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Lord Kabok Goldtooth has a Charisma ability score of 17 and makes Deception skill checks with a +6 modifier.
- ***Shadow Shield (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).*** Lord Kabok Goldtooth can use his reaction to conjure a shadowy aura that negates one hit by an attack that targets him.
- ***Pseudo Reality.*** When Lord Kabok Goldtooth casts a 1st or higher level spell to create the image of an object, creature, or visible phenomenon, he can choose to cast his spell to deal 1d6 psychic damage per spell level every turn to those creatures that are affected by it. Affected creatures can make a **DC 14 Intelligence** saving throw to half the damage. Physical interaction with the image does not reveal it to be an illusion. A creature that successfully sees through the image by taking an action to make a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check becomes immune to the damage dealt by the spell.

LORD KABOK GOLDTOOTH

"Oh, we are very close. Almost like brothers. We have seen a lot together and owe each other many favors. Big favors!"

Kabok describing his friendship with Xycot, the gold dragon.

Lord Kabok Goldtooth used a scroll of *programmed image* to create the permanent illusion of huge adult gold dragon that he can call forth if he shouts its name. He dubbed the dragon Xycot and claims to be best friends with the creature. On rare occasions, when he calls for the gold dragon, it appears to be flying from behind the canopy of trees and lands on the ground, asking the goblin lord what he needs assistance with. Lord Kabok Goldtooth tells the dragon his request, and it immediately does as asked by the goblin illusionist. The scene is always set as if the dragon was in a hurry because the spell is active for only 5 minutes before being unusable again for another 10 minutes.

Lord Kabok Goldtooth has infused the *programmed illusion* spell with his *pseudo reality* class feature and using his *spell focus of the shadowcaster,* making the spell require a **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check made with disadvantage to discern it as an illusion. The spell deals 21 (6d6) points of psychic damage (save DC 16 with disadvantage to halve) every turn by either making a melee attack with a natural weapon or breathing fire on creatures within the 30 feet cube area of the *programmed illusion* spell.

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"Greetings old friend! What bothers you is now my concern as well. How can I help? I have only a few minutes to spare, speak quickly!"

Xycot speaking to Lord Kabok Goldtooth in a deep booming voice.

Before long, the Blackfur bandits will attack Gronshar. Before the attack, Ishnari and the bandits are informed about the illusory nature of the dragon by Zroct Mothfang, allowing them to roll their Intelligence (Investigation) skill checks to disbelieve the *programmed illusion* spell normally instead of having disadvantage on the roll.

Treasure

Lord Kabok Goldtooth carries two *potions of healing* and a *spell focus of the shadowcaster*.

42. Blackfur Bandit Hideout

Background

The Blackfurs have been raiding caravans for years within and around the Arden Forest. Considering the Midnight Curse as a newfound opportunity, their leader Ishnari, a half-orc and half-elven druid fighter, has set eyes on the town of Gonshar and the magic items owned by its noble wizard, Lord Kabok Goldtooth. The bandit captain hoped that the **choking rain** and the curse in general had weakened the town and its defenses. The bandits executed an attack on the unsuspecting town that was repelled by Lord Kabok Goldtooth's magic and the emerging image of the gold dragon to whom the locals referred to as Xykot. A goblin of the Mothfang family named Zroct arrived at the camp of the Blackfurs recently and told Ishnari the truth about the dragon, namely that it is only a semi-realistic illusion. Zroct is trying to instigate a new raid on Gonshar, but Ishnari is still considering his next move, as he is still not convinced about Zroct's trustworthiness.

Environment

The patchy camp of this rag-time army has nineteen tents spread out around a large bonfire that burns with a tall column of smoke due to the soaked wood of which it was assembled. The small tents stand on a field of trash, discarded household items, dirty utensils, and torn clothes. The inside of each tent has two bedrolls, some clothes, and personal treasures of the bandits who live in them.

Scene

There are thirty-two male and female **bandits** in the camp who all obey **Ishnari** and trust him to lead them to a life filled with riches.

Ishnari (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **druid** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Ishnari is *neutral evil*.
- He has 53 hit points.
- He has a Strength ability score of 15.
- He makes two melee attacks.
- ***Scimitar.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.
- ***Parry.*** Ishnari adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Ishnari must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Ishnari does not trust anyone and will try to subdue and rob the characters if they enter his camp. He will keep them tied together in the rain until he makes sure that he knows all of their secrets, then lets them die slowly.

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Ishnari

"I don't care who you are. You walked into the wrong camp, we will take what's yours, and your bodies will fertilize the ground."

Ishnari threatening the characters.

Unknown even to his bandits, the druid captain has buried a treasure chest near the camp and hid its location and his tracks to it with his druidic magic. If the characters defeat Ishnari, they can force him to divulge the location of his (and Vaven Fallspell's) treasure only by succeeding on a **DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation)** skill check.

Zroct (use the **spy** monster entry) will flee into the woods and try to get back to his family residence if a fight breaks out. He will try to negotiate for his life with the secret of the illusory gold dragon if caught by the characters and flee as soon as an opportunity arises.

Treasure

The ten tents hold a total of 523 gold pieces, two amethysts worth 35 gold pieces each, a golden earring worth 20 gold pieces, and a *potion of healing*. Ishnari's buried treasure chest hides the valuables of the pilgrims, totaling 58 copper pieces, 61 silver pieces, and 329 gold pieces, and Vaven Fallspells *necklace of adaptation* (see location 39.). It also holds his own plunder - 224 silver pieces, 491 gold pieces, and a small diamond worth 200 gold pieces. Zroct wears a silver necklace worth 25 gold pieces and carries a *+1 hand crossbow*.

43. Stride of the Elders

(SECRET LOCATION)

See section On the Stride of the Elders at the end of Chapter 4.

44. The Hagtree

(SECRET LOCATION)

See section Traversing the Hagtree at the end of Chapter 4.

45. Ruins of the Water-Raiser

Background

Bryn Helgraz, his wife Rikka, and their two sons in their mid-twenties, Jadlyr and Woren, have made their home in the depths of this immense water-raiser structure. The half-elven family has lived a life of solitude for years and has been preparing for the end times, driven by Rikka's nightmarish visions about the coming Midnight Curse. Bryn Helgraz, who is a philosopher and woodworker by trade, believed the omens his wife foretold. As a result, the Helgraz family has amassed large amounts of fresh water, non-perishable food, and resources and have sealed themselves inside the ruins of the colossal wooden water-raiser mechanism. They rarely emerge, only when they need something from the outside world, and are armed to the teeth when they do so.

Environment

The ruins of the ancient water-raising mechanism

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soar to a staggering height of 200 feet. The structure's base is a complex platform with a gigantic suspension arm driven into the side of the rocks and several transmission blocks that once utilized the force of the river in which the entire structure currently rests. A gigantic broken water wheel and the vast platforms constantly creak with an ominous sound as if they would collapse at any moment.

Ha'aren Blackbone visited the ancient structure on her quest to find Samkiel's Prison and spent a night at its feet. The Red Cloak Lawgiver did not meet any members of the Helgraz family, but the family saw her from inside of their hideout.

Scene

A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check can find clues that reveal that someone has made camp at the feet of the gigantic structure a long time ago and tried to hide their tracks and the campsite before leaving.

The characters meet the four members of the Helgraz family (use the **bandit** monster entry) only if they thoroughly explore the entire structure of the water-raising mechanism. In this case, they will eventually find a closed door that leads to a few larger compartment areas where the family established their quarters. The family is not interested in talking to the characters and tries to avoid them as much as possible. If confronted, they tell them that they don't have any valuables and ask them to leave. They saw Ha'aren Blackbone, who left to the northeast, but did not reveal themselves to her.

Bryn Helgraz

"We don't have anything to offer you. Leave us alone and go away. The end time are nigh!"

Helgraz trying to get rid of the characters.

46. The Groaning Pillar

Background

The Dark Star's forces punished the most insolent mortals by chaining them to this pillar of monumental size. The victims hung on the side of the column where they suffered terrible pain until they died of decreased oxygen supply to the brain.

Environment

A gigantic, square-shaped stone pillar rises from the ground and pierces through the thick forest canopy as a nail would through a plank. The ancient structure is 50 feet wide on each side and rises to a height of 300 feet. It is covered in carvings, written in the dark Celestial hieroglyphics of the fallen angels, pronouncing the superiority of the celestial creatures over mortals. Rusty chains dangle from the side of the pillar from top to bottom on all sides at every 10 feet. Some of them still hold a skeletal arm or even a skeletal half torso. As one approaches the pillar, faint groaning and wailing sounds grow louder until they turn into a painful cacophony at its feet. A couple of more fresh, broken corpses lie at the foot of the pil-

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lar, obviously having died from falling. A huge black opal is embedded into the top of the pillar.

A 10-foot diameter tent of many colorful tarps stitched together stands not too far from the pillar, soaking in the constant rain.

Scene

The tent is home to Zevius, a **spirit naga** oracle and follower of the Inevitable, the god of death. It was expelled from its nest by the other two spirit nagas, who are avid followers of their deity and divine from the bones at the Cairn of Bones (location 47.). Zevius found a *crystal ball* and started exploring the world using the magic device instead of practicing their ancient rituals. It recently moved to the Groaning Pillar to examine the dead souls trapped within the pillar and is willing to scry on anyone if the client pays with one of their body parts, like hair or nails, that the naga can later use as a focus for scryings. Zevius' tent is filled with colorful shifting crystal orbs that are connected to a central magical *crystal ball* that reflects its images on all the orbs simultaneously.

Zevius

"I sssee everysssing... I sssee All! Who isss it that you ssseek? Give mee a pieccce of yourssselvesss and I can show them to you. Do you ssseek Ssssamkieeel asss well?"

Zevius presenting its bargain.

Zevius met Ha'aren Blackbone when she investigated the Groaning Pillar for clues to find Samkiel's prison. The Red Cloak Lawgiver did not tell the spirit naga about her goals and refused its offer to scry for her. An attempt by Zevius to scry on Ha'aren Blackbone or Samkiel fails every time.

The magic of the ancient place of execution is still active and captures any humanoid mortal that goes near it. A creature who approaches the Groaning Pillar within 10 feet must make a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw or be carried away by an invisible force. On a failed save, the creature is lifted from the ground to a height of 1d20 x 10 feet and pulled to the surface of the pillar. On a successful save, the creature resists the pull and is free to act until the start of its next turn, when the Groaning Pillar attempts to move its body again. A creature lifted by the force of the pillar is attached to a manacle that magically melds around one of the creature's wrists, who becomes restrained. The rusty manacles cannot be picked and have AC 17 and 8 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against piercing, slashing damage, and damage immunity against poison, and psychic damage. A creature can escape the manacles by succeeding on a **DC 20 Strength** or **Dexterity** ability check. A creature that remains trapped in the manacle for over an hour must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw every hour or fall unconscious. An unconscious creature must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw every minute. On a successful save, the creature remains unconscious. On a failed save, the creature dies.

The deep carving on the pillar and the dangling chains make climbing the side of the pillar relatively easy. A creature can attempt a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb the wall up to half of its movement speed. On a failed skill check, the creature falls to the ground and takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet of falling. A falling creature can try to grab one of the chains to stop its descent by succeeding on a **DC 20 Dexterity** saving throw.

The top of the Groaning Pillar is carved into the multi-angled shape of a star with a fist-sized black opal

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embedded on its top. The opal is a magic gem that holds the thousands of souls of those who perished on the pillar. Climbing to the opal from either end of the platform requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The opal can be removed with a successful **DC 20 Strength** ability check. Once the opal is removed, the groaning whispers cease, the souls are released and laid to rest, and the Groaning Pillar loses its magical abilities.

Treasure

The fist-sized black opal is worth 1,000 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they obtain the black opal and free the spirits from the Groaning Pillar

47. Cairns of Bone

Background

These mounds of rock hide mass graves filled with the bones of those who resisted the rule of the fallen angels. A cabal of three spirit naga oracles that venerate the Inevitable, the god of death, has nested on top of one of the cairns for hundreds of years, divining the death of the deceased from their bones. Zevius, one of the spirit nagas, has been expelled from the nest for not following the sacred rituals. The renegade naga is slowly but steadily exploring the world outside the cairns through its magic crystal ball (see location 46. for details).

Environment

Large mounds of stone blocks rise from the ground in several places, almost completely covered in grass and plants, speaking to their ancient origin. Masses of bones protrude from these mounds in some areas where the ancient stone blocks have fallen out of their original positions. A light mist lingers between the overgrown mounds, covering the ground from the eyes of those who enter it. The shape of two large snake-like creatures can be seen in the fog only for a moment before they disappear into the mist.

Scene

The area is considered lightly obscured to a height of 10 feet. The two **spirit nagas,** Arkalya and Nusha, refrain from contact and avoid the characters at all costs if approached. However, the mystical creatures can hold some information for the characters if made to parlay with a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Deception, Intimidate, or Persuasion)** skill check. They know about Zevius, the expelled third member of their nest, who has relocated to the Groaning Pillar. They can also tell of Ha'aren Blackbone, who visited them earlier asking about the Ziggurat of the New Moon. They did not speak to the Red Cloak Lawgiver but can recognize her signature cloak.

48. Camp of the Red Cloak

Background

The summit of Cloud Peak was a site of blood sacrifice to the Dark Star and one of the focus points for Sarath's ritual of light that banished the fallen angels from Aglarion. The location is a monument to both eras, the reason why Ha'aren Blackbone the Red Cloak visited the site for information about Samkiel and its prison.

Environment

Cloud Peak pierces the skies and rises to a soaring height of 13,000 feet. The mountain itself is of a different hue than the bedrock, hinting at the foreign origin of the jagged, greyish stone, as if the entire mountain impacted into the heart of Aglarion.

At the top of the mountain is a small plateau, where the remains of a stone altar can be found, standing within a bowl-shaped indentation. The altar was demolished over a millenium ago. However, the remains of the blood once pooled in the indentation, seeping into the rock itself, can still be seen. The surfaces of the ground and the remains of the altar stone are covered by runes, worn down by the elements, but still discernible as divine sigils of the Shining Light. The remains of a campsite sit next to the altar.

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Scene

The mountain slopes are treacherous and can be deadly if the right equipment isn't used. Characters must succeed on a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics)** skill check three times before reaching the top - to traverse crevasses, avoid slipping on smooth rocks, or move boulders in their paths. The character falls down the sheer cliffs on a failed check but can attempt a successful **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw to catch a ledge before falling. The character falls 1d10 x 10 feet on a failed saving throw and suffers the corresponding falling damage.

At the top of the mountain, characters can identify the remnants of sacrificial blood at the bottom of the indentation with a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check and the religious runes dedicated to the Shining Light with a **DC 10 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check. Characters who search the site and succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can find a small piece of red cloth with a golden hem that was caught on a jagged piece of stone and torn from a piece of clothing. Characters who succeed on a **DC 10 Intelligence (History)** skill check can identify the cloth as part of a Red Cloak Lawgiver's signature cloak.

49.

Background

The Weary Ogre is famous all over the continent and even in the Royal Palace for its costly but first-rate gastronomic creations. The proprietor, Ozar the Exquisite, is a towering and fat half-ogre who is known to be a joyful chef of masterful skill and a transmuter wizard who graduated from the Arcane Tower decades ago. Unfortunately, the Midnight Curse has affected the cheerful wizard's tavern in a gruesome way by animating the prepared food within the establishment.

Environment

The tavern is a lavishly furnished and decorated establishment suitable for the highest standards of the noble class of the kingdom. The spacious foyer of the building serves as a lounge with comfortable sofas and low tables, while the dining area, which is furnished to host only one group of people at a time, features a single large beautifully carved wooden table in the middle of an elegantly decorated room. Lavish chandeliers and glass-doored serving cabinets glitter in the light. Currently, the dining area shows the signs of desperate combat, with many pieces of furniture overturned or broken, covered in blood. The bodies of six dead former guests, all battered to death, lie on the ground.

The kitchen of the Weary Ogre is equipped with the finest tools and kitchenware available in the realm. Ozar's private quarters are small but comfortable, featuring a small bathing area and a massive king-size bed reinforced with a metallic frame to support his weight.

Scene

The Midnight Curse has caused all butchered and prepared meat in the kitchen and the pantry to rise as undead. The beheaded chickens, ox heads, sausages, and blocks of hams have assaulted all living beings at the inn, intending to bash them. Ozar (use the **mage** monster entry with no 4th and 5th level spell slots available and only 14 hit points left) has locked himself in the underground wine cellar and is completely devastated, his cheerful demeanor gone for good. He was unable to defeat the flying undead meats and had no other option but to retreat to the safety of his cellar, where he has enough food and water to survive until he recovers from his wounds. Ozar knows Abulior Whitegate, the wizard who was expelled from the Arcane Tower, and his current location. He also met the Heroes of Virtue when they visited his tavern after going to the Arcane Tower and saw them depart heading northeast. The half-ogre mage had other guests at the time, so he turned them away, but he mentions that they had a sinister air around them.

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OZAR
THE EXQUISITE

"They were... I don't know. Unpleasant people. The wizard was playing around with a flame all the time as if he wanted to intimidate me."

Ozar's comment about the Heroes of Virtue.

The Weary Ogre is haunted by twenty-four **undead flying meat** that attack any living creature in unison by surrounding them. They will not leave the building.

Undead Flying Meat. These meat products attack by bashing against their victims. Use the **flying sword** monster entry with the following modifications:

- An undead meat has the undead monster type.
- It has AC 12.
- It deals 4 (1d6+1) bludgeoning damage.

50. VAULTS OF THE ARCANE TOWER

Background

The acting archmage of the Kingdom of Aglarion and the Arcane Tower, Master Zaophas, didn't hesitate for a moment to activate the safety measures of the magical wizard's tower when the Midnight Curse stuck (see The Arcane Tower section at the end of Chapter 4.). The arcane protocol, designed by Master Arlen based on ancient celestial knowledge, immediately transported the entire Arcane Tower, with all of its inhabitants, to the Astral Plane. The wizard academicians and their pupils, many of whom had only heard tales about the plane-shifting capabilities of the tower, were concerned by the events, but also felt safer in this new, never-before-seen environment. They continued their studies and research, and also closely followed and analyzed the recent events on the Material Plane.

These events did not reach the consciousness of Master Eydan, who lies in a self-induced coma caused by the night roses he has planted in his chamber. The former, now retired, archmage is constantly submerged in the formless and endless void of the Dreamrealm, where he frequently communes with Father Lestor, the cleric of the god of knowledge. The latter was exiled by King Waldrann Azennar during their quest to the Feyrealm and has remained in the Bleak Mire since.

The Arcane Tower's planar safety protocol can be reversed by the archmage of the tower through the *control medallion of the tower* or by outside influence through the use of the *torcs of the tower* (see Appendix C: Magic Items). The six torcs must be placed within the focus pedestal in area 1 to conjure the tower from the Astral Plane and keep it locked on the Material Plane until the torcs are removed from the pedestal.

The Heroes of Virtue is a group of self-serving adventurers who make a living by endangering communities and taking their gold for fake heroic quests. They have learned about the disappearance of the Arcane Tower and made haste to be the first to investigate the scene and rob its vaults before anyone else.

Rowan Caltheryan Caltheryan is the youngest apprentice of the Arcane Tower, who was sent out by the academicians to gather components from the surrounding region when the Midnight Curse struck. He experienced the worst of the **choking rain** and the mutated flora and fauna and was unable to get back to the Arcane Tower before Master Zaophas

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pulled it to the Astral Plane. After a long and painful journey, he collapsed on the doorsteps of a nearby farming family, who gave him safe haven. The young apprentice saw the Heroes of Virtue break into the vault but doesn't know the name or the background of the group or the individuals that comprise it.

Environment

The base of the Arcane Tower is a flat, 150-foot diameter patch of dirt with a single metal trap door at its center. The trap door was obviously vandalized, its complex lock mechanism and lid torn and damaged by heavy tools. An almost unnoticeable, faintly glowing magic circle of arcane runes surrounds the circular area of dirt.

Miserably neglected farms and fields of obviously diseased, rotten, brown and yellow crops surround the area, located just a few miles from where the Arcane Tower once stood. Only a few of the outlying farmhouses have lights shining in their windows. The blackened windows of the rest of the farmsteads stand as reminders of the tragic fates of their former inhabitants.

Scene

Behind the trap door, a stairway leads down to the vaults of the Arcane Tower to area 1. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check can deduct that someone tried to pick the lock but failed before bashing the lid and breaking the lock with an axe.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can decrypt the magic circle around the base of the tower and tell that it is part of an arcane spell with sigils pointing to the Astral Plane.

Only three of the seven farmhouses are occupied by families who have always lived in the proximity of the Arcane Tower. These families consist of one or two parents and grandparents and several children of different ages, but every family has already lost at least one member to the Midnight Curse. They are undernourished and frightened. A character must succeed on a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince the farmers of their peaceful intentions.

"We don't know much besides raising livestock and children, but I know that these are times when we would need those magicians more than ever."

A farmer expressing his bitter feelings.

The farmers had minimal interactions with the wizards of the Arcane Tower before the Midnight Curse, and those were only related to trade. Some of the older farmers know of the last disappearance of the tower when Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, a shape-changing dragon, ravaged the capital. Still, all they know is that the tower was gone until the dragon was defeated in the north by King Daerios Azennar, father of King Waldrann Azennar. The farmers also tell the characters that they have heard a rumbling noise emanating from deep underground near the tower only a few days ago and that they are terrified for their family's safety.

After gaining their trust, the farmers direct the characters to Rowan Caltheryan (use the **apprentice of the Arcane Tower** monster entry), who is happy to see the characters. He is more than eager to help but feels unsafe to leave the farmlands and the comfort and care the families provide.

He tells the characters how he got separated from the tower and spied on a group of four individuals who broke into the vault a few weeks ago. Rowan Caltheryan tells the characters the following information about the members of the group:

- A well-groomed, black-haired human in leather armor and blue cloak, who tried to pick the locking mechanism of the trap door and failed. This man looked as if he was the brother of one of the group's other member, the bard.
- A short, black-haired man in elegant and colorful traveling clothes, who was obviously a bard. He played a few melodies on his lute while his brother tried to pick the lock.
- A 10-foot tall ogre brute in red metal armor with a huge axe. He broke down the trap door but could not fit through, so he waited outside.

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- A blond man in a blue, elegant, and uniform-like outfit, who played with a small flame in his palm while waiting for the others to provide entry into the vault.

Rowan Caltheryan tells the characters that the group left to the east after emerging from the vault, seemingly unharmed.

Rowan Caltheryan recognizes the *mithral torc of the tower* if he sees it on one of the characters. He points out that he saw a similar torc on the blond magic-user's wrist marked with the emblem of the Arcane Tower, but that torc was made out of iron. Rowan Caltheryan knows the primary function of the torcs and tells the characters that these are ancient keys, believed to be lost, that can recall the tower to the Material Plane if needed. He gets really excited about the existence of the torcs but doesn't encourage anyone to use them against the will of the archmage, Master Zaophas. He believes that the archmage must have had good reasons to transpose the tower to the Astral Plane.

ROWAN CALTHERYAN

"One could judge Master Zaophas' decision. However he not only protects his students this way but also keeps the knowledge of our guild safe."

Rowan Caltheryan defending the idea of the security measure.

Rowan Caltheryan also knows about a wizard named Abulior Whitegate, a former academician of the Arcane Tower, who was expelled by Master Zaophas years ago for stealing an ancient parchment from the library. He doesn't know if the former academician can help with any information, but he is sure that Abulior Whitegate knows more of the Arcane Tower than he does. Rowan Caltheryan can direct the characters to Abulior Whitegate's workshop (location 32.) far to the west and describes the mage as a harmless and reserved person, a master of transmutation magic and crafting, and an enthusiastic devotee of Master Arlen's work.

Rowan Caltheryan has limited knowledge of Master Eydan. He knows that he is alive but has secluded himself in his private chamber for over a decade now. He has heard that Master Zaophas sometimes visits the former archmage, but Rowan Caltheryan does not know what Master Eydan is working on and how he generally spends his days. Nevertheless, he considers the former archmage a knowledgeable wizard of the highest power and trusts that he is doing well.

1. VAULT STAIRS

Background

This is where the *torcs of the tower* can be used by placing them into the focus pedestal. Recently, a bulette has burrowed its way into the room through the component storage chamber.

Environment

This otherwise unremarkable staircase leads to the vaults of the Arcane Tower. A simple stone pedestal with a basin-like indentation on its top stands in the middle of the stairway, its front covered by inscriptions. A large natural looking hole gapes on the wall to the west, littered with rubble in front of it. The air is still and smells of freshly dug earth.

Scene

The **bulette** has built a nest and laid an egg here. The monster attacks anyone who enters its newfound lair. The egg hatches in 30 days if kept underground. The freshly hatched bulette, by its nature, will attack

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anyone it sees when it emerges from the egg. It can be calmed by feeding it constantly, but it has a tremendous hunger and a raging temperament.

Bulette Hatchling (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **bulette** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The bulette hatchling is Medium size.
- It has AC 15 and 31 hit points.
- It has a Strength score of 15.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d12 + 2) piercing damage.

All six of the *torcs of the tower* fit into specific indentations at the top of the focus pedestal that resemble their unique shapes. The front of the pedestal is engraved with a long text that describes the original bearers of the six torcs.

"Mast'r Arlen the Constructeth'r wast did create this planar locketh, und'r 'rd'rs from the most hon'rful King Razmyrel Melkar the True, the first of Aglarion. It shall beest activat'd only with the useth of the six t'rcs of the toweth'r, which w're entrust'd to beest hath carried by these loyal Lawgiv'rs. May their collective loyalty and wise judgement insureth the ryghtful useth of their keies yond shalt beest hath passed onto their chosen success'rs.

Onrryl Blackbone, the Lawgiv'r of Harveston, the beareth'r of the adamantine t'rc of the toweth'r, a wise instructeth'r of his owneth bloodline.

Peklyo Tassadir, the Lawgiv'r of Onadh Byr, the beareth'r of the mithral t'rc of the toweth'r, a relentless s'rvant of the coronet.

Jwarlea Jyle, the Lawgiv'r of Smokestone, the beareth'r of the iron t'rc of the toweth'r, whose will wast forg'd in northern flames as r'd as h'r locks.

Agratthys Vuelnor, the Lawgiv'r of Gorso, the beareth'r of the silv'r t'rc of the toweth'r, a sir who is't loves his town m're than his life.

Lord Eard Wytas "Dragonfriend" Arden, Lawgiv'r of the Arden Climature, the beareth'r of the clay t'rc of the toweth'r, a gentle soul of heart and mind.

Kalnur "Rockheart" Nangrath, the Lawgiv'r of Nangrathn, the beareth'r of the stone t'rc of the toweth'r, a st'rn rocketh in the visage of the elements."

The engraving on the pedestal.

The focus pedestal cannot be used unless the break in the magic circle in area 2 is fixed.

2. COMPONENT STORAGE

Background

This storage chamber was the primary component storage of the wizards with enough resources to last years. Currently, it lies in ruins, its contents utterly destroyed by the bulette that bore its way into the vaults. The landshark tore through its stone walls and an invisible magic circle that is part of the dimensional lock spell that would recall and secure the Arcane Tower on the Material Plane once activated by the torcs in the focus pedestal.

Environment

A mix of rubble covered in colorful dust, broken vials, smashed containers, thousands of unrecognizable

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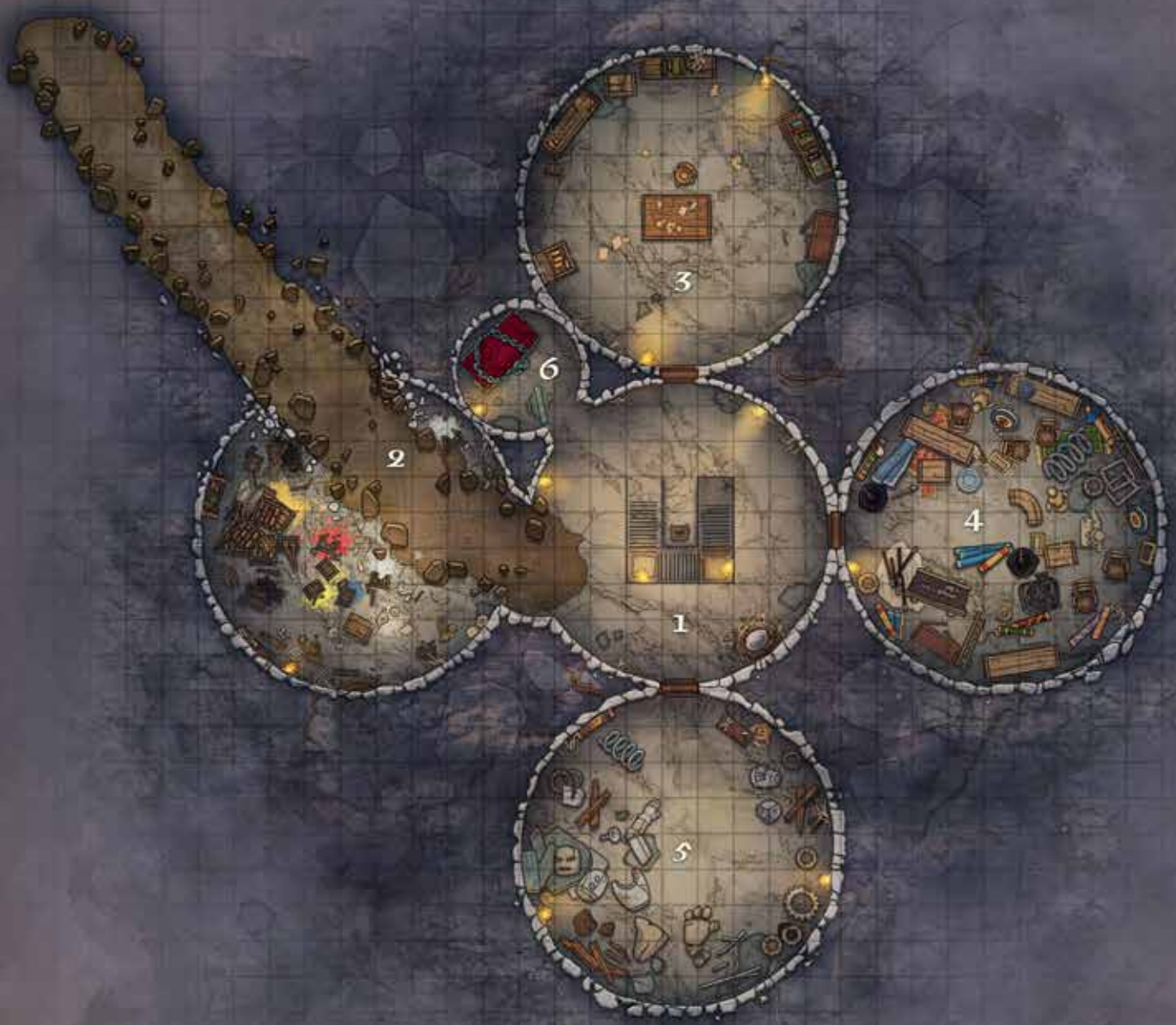
Vaults of the Arcane Tower



1 tile = 5 feet

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components lie on the floor amid piles of bulette feces. A tunnel leads into the ground for dozens of miles under the earth, eventually ending at a cave-in.

Scene

The magic circle is visible if observed through a *detect magic* or similar spell. Its two ends break off abruptly at the two sides of the hole where the bulette burrowed its way inside. A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can fix the circle by filling in the missing parts with arcane sigils drawn on the ground.

If the focus pedestal is activated before the magic circle is fixed, its two ends burst with sparkles, revealing its existence and the fact that it is missing a section that would allow the flow of arcane energies. Rowan Caltheryan is happy to help fix the magic circle if needed, but he is very nervous about the fact that he is tampering with something that the legendary Master Arlen created.

A character who searches the room and succeeds on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can find a handful of curious black seeds that pulsate with soft violet light. A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check can identify the seeds as those of the rare **night rose** (see area 3 of the Arcane Tower), which induces vivid dreams to those who smell its perfume when it blooms at sunset.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can fix the magic circle.

3. Archives

Background

The archives of the Arcane Tower are a depository of old documents, journals, and ancient arcane study books that are beyond repair or reuse. The Heroes of Virtue collected all magical resources from the archives, mostly damaged scrolls, and took everything that had even the faintest magical aura.

Environment

The room has a few shelves and filing cabinets with a vast collection of documents that lack any value. Many of the containers are open, and their contents spilled on the floor as if someone searched them in a hurry.

Scene

Most of the documents contain information on the daily life of the arcane academy. Old study books, class notes, torn academic tomes, records of class attendances, accounting records, order sheets, storage inventory lists, and similar mundane documents fill the cabinets and drawers.

A character who searches the documents for an hour can make a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to find a reference in a filing folder to an ancient parchment written in dark celestial language, dating back to the age of the fallen angels. The listing indexes the exact location of a piece of parchment in the library, labeled "Dark Star parchment" (see area 2 of the Arcane Tower), the fact that it contains an unknown command phrase, and that Master Arlen himself recovered it. The entry is circled, and the word "Stolen" is written in red next to it.

Treasure

An undamaged crystal, an arcane focus, lies on the floor near an empty spellbook without a cover, stuffed between two old books on one of the shelves.

4. Depository

Background

Old junk, useless components, and broken but reusable items are stored in this area, left here by the mages for future evaluation.

Environment

The room contains a collection of colorful items of all shapes and sizes, placed in the room in a disorderly fashion. A few of the strangest-looking items include a malformed sculpture with an elongated right hand, a giant spring, a table that looks as if it is

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in mid-jump, and some rolled up carpets that stink with a gut-wrenching stench.

Scene

An old, scratched blackboard has a few visible words written on it with chalk and an almost illegible, badly erased sentence that can be deciphered with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

"To all apprentices: Use of the central levitation chamber is strictly prohibited outside of lecture hours. Breaches of the rule will result in strict reprimands and may result in suspension."

The text written with chalk on the blackboard.

An invisible, tall, and slim standing mirror is placed by the wall.

Treasure

Two vials of *potion of acid resistance* were left inside the drawer of the once animated table, missed by the Heroes of Virtue.

5. Construct Repository

Background

Laromarius, one of the academicians of the academy and the bearer of the title of Golem Controller, is the only one who has access to this storage area. He has hidden one of his most valued possessions, a *manual of clay golems,* in this storage area, using an *arcanist's magic aura* to hide it.

Environment

Large cogs, metal bars, boxes full of screws and tools, numerous metallic, stone, and wooden parts of golems lie around in this room.

Scene

The *manual of clay golems* is hidden in the false bottom of a crate that holds some tools and can only be found if a character searches the crate and succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. The Heroes of Virtue opened the crate but could not find the false bottom or detect the hidden magic aura of the manual. Some of the golem parts scattered in the room are obviously used for repairing and constructing daedal wrights.

6. Secure Vault

Background

Master Zaophas, archmage of the Arcane Tower, has visited the Abyss on many occasions as part of his research into the nature of the demonic plane. During his studies and his investigation into the cult of Dagon, he uncovered an abyssal portal that he transported into the tower's secure vault for safekeeping. The portal is disguised as a giant wardrobe and leads directly to the depths of the Abyssal sea. Master Zaophas had the wardrobe locked and kept it in the most secure location of the Arcane Tower so that no one might interfere with it.

The Heroes of Virtue were intrigued by the massive vault door and made a great effort to break into the room, sparing no resources during the process. They hoped they would find riches and magic to loot, but eventually, on the advice of their arcanist Tasran Stoneplitter, they decided to leave it alone.

Environment

A massive vault door guards the room, now cracked open, its locking mechanism bent and totally destroyed. Its surface is marred by a medley of damage from both weapons and magic. It stands open, its locking mechanism bent and destroyed. A huge wardrobe made out of bright redwood stands in the middle of the room. Runes cover its surface and a thick chain wraps around it, secured with a sizable padlock.

Scene

A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can identify the redwood as a rare abyssal tree called leech mangrove, which en-

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twines its victims and sucks their lifeblood. The runes engraved on the surface of the wardrobe are written in Abyssal. A character who succeeds on a **DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can understand that they are part of a magical formula similar to a *gate* spell. The wardrobe emanates a magical aura of conjuration. The padlock and the chains are nonmagical. The padlock can be opened with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check.

When the wardrobe is cracked open, the runes start to glow red, and a powerful stream of foul water slams out the doors and gushes out, filling the entire opening. The waters of the Abyssal sea are poisonous and smell of sickness, and contact causes a creature to become poisoned. A character in a direct line in front of the wardrobe inside or outside the room must make a **DC 21 Strength** ability check or be knocked prone by the powerful stream of water. The broken vault door slams into its frame, and its damaged hinges break, thrusting the door into the stairway with an enormous force. Any creature standing between the vault door and the stairway in area 1 must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage from the door.

Every round 1d4 aquatic **dretches** (that can only breathe in water) are washed into the Material Plane through the abyssal gate. The dretches attack anyone on sight.

The seemingly infinite **abyssal seawater** fills area 1 and 6 within two rounds, and floods area 2, 3, 4, and 5, filling them entirely on the fourth round after opening the doors of the portal. Characters can try to escape the water by entering the tunnel of the bulette, but it fills up entirely by the end of the sixth round, creating a geyser on the plains some 500 feet from the vault. A character in a room filled with abyssal seawater must hold their breath or start to suffocate.

Abyssal Seawater. Any creature that starts its turn in an area covered or flooded with abyssal seawater must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, but not both, and can't take reactions.

Swimming towards the strong current to approach the wardrobe in the flooded corridors requires a **DC 21 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. Forcing the doors of the wardrobe shut requires a successful **DC 15 Strength** ability check. Once the doors are shut, the gush of water stops. If the flow of abyssal seawater is not stemmed, the farms get flooded in three days. In another three days, a small lake appears, infested by aquatic dretches. If the characters don't end the threat, **Cygnus** intervenes after a week. The couatl kills many of the dretches and closes the doors of the abyssal wardrobe portal, then destroys the wardrobe, sealing the gate permanently.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they destroy the abyssal wardrobe portal.

51. Field of Nightmares

Background

Where once beautiful wild poppies grew, a field of deadly flowers now stretches on the sides of the road due to the Midnight Curse.

Environment

The road to Harveston crosses a large field of poppies that look normal during the day, but at night they emanate strange whispering, eerie sounds that penetrate the mind of those who travel the road. A few corpses, seemingly unharmed remains of past travelers, lie on the muddy, rain-soaked road.

Scene

A creature that passes on the road after dusk experiences strange hallucinations that initially materialize as faint silhouettes and shapes that move within the field of tall flowers. Soon they grow more frequent and obtain a physical form that eventually pours over the road to engulf the observer subjecting them to

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their worst nightmares. A creature who is subjected to these hallucinations must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or be targeted by a *phantasmal killer* spell. On a successful save, the character is immune to the effects of the field of nightmares until the next dawn.

52. Harveston

Background

Harveston, the proud and brave farming community, has seen some growth in its population since the curse took hold. Scores of refugees who survived the perils of the weather were given refuge in the Kicking Bull feasthall, transformed into a temporary lodging. However, with their crops dying and the weather posing a deadly challenge, the townsfolk are worried that food supplies will not last for long and are huddled together with their families.

Renrik Nuhak, commander of the Southkeep garrison, sent multiple groups to collect regular tithes in food, goods, and gold from the village in the past weeks. The farmers no longer wished to pay these taxes as their supplies were running out as well. The patrols took several individuals who resisted the most back to Southkeep for trial, and these unfortunates never returned. The latest patrol has arrived only recently in the town and is anxious to complete its mission. They took control of one of the taverns as their base of operations, and their lieutenant, Prollip Ramar, issued a pronouncement to the leaders of Harveston with a deadline of a week to pay up the 312 gold pieces they requested. Prollip Ramar is uneasy about his orders and has sent a pair of riders back to Southkeep to confirm the use of force, but they haven't returned either with the confirmation from their captain. The lieutenant is getting more and more frustrated with his situation.

In the meantime, a larger group of the Uncanny Vagabonds arrived, mingled with the refugees to keep a low profile. If their leader, Gren, has survived, he is here and hiding in one of the blacksmith shops. The Uncanny Vagabonds want to help the townsfolk and plan to deal with the patrol if soldiers don't leave voluntarily, but they are also concerned about losing their cover.

A half-orc guard who arrived with the patrols named Mikan Bogda is silently drinking himself into oblivion in the Golden Barley tavern near the Kicking Bull feasthall. Until recently, he was more willing to look the other way and just complete orders, but the situation with the refugees, the cursed land, and his orders to collect taxes from poor village folk was too much for him. Several of the Uncanny Vagabonds befriended him and are now pushing him to collaborate with the townsfolk to lure the soldiers into a trap if needed by offering him gold.

The locals know that Harveston's beloved Redcloak Lawgiver, Ha'aren Blackbone, a descendant of Onrryl Blackbone, left the town about a year ago to search for information on the Dark Star and the fallen angels. She spoke about her plans to travel to ancient sites searching for an ancient phrase and the exact location of a particular place.

"If only Ha'aren Blackbone were here, she would put an end to all of this."

Regular townsfolk lamenting over a drink.

Werular Swinefriend, the respected young cleric of the local Temple of the Eternal Mother, has been hiding since Queen Aphinah's proclamations. The farmers take turns in hosting him in their homes, and he has been instrumental in slowing down the continued decline of supplies.

Environment

Harveston is clearly overwhelmed these days. The Temple of the Eternal Mother was closed and the doors sealed with wooden planks, as required by Queen Aphinah. The Kicking Bull feasthall has been transformed into a refugee camp, with somber families living inside the large hall in tents with all their belongings and children running around. The surrounding farms and homes are also hosting refugees, and the whole town seems overcrowded by the num-

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ber of people in closed confines. Locals try their best to accommodate newcomers, but tensions are high. The surrounding fields are completely untended and flooded by the **choking rain.**

Scene

The twenty Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and their captain, Prollip Ramar (use the **knight** monster entry), are planning to tour Harveston's homes house by house as the last resort in a week's time, to force the inhabitants to hand over the requested money and goods.

One of the patrol's soldiers, Mikan Bogda (use the **guard** monster entry), is torn between his duties and conscience and drinking heavily as a result. He has decided to side with the farmers. A character can convince him to negotiate on behalf of the farmers if they succeed on a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check.

Mikan Bogda

"Dat lad, he looks at me, his old man taken to the keep a coupl' weeks ago... guh... no gonna do this nope I won't"

Mikan Bogda speaking to the mug of beer in front of him.

A total of twenty-four farmers (use the **commoner** monster entry) have sworn to put up a fight if needed and are supported in this idea by a total of fifteen undercover Uncanny Vagabonds (use the **bandit** monster entry with the ability to cast *vicious mockery* once per day) who all reside in the Kicking Bull festhall. If **Gren** has escaped from Onadbyr, he is also here and eager to fight the soldiers he considers oppressors.

Whispering Winds

Morrigan

Lifting the mood in the Kicking Bull festhall are two entertainers - Morrigan, a red dragonborn illusionist (use the **mage** monster entry) and Whispering Winds, a tabaxi bard (use the **minstrel of the**

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college monster entry) who dances and plays a dulcimer. Both are eager to introduce the characters to the Uncanny Vagabonds. A character succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can realize that many people there don't look like ordinary peasants, more like hardened soldiers among the refugees. Investigating, members of the Uncanny Vagabonds (potentially Gren) approach them and explain that they would like to get rid of the soldiers in the town.

If Mellier (see location 54.), the **werehellhound knight,** is traveling with the characters, he first tries to see if the characters can uncover any evidence of the Uncanny Vagabonds in the town, and if not, he seeks out the soldiers and takes over the company. The lycanthrope ruthlessly interrogates anyone who might know about the rebels. Once Mellier finds the Uncanny Vagabonds, he has the Kicking Bull festhall surrounded and put on fire, which quickly escalates into a face-off between the soldiers and the Uncanny Vagabonds.

A character can convince the soldiers to leave without the taxes by succeeding on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. If the characters convince Mikan Bogda to help the farmers, this DC is lowered by 2 due to his pleading. If the characters find out about and have the support of the Uncanny Vagabonds, this DC is lowered by another 2 points. If the characters bring news about the demise of Southkeep and defeat Mellier, the soldiers can be convinced with a **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to side with the farmers and to stay and protect the community together with the Uncanny Vagabonds.

A character who asks about the former cleric can succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice that the townsfolk prevaricate about Werular Swinefriend, the local cleric of the Eternal Mother (use the **priest** monster entry) who is hiding among the townsfolk.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can resolve the conflict between the soldiers and the townsfolk of Harveston.

53. Leaning Watchtower

Background

The Leaning Watchtower and the nearby towers are patrolled by Lieutenant Nermal Ottington's mounted troops (see location 54.). The lieutenant found a secret cave under the hill where the Leaning Watchtower stands and used it as a refuge for his troops. They are planning a scouting party and are prepared for any eventuality. Nermal Ottington hopes to be able to mount a crusade against Queen Aphinah and is gathering forces independently.

Environment

The Leaning Watchtower is an overgrown structure that slightly leans to the side. The tower is empty, all of its furnishing and decorations taken a long time ago.

Scene

A character can make a **DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to recognize that the tower can collapse at any time. A character who searches its surroundings can make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to find tracks that lead to the bottom of the hill into a rocky area where the secret entrance to the large cave can be found with the troop's campsite within.

Lieutenant Nermal Ottington

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The sixteen soldiers (use the **guard** monster entry) and their officer, Lieutenant Nermal Ottington (use the **veteran** monster entry), hide and keep continuous watch inside the cave. They raise the alarm as soon as they realize that they have been discovered and move to disarm and incapacitate intruders quickly. The characters must succeed on a **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince the soldiers of their good intentions. On a successful check, the lieutenant orders his troops to stand down. If Mellier, the werehellhound knight, is traveling with the characters, the lieutenant recognizes him on sight. When recognized, Mellier flees the location and tries to infiltrate Harveston. If the characters have liberated Harveston and Southkeep, the soldiers offer their help and happily relocate to Harveston to support the farmers.

54. Southkeep

Background

Queen Aphinah received worrying news about the Uncanny Vagabonds organizing in the south and dispatched a werehellhound knight, Mellier, to root them out. She commanded Mellier and has given him written orders to commandeer the garrison under the command of Renrik Nuhak, the Captain of Southkeep, a Red Cloak Lawgiver. Captain Nuhak was tasked with keeping the south protected, but upon receiving the orders and meeting Mellier, he decided to turn against the new Queen and guard the realm from Queen Aphinah's rule. He was able to trap Mellier, but not before the beast murdered and wounded some soldiers. Unknown to everyone, some of them contracted lycanthropy. With Mellier trapped and Onadbyr a looming threat, cold logic drove Captain Nuhak to send multiple patrols to Harveston, start to collect a tithe to have an income, and force able bodies into his army. His favored lieutenant, Nermal Ottington, opposed his actions and urged the mobilization of the troops against Onadbyr. In the ensuing argument, swords were drawn, and blood was spilled, and the lieutenant fled Southkeep with those loyal to him to a secret cave near the Leaning Tower, one of the watchtowers on the southern border (see location 53.).

Mellier watched and waited until those bitten by him turned into werehellhounds. The afflicted lycanthropes soon massacred most of the garrison, with only a few who were able to escape. Now, the afflicted lycanthropes scour the remains of the keep for survivors. However, they refrain from killing Mellier because they fear the Queen's retribution and keep away from him.

Mellier has been sitting in his iron cage for some time now and is hungry and restless. He will take every opportunity to escape and would like to stay undercover. The characters are an excellent opportunity to pass along with a group and further his true objective, locating and possibly eliminating the Uncanny Vagabonds.

Environment

The keep, once an imposing stone building with solid walls and towers, is a smoldering ruin. The walls of the central watchtower have caved in, the 10-foot tall, partially burnt and broken palisade, garrison's tents, and living areas outside the keep all burned down. Smoke can be seen for miles, and the smell of burnt flesh fills the air. A pile of partially burnt and rotting bodies is in front of the 15-foot tall, partially collapsed wooden gates. The remains of soldiers bear apparent marks of massive claws and bites.

Scene

Characters can spot a corpse among the dead wearing an officer's uniform, that of the late Captain Renrik Nuhak, if they succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Five **werehellhounds** hide inside the ruined fort and attack any creature on sight. They breathe fire and use pack tactics to overcome their foes.

Mellier, a **werehellhound knight** (with AC 10 and no armor) in human form, sits in an iron cage hung 20 feet high from the top of the central watchtower. If the characters defeat the werehellhounds, he explains that he was a lieutenant of Renrik Nuhak, and the werehellhounds kept him imprisoned. He says that the late captain and a small group within the

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garrison, including himself, were looking for a way to overthrow Queen Aphinah. He explains that he would like to travel to Harveston and lay low there. He tries to convince the characters to accompany him on his travels, using them as cover to find the Uncanny Vagabonds. A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can determine that Mellier is trying to lure them into a situation favorable to himself, and he is not telling the whole truth.

MELLIER

"I heard that Harveston is where it's the safest in the realm. Care to join me on the way there?"

Mellier trying to get the characters to join him on his trip.

Werehellhound (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **werewolf** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The werehellhound has damage immunity to fire.
- ***Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6).*** The werehellhound exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- ***Pack Tactics.*** The werehellhound has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the werehellhound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated

55. Monastery of the Spirited Leaf

Background

This old monastery is a place of contemplation dedicated to the Redeemer, the god of life. It is inhabited by two dozen friars, who have until recently been positive thinkers and aided those in need. However, after suffering the effects of the Midnight Curse, they have locked themselves inside their stone building and are wary of visitors, as there have been several attempts to rob them. Even worse, the master brewer Tortitudo has contracted **sight rot disease** and is slowly going blind. The monks know that eyebright grows abundantly in the Ulden Swamps, but the group that dared to venture out has never returned. The second group that was sent after them found their bodies impaled on the branches of the trees at the edge of the swamp. They returned to the monastery in haste, and in their desperation, the monks have looked for a respite from their plight in drinking the alcoholic drinks they produce.

Environment

A large, two-story stone building with brownish roof tiles stands between the Ulder Road and the edge of the Ulden Swamps. Its main gate is closed, and all of its windows are covered by shutters except for the ones in its wide circular tower, where the shapes of some of the clerics can be seen peeking out the windows from time to time.

Scene

The friars of the monastery (use the **acolyte** monster entry) are drunk most of the time, trying to escape the dread reality that has befallen them. Unable to help themselves and Tortitudo, their sick master brewer, they have grown frustrated and easily irritated. They will not allow anyone inside their monastery until convinced of their good intentions.

A character who wishes to converse with the drunk friars of the monastery must succeed on a **DC 16 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check. On

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a successful check, the friars open the main gate and usher the characters inside. They hug and pat them, shake their hands and consider them as the source of their salvation. Next, the clerics introduce Tortitudo, who asks them to retrieve a handful of eyebright flowers from the swamp before the sickness completely rots his eyes.

TORTITUDO

"I would really appreciate it if you would... be so kind as to be of assistance to help... me in my miserable state..."

A drunk Tortitudo asking for the character's help.

The friars don't know about Kelzar's transformation but can inform the characters about the trolls that lived in the swamps. They are also worried about Vaddon, the hermit druid, who lives in his hut alone, south of the swamp (location 59.).

Treasure

If the characters retrieve the curative flowers, the monks supply them with four small kegs of their finest Spirited Leaf liquor worth 400 gold pieces in total.

Experience

Avert the party 700 experience points for curing Tortitudo's disease.

56. AZURE BRIDGE

Background

As the Midnight Curse takes hold in the realm, the bridgemaster of the Azure Bridge, Klinikk Jordus, becomes more and more greedy and starts to rob everyone who tries to pass over. The *azure control rod* of the bridge is in the bridgemaster's possession, which he can use to activate the magical properties of the bridge and affix travelers to it, then shoot them from afar with his goons, collecting the wealth they leave behind and dumping their corpses into the river below.

Environment

The blue crystal surface of the Azure Bridge shines with a faint glow even under the overcast skies. At the two ends of the bridge are barbicans that guard the bridge and collect the toll to the bridgemaster. A group of a dozen travelers about 100 feet from the northern **barbican** has set up a camp of tents to avoid the rain.

Barbican. The wooden forts at the ends of the bridge are constructed of thick wooden logs. They feature sets of two large wooden gates (20 by 20 feet) on both sides that can be opened from the inside. The gates can be locked by a heavy sliding bolt latch made of iron. They each have AC 15, 54 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The second level of the barbican is at the height of 20 feet, protected from the outside by arrow slits that afford three-quarters cover to those within the walls.

Scene

Klinikk Jordus (use the **bandit captain** monster entry) is stationed with his eight soldiers (use the **bandit** monster entry) at the bridge where steady traffic has been arriving from Onadbyr. The greedy bridgemaster has instructed his soldiers to guard the barbicans at the bridgeheads and not to let anyone approach if the toll is not paid. When characters arrive at the tents, the travelers can inform them about the refusal of

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the soldiers to let them through without paying the bridge fee, which has been raised to an exorbitant amount of 2 gold pieces per person and an additional 5 gold pieces per vehicle or mount. Without the funds, the travelers have been stranded at the bridge.

When characters approach the fortification, they are hailed by a soldier on the ramparts, who demands payment to cross. If characters refuse and approach within 100 feet, the four soldiers on the second level of the barbican open fire from behind three-quarters cover and try to keep characters away. The soldiers can be reinforced by four additional members from below if needed.

If characters pay up, two soldiers open the outer gate of the barbican and escort the travelers into the barbican, where four additional soldiers and Klinikk Jordus await. The bridgemaster tries to appraise the group's wealth before having the inner gate of the barbican opened. Characters can make a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice the eager glances of Klinikk Jordus at the purses of the characters as he grips his *azure control rod,* made of the same stone as the bridge.

Captain Klinikk Jordus

"Tis what it is. Troubled times are expensive for all... And orders of the Queen you know, nothing a lowly bridgemaster like I can do about it..."

Klinikk Jordus lying through his teeth.

When the travelers exit the barbican onto the bridge, the inner gate is closed behind them. When they are 40 feet from the barbican, Klinikk Jordus activates the defensive ability of the Azure Bridge using the *azure control rod* that is in his possession. Suddenly, the entire surface of the bridge lights up with a magical blue flare for a moment, which surrounds creatures that stand on it in a glow. At the start of every round, a creature in contact with the bridge's surface must make a successful **DC 15 Strength** saving throw to fight the adhesive effect of the magical light. On a failure, the creature becomes restrained. Meanwhile, the four soldiers at the top of the barbican open fire from above behind three-quarters cover.

"Pin them down before they escape with some magical gateways like those cretins of virtue did the last time!"

Klinikk Jordus shouting to his men as he activates the magical property of the bridge.

Treasure

The gang has amassed a sizable pool of wealth through their exploits: 675 gold pieces, 110 silver pieces, and various jewelry worth 487 gold pieces. Additionally, Klinikk Jordus has the *azure control rod* of the bridge in his possession.

57. Mud Funnels

Background

After the Midnight Curse manifests, the authorities no longer maintain the King's Road, and the Royal Swords no longer patrol the roads. The majority of the farmers from the Onadbyr farmlands have fled west and have abandoned their farms. Ankhegs have been drawn to the muddy habitat created by the rains along the side of the road, creating an underground network beneath mud sinks.

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Environment

As a result of the deluge of the choking rain, the brick road is flooded in many places, and travelers are forced into the muddy ground on the sides of the road, where carriages and wagons lie stuck and abandoned. Corpses cover the ground along the roadside, having fallen victim to the choking rain or another effect of the Midnight Curse.

Scene

Dangerous funnels covered in mud dot this area, where the quagmires might swallow the unwary traveler. Those who fall below tumble into the extensive ankheg network beneath, becoming the monsters' next meal. A character can make a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to avoid a funnel and being sucked below ground. On a failed check, the character falls through the sinkhole and finds itself in a network of tunnels measuring 10 feet in diameter. Six **ankhegs** are soon drawn to the vibrations and arrive in 1d3 rounds.

58. Kelzar's Log

Background

All creatures avoid the Ulden Swamps who know of the nightmarish rampage of Kelzar, the largest of the troll family that used to live in this mire before it murdered its kin by forcing them into the acidic saliva of the ankhegs north of the Ulden Swamps (location 57.). The Midnight Curse turned the troll into a huge, ravenous monster with a mad urge to become the most destructive force within the swamp, which it considers as its kingdom. The troll has gained the ability to merge and control the body parts of other creatures by planting them into its regenerative body. Kelzar uses the massive floating tree log as its hideout and considers the remains of its dead family as its council. These days, even the monks of the Spirited Leaf and Vaddon the Hermit are afraid to visit the swamp. Those first few who dared to do so have disappeared and have been found gruesomely mutilated, their bodies hung from trees at the border of the swamp. A troll-hunter named Algers has recently entered the swamp on his quest to slay Kelzar but has become trapped by mud sinks, a sitting duck for Kelzar's fury.

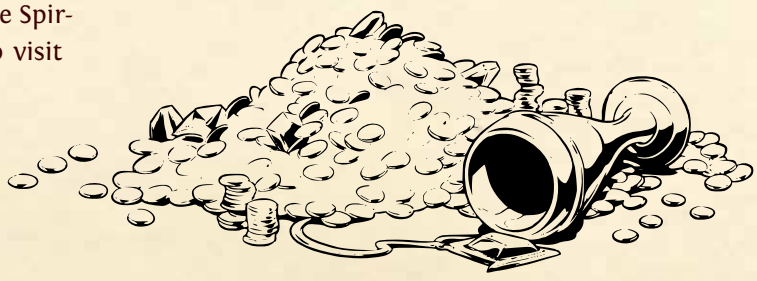
Algers the Troll-Hunter

Environment

The gruesomely mutilated bodies of various kinds of beasts and humanoids, and even some giants, hang from the tallest branches of the trees at the border of the swamp, marking Kelzar's territory. The wetland is more water than solid ground, and navigating the bogs and reeds requires a boat or some floating device. The abundant plant life, which is heavy with flying insects, hides the ground from view in many places.

Scene

Kelzar spends much of its time within its hollowed floating log, but from time to time, it takes off to rampage in its domain, killing anything larger than a tiny creature. It prefers to close in on its target through either the thick canopy of the trees or from underwater in less overgrown areas of the swamp.



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KELZAR

"Dis Kelzar kingdom! Kelzar king! You fooood!"

Kelzar raging at the characters.

Algers (use the **veteran** monster entry with a +2 modifier on his Survival), the 60-year old senile troll hunter also hides in the swamps. A seasoned marksman earlier in his life, Algers makes a living as a self-employed monster hunter, drawn to hunt Kelzar when he heard about the murders. He has since realized that he has bitten off more than he can chew. He eventually got trapped in a dry region surrounded by **mud sinks** and was too afraid to risk flight. He is more than happy to leave the Ulden Swamps but can be convinced to join the characters to defeat Kelzar.

Mud Sink. These wet and muddy areas cover a region of about 30 to 100 feet in diameter and are the equivalent of quicksand in swamps and marshes. There are usually several mud sinks in a larger area with only narrow patches of solid ground between them. A creature that steps in a mud sink must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or become restrained. A restrained creature can attempt a **DC 13 Strength** ability check to escape the mud sink. On a failed check, the creature sinks deeper and the DC to escape increases to **DC 15.** On a second failed check, the creature sinks even deeper, covered up to its shoulders and the DC increases to **DC 17.** On a third failed check, the creature is fully submerged in the mud and starts to suffocate, and the DC to escape the mud sink increases to **DC 19.** A creature within 5 feet of the sinking creature can assist the escape, but only if they are not in a mud sink themselves. Mud sinks can be avoided by a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check.

Eyebright, a rare flower that cures **sight rot,** grows in a few patches within the Ulden Swamp. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check can recognize the plant and harvest enough flowers that can be prepared by a character proficient with the herbalist kit into 2d4 doses.

59. VADDON'S ABODE

Background

Vaddon is an old druid of the Eternal Mother, god of nature, who has chosen isolation and lives as a recluse in his tiny hut. Vaddon's only contact with the outside world is Tortitudo, the master brewer of the Monastery of Spirited Leaf (location 55.), who visits the hermit druid from time to time to collect rare herbs for his brews. Vaddon has seen Kelzar's new form and the bloody massacres he has committed.

Environment

Vaddon's rickety hut is only a room with a bed and some equipment stored next to it. The ramshackle building is held together more by the plants that have entwined it than the planks of which it was made.

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VADDON

Scene

Vaddon (use the **druid** monster entry) is a reserved misanthrope, who rarely speaks, mumbles a few words when he does, and even then, he is hard to understand. He has no intentions to aid the characters in any way but can be motivated to share information about Kelzar's Log (location 58.) if the characters show intent on slaying the monster.

"Bewr, cuz K'zarh turhed nto a s'vagh munshtr."

Vaddon mumbling incomprehensibly.

Treasure

Vaddon carries a *+1 silver sickle*.

60. SOBRUZ QUARRY AND PENITENTIARY

Background

The Midnight Curse has impacted this location in multiple ways. Firstly, it has given life to a clay elemental in the pit of the quarry that now attacks anyone in the clay pits. The convicts and the guards fled the elemental and have locked themselves into the penitentiary, but they have been stranded without food. Their existing brutality and hate towards each other heightened to a sadistic and cannibalistic madness. They lost their identities and are no longer convicts or guards.

From time to time, when the tribe grows hungry, they eat one of the weakest amongst themselves. Sometimes, the dead cannibals rise as ghouls whom the tribe, which has sealed itself inside a section of the building, dumps into the central courtyard.

Environment

The collection of walled buildings known as the Sobruz Penitentiary sits in the middle of a giant clay pit, in a depression that is 40 feet deep and 200 feet across. The stone walls of the penitentiary rise to a height of 20 feet, while buildings inside are 10-foot tall one-story structures that were erected on enormous stone slabs that ensure their stability in the malleable clay environment. The courtyard and the connected smaller buildings are open and covered in blood and dirt. The larger building, formerly occupied by the guards, is sealed off with a barricade and shuttered windows.

Gates and Doors. The outer gate (10 by 10 feet) of the prison is made of iron and has AC 19, 90 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It has been locked, but the lock can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The barricade is reinforced from within and requires a **DC 24 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to break down, leading to the wing where the cannibalistic tribe has secluded itself.

Scene

A **clay elemental** lies submerged in the mud at the bottom of the clay pit around the walls of the building. The elemental has not managed to break the walls of the fortification and can't get inside, but attacks anyone in its berserk state who exits from or tries to approach the building of the prison.

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Clay Elemental. Use the **earth elemental** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The clay elemental can only use *Earth Glide* to burrow through clay.
- It doesn't have the *Siege Monster* trait.
- ***Acid Absorption***. Whenever the clay elemental is subjected to acid damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the acid damage dealt.

Inside the prison, the empty corridors and cells of the outer wing and the courtyards are the hunting grounds of twelve **ghouls,** who are also trapped within the prison walls. The cannibalistic tribesmen (use the **tribal warrior** monster entry) have barricaded themselves into the inner wings and will attack any intruders who enter their territory. The tribe of cannibals will take over the entire penitentiary if the characters don't deal with the clay golem and the ghouls. They will terrorize neighboring colonies and collect victims to feed their newfound appetite for humanoid flesh.

61. ROYAL STUD FARM

Background

As a result of the close connection to Hell in this area and the Midnight Curse taking hold, the former king's horse, Blackheart, has transformed into a nightmare that has destroyed the buildings and has slain every living creature in this area. The fiendish horse lurks in the Ethereal Plane and stalks intruders who enter its territory.

Environment

The wooden buildings of the Royal Stud Farm - stables, barns, service buildings, and the manor house - have all burnt down, their husks smoldering and smoking. Charred corpses of horses and humanoids litter the area, most of them partially eaten. Hoofprints can be found around the corpses, burnt into the very ground, however it is impossible to track the prints as they abruptly end and resume in different places.

Scene

Blackheart, the **nightmare,** stalks its prey from the Ethereal Plane, observing victims without being seen, before stepping back into the Material Plane to attack. It will favor lone victims that have separated from the group, biding its time until such an event arises. It finds malicious pleasure in vanishing when a victim is near death, then reappearing again to finish the victim off after they had a brief moment of hope for survival. Blackheart will not attack anyone who displays or voices a connection to fiends. In this case, such a character can make a successful **DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince the nightmare about its wicked intentions. If such actions are demonstrated to the nightmare, it might even allow a black-hearted individual to ride it.

SYLL'ROBYN

Syll'robyn (use the **scout** monster entry), an overly helpful but very slow-witted half-elven ranger has sealed himself in the cellars of the manor house. He leaves the safety of his hiding place if he hears the characters outside and asks them for help to overcome the nightmare. The half-elf, who talks in the third person, follows foolhardy tactics and thoughtless plans, endangering himself and the characters alike. He is happy to be saved but will not join the characters because of a very important task that he has to accomplish in the Vordan Mountains of which he won't say more.

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62. Old Windmills

See the corresponding location entry in the Kingdom of Aglarion section. One of the windmills is the Old Grinder, which the characters should have visited before.

63. Ruins of the Royal Summer Palace

Background

The palace, once the royal summer residence lies abandoned and haunted still. Some unfortunate stablehands managed to escape the rampage of Blackheart the nightmare in the Royal Stud Farm (location 61.) and fled into the ruined villa, only to be slain by the ghost of Count Plitvar within the building.

Environment

The villa once used to be a magnificent and opulent structure, however it has been ravaged by seven decades of unuse. The walls of the villa have slumped, its ornate stairs are near collapse, the roof has caved in many places, and the rains soak through the entire building. The bodies of several stablehands lie in the main foyer and central hall of the villa.

Scene

The **ghost** of Count Plitvar haunts the main hall of the villa and appears from the Ethereal Plane when the characters enter the chamber. The ghost snarls in madness, its lascivious face contorting into a horrifying visage. The spirit of the ghost can be laid to rest if the corpse of Count Plitvar is located and disinterred from the wall where it is buried. Characters can make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the bulge behind the wall behind the fireplace that hides the count's body.

"Traitors all! Did she send you? Eirammar's lackeys shall not be tolerated here. Or anywhere! Your deaths can hardly avenge the traitorous she-devil, but they will do!"

The ghost of Count Plitvar in its mad calls for vengeance.

Treasure

If characters spend 30 minutes rummaging through the remains of the villa, they can discover an assortment of abandoned trinkets and art objects that are still intact although needing a thorough cleaning. The items include a silver spoon with the insignia of Queen Eirammar worth 16 gold pieces, an ornate mahogany box with a set of playing cards worth 10 gold pieces, a porcelain vase commemorating the repulsion of the Xantharosian armada worth 125 gold pieces, a golden serving plate with engravings of monsters with the body parts of lions worth 200 gold pieces, and a paperweight chiseled from grey spinel in the shape of a mountain with the holy sign of the Relentless at its peak worth 2,000 gold pieces.

64. Ziggurat of the New Moon

(SECRET LOCATION)

Background

The Ziggurat of the New Moon was constructed around Morkiel's crystal of the immortals to venerate the fear associated with darkness. For millennia, the altar at the top of the obsidian building dripped with the blood of terrified victims sacrificed to the manifestation of the Darkness Within that was the Dark Star. The ziggurat is also where Samkiel, the deva loremaster and advisor to the three planetar generals of the Dark Star, was imprisoned in Morkiel's crystal for foreseeing the banishment of the fallen angels from the Material Plane. Then the entire ziggurat was transposed to the Astral Plane. The crystal prison has held the deva for thousands of years under constant fear, and as a result, it has gone completely insane.

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Over 600 years ago, Master Arlen and Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar found the hidden ziggurat, and Samkiel within. The two successfully attuned to the crystal and spent considerable time in the presence of the mad deva to learn many ancient secrets that proved crucial in their crusade against the Order of the Eternal Light. However, the pair kept all knowledge about the ziggurat and the source of their lore a closely guarded secret.

Recently, a Red Cloak Lawgiver named Ha'aren Blackbone, managed to locate the ziggurat and transfer it back to the Material Plane. She entered the building, only to succumb to the crystal's power. The Red Cloak died of starvation, cowering at Samkiel's feet in fear. Ha'aren carried the *adamantine torc of the tower,* now on the wrist of her lifeless body at the foot of Morkiel's crystal of the immortals.

An astral spider has made its lair at the top of the ziggurat and has covered its top with invisible webs, patiently waiting for its eggs to hatch.

Environment

The 90-foot tall ziggurat is ancient, thousands of years old, constructed by the slaves of the Dark Star out of large blocks of obsidian. The entire structure is decorated with reliefs depicting winged beings with frightening countenances and etched with strange pictograms and runes in the form of dark Celestial language. 15-foot wide stairs ascend to the top of the tower, where an altar rises under a columned roof. A single opening leads into the ziggurat on its second level.

Invisible Webs. Invisible webs cover the top level of the ziggurat, weaved by the astral spider that lairs at the ziggurat's summit. Any creature that steps onto the webs is restrained by invisible webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a **DC 13 Strength** ability check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked with disadvantage and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, poison, and psychic damage)

Scene

Once characters have found out the name of the ziggurat from Cygnus and that it can only appear at the highest point of the new moon, and learned the Celestial command phrase "The darkness shall feed their fears." from the ancient parchment stolen by Abulior Whitegate from the Arcane Tower, and knowing its location, they can conjure the Ziggurat of the New Moon from the Astral Plane. As they speak the command phrase, the enormous structure materializes from the void between the planes.

The entire ziggurat is covered in magical runes that imbue it with a complex magic effect that allows it to shift to the Astral Plane. When the ziggurat appears, the runes on the building glow brightly before fading to their natural black color. The ziggurat stays on the Material Plane for 10 rounds before the runes activate again and return it to the Astral Plane until they can be triggered again at the time of the new moon once every week and when the command phrase is spoken. The runes start to glow brighter over the course of the 10 rounds, at which point the ziggurat is transported back to the Astral Plane along with anyone within and or in contact with it.

Any character who speaks Celestial and succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can decipher the runes and understand the intricate astral projection effect they bestow on the building. An *identify* or similar spell also reveals the nature of this magical effect.

The **astral spider** will wait until characters enter the ziggurat, at which point it will cover the entryway and surrounding area with its invisible webbing, lurking invisibly and waiting for the characters to exit the structure.

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1. Campsite of the Founders

Background

Mater Arlen bore a passage into the building, and a room on its first level with the use of *disintegrate* and *stone shape* spells. The archmage and the king-to-be Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar, used this chamber to rest during their visits to Samkiel over 600 years ago.

Environment

The opening on the building is not chiseled from the stone but clearly too precise in its angles and shape to be made by hands. The surfaces of the corridor leading into the structure and the room on the lower level are completely smooth and devoid of decorations, also having been fashioned by magical means from the solid stone. The ceiling of the chamber is 15 feet high. The stone stairs that ascend from the room seem to grow out of the ground, and a soft bluish light illuminates its top stairs. Two worn-out mattresses lie on both sides of the stairs with the remains of a campsite spread around them - stubs of candles, small pots and cups, a pitcher, a ripped belt with an ornate belt buckle, a small pack of dry rations, a golden goblet, a single sock, and a few sheets of paper.

Scene

The chamber has been infested by six **swarms of astral stirges,** drawn to the crystal of the immortals above. The swarms will fly to attach themselves to anyone who enters the room.

Treasure

All the seemingly mundane items are the discarded belongings of Master Arlen the Constructor (his sock, notes, and favorite cup) and Razmyrel Valsyr Melkar the True (his golden goblet and belt buckle). The cup is made of silver, and engravings cover its entire surface with underwater seascapes. It is worth 150 gold pieces. The golden goblet is lined with garnets and is worth 550 gold pieces. The belt buckle is decorated with the crest of House and is worth 75 gold pieces. Master Arlen's notes are regarding the information from Samkiel about the planetar generals of the Dark Star and ancient holy ceremonies from the age of the Dark Angels. The archmage also refers to the astral transference properties of the ziggurat that Master Arlen wished to incorporate into the Arcane Tower that he planned to build.

If Abulior Whitegate is present, the wizard tries to snatch Master Arlen's notes before anyone can take a look at them. He refuses to give them up and resists any attempt to take them.

If Cygnus is present, he insists on destroying any relics related to the dark angels. He will not use force to accomplish this but reason in favor of eliminating any unholy presence of such remnants of ancient times.

2. Samkiel's Prison

Background

Samkiel was imprisoned in Morkiel's crystal of the immortals for its prophecies in ancient times. The deva stands in its prison, continuously shifting forms into humanoids and beasts, and back to its true winged form, but unable to escape. Ha'aren Blackbone managed to reach the chamber but succumbed to the effects of the crystal and starved to death while unable to move away.

Environment

The stairs from below end in a chamber that was chiseled from the obsidian rocks, illuminated by the glow of a huge, multifaceted blue crystal - **Morkiel's Crystal of the Immortals**. Deep engravings of hieroglyphs cover the walls and the floor, including the ceiling, which is 15 feet high. The opening of a tiny shaft can be seen on the ceiling. The form of a figure is continuously shifting inside the crystal. A corpse, wearing the signature cloak of the Red Cloak Lawgivers, lies at the top of the stairs, gripping its longsword.

Morkiel's Crystal of the Immortals. The planetars and the Dark Star used these crystals to descend upon the Material Plane. This particular crystal radiates a

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Ziggurat of the New Moon

1 tile = 5 feet

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power of raw immortal energy that creates an aura of tangible fear that cripples the mind. The crystal of the immortals is impervious to physical or magical attacks. Any creature within a radius of 10 feet must succeed on a **DC 23 Wisdom** saving throw at the start of its turn against the maddening fear effect of the crystal. On the first failed save, the character is afflicted with short-term madness (roll on the short-term madness table). On the second failed save, the character is afflicted with long-term madness (roll on the long-term madness table). On the third save, the character is afflicted with indefinite madness (roll on the indefinite madness table) and gains a new character flaw: "I am convinced that the Dark Star is watching me and will come to enslave me. I am weak and mortal compared to its immortal being." On any one of the failed saves, the character also becomes overwhelmed by fear and falls to its knees, cowers, and shivers uncontrollably. A character afflicted by this fear effect can make a saving throw each day to recover from it. This effect even affects creatures that are immune to being frightened. A creature can attune to the crystal of the immortals by pressing its forehead against the crystal, while a small fragment of it inserts itself into its forehead. Attuning to the crystal of immortals takes one minute of uninterrupted concentration. An attuned character becomes immune to being frightened and the effects of the crystal. A celestial creature regains 18 (4d8) hit points every round within the aura.

Scene

Ascending the stairs is impossible without overcoming the fear effect of the crystal of the immortals. As soon as characters reach the tops of the stairs, they can see Ha'aren Blackbone's remains that lie at the feet of the crystal. **Samkiel** calls to the characters telepathically, its voice a babble of dark thoughts within their minds. The mad deva rambles in horror about the devastation caused by the fall of the dark angels during the Mountainfall and the millennia of enslavement that mortals endured under the Dark Star. It whispers in a frightened tone about lost libraries, ancient artifacts of darkness, sites of great battles and mass sacrifice, and of the Dark Star itself, whimpering and shivering when it utters its name.

It is extremely hard to communicate with Samkiel, and characters who wish to extract any useful bit of information must succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to find meaning in its jumbled words. References to a few hidden locations can be gleaned from the mad deva's words, about the sacrificial altar on Cloud Peak, the Groaning Pillar, the Gate to the Darkness Within, and the Ethereal Cloister (locations 48, 46, 31, and 3 respectively).

Samkiel. Use the **deva** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Samkiel's skills are Arcana +11, History +11, Insight +9, Nature +11, Perception +9, and Religion +11.

SAMKIEL

"Be you angels of darkness sent to torment me...or mere mortals that find glee in other's fright...or gods who bring deliverance!? Come closer and kneel before me... but know that the Dark Star's empty soul is devoid of pity...feel the fear that is Morkiel and relinquish all hope, as I have done...."

Samkiel gasping for words amid shivers of fright.

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If Cygnus is present, the couatl will make the characters swear an oath to never speak of the Ziggurat of the Moon, Samkiel, or the crystal of the immortals to anyone. If they break their promises, the celestial will hunt them down (via *dream* and *scrying*) and hold them accountable for their broken vows.

Treasure

The corpse of Ha'aren Blackbone wears the *adamantine torc of the tower* on its wrist and grips a *+2 longsword*.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for recovering the *adamantine torc of the tower*.

3. Altar to Morkiel

Background

The altar to Morkiel, the dark planetar general of the Dark Star, was used to sacrifice mortals while holding them in absolute fear. The bottom of the altar is connected to the chamber below with a tiny shaft, allowing the magical energies of the crystal to manifest on those who lie on the slab of the altar. Recently, an astral spider has made its nest around the altar, guarding its egg sack and covering the top of the ziggurat with its nest.

Environment

The ziggurat's flat top features an obsidian altar, covered by a flat roof supported by columns. Engravings on all surfaces show terrifying countenances of angels, snarling and baring their teeth.

Scene

The **astral spider** has covered the top part of the ziggurat in invisible webs (see the general Environment section under the Ziggurat of the New Moon). Once the ziggurat materializes on the Material Plane, the invisible spider will immediately grab its egg sack and transport itself back to the Astral Plane. After the building returns, it will wait in invisibility until the characters emerge from the ziggurat, when it will attempt to entrap them in its webs and attack in stealth.

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The Arcane Tower

Background

The Arcane Tower was built by Master Arlen the Constructor over six hundred years ago. Its sole purpose is to educate those deemed worthy of the arcane knowledge accumulated by the first archmage and his successors. The arcane academy can accommodate thirty-two students and always has four academicians in attendance, one of them the official archmage of the tower and all Aglarion. Master Arlen set strict rules and obligations for those who attend the academy, including his notoriously difficult entry test, general academic principles, and the legal status of the organization. The most important of these is the fact that the Arcane Tower and all of its residents are bound to serve the kingdom when the ruling monarch orders them to do so.

Many of the students are from the neighboring Drayl city-states or lands even farther. The wizards of the tower live secluded lives and rarely interact with their surroundings, only when buying foodstuff and resources from neighboring farms or when collecting components. Graduated students leave the academy of the Arcane Tower after twelve years or longer with an academic degree.

Environment

The Arcane Tower is a tidy and well-kept academy, due to the strict house rules set by Master Zaophas, the magical servants, and the self-cleansing effects that were constructed into the building by Master Arlen. The facility provides for every need of its residents, letting them focus on their studies instead of menial tasks.

All rooms and corridors have a height of 10 feet on the ground, second, and third floors, and 20 feet on the fourth floor.

Doors and Double Doors. Doors open inwards and are made of thick, sturdy wood that has been fitted with iron hinges and handles. They feature masterfully crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The doors have AC 15, 40 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison, and psychic damage.

Windows. Windows are 10 feet high and wide. They open inwards and have stone frames and a single layer of thick glass. The wings are held together by iron latches that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check or forced

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open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The windows have AC 10 and 5 hit points.

Main Gate. This thick wooden gate is the size of a typical double door, but it is sturdier and its lock more complex. It can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. It has AC 15, 80 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison, and psychic damage.

Magic Heating and Illumination. All areas of the Arcane Tower were fashioned by Master Arlen to be magically heated to 70 degrees Fahrenheit at all times. In addition, magical globes of light provide illumination, shedding light as hooded lanterns when touched. They can be dimmed, shut down, or re-activated by tapping them sequentially.

Unseen Servants. An academician or apprentice of the Arcane Tower can summon an unseen servant at any time as if they have cast the *unseen servant* spell. One academician or apprentice can only have one unseen servant at their service at any time.

Water and Sewage System. Water is provided directly from a clean vein of pure freshwater from the Elemental Plane of Water. Master Arlen created and placed several taps all over the tower to connect to these elemental water reservoirs directly. The waste from the building, including toilets and trash collectors, is transported directly to the Elemental Plane of Fire. These planar portals are small, safely out of reach, and open only temporarily to a size where only a Tiny creature could squeeze through them.

Private Sanctum. The Arcane Tower is under the permanent effect of a *private sanctum* spell, blocking planar travel, teleportation, and divination spells, and prevents creatures from peeping or listening through its windows, except for the academicians of the tower and Master Zaophas, who are exempted from this effect. This effect also prevents the succubi and incubi within the tower from using their etherealness abilities.

CONJURING THE ARCANE TOWER

Background

The Arcane Tower was transposed to the Astral Plane by Master Zaophas using the tower's security protocol when the Midnight Curse spread over the realm. The archmage of Aglarion made his decision based on the first-hand report from Laromarius the Golem Controller, who attended the cursed coronation of Queen Aphinah. Master Zaophas chose to avoid the unprecedented phenomenon, the bloodthirsty new queen, and her seemingly magically adept mother. He is actively researching their backgrounds and affiliations, but currently, the wizards of the Arcane Tower have a more immediate problem on their hands.

Environment

The stairway inside the Vaults of the Arcane Tower (location 50.).

Scene

Once all six torcs are placed in their places, the focus pedestal releases a blinding flash of light, and with a short rumbling sound and a loud clash, the Arcane Tower is recalled from the Astral Plane, secured to the Material Plane.

THE TIME LOOP

Background

Azaeresh, a succubus swashbuckler, is the captain of a flying pirate ship and its incubus crew. The vicious fiends are a renegade group who have rebelled against their succubus queen master and stole one of her planar ships. The fiendish pirates use the Astral Plane and its numerous planar portals as a conduit to enter other planes of existence, where they plunder treasures and take slaves. Their ship, the Last Kiss, was built in the Abyss as a vessel in the succubus queen's flying armada. It has a small chassis, and as a result, it has superior maneuverability. Its flight and the single large cannon at its front are

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powered by the psychic energies of the slaves bound to it. Blister was furious to learn about the cowardly self-exile of the wizards of the Arcane Tower and has hired Azaeresh and the Last Kiss to destroy the wizardly college and their powerful archmage. She considered the wizards the most formidable foes within the Kingdom of Aglarion, who could oppose their coven's plans. The midnight hag made its move to keep the arcanists from ruining the joyful reign of terror that the Matrons of Malice had been preparing for so long. With her two sisters in the captivity of the drow of House Ausstyl, she did not risk joining the succubus pirate captain on this high-risk mission. Blister's divinations revealed that the Arcane Tower was on the Astral Plane, but Azaeresh had to make a great effort on the timeless plane to discover it with its magic spyglass.

Master Zaophas, the academicians, and the apprentices of the Arcane Tower made a heroic stand against the dozen invading fiendish pirates. Still, the fiends' shapeshifting and charm abilities caught them unprepared and tricked many of them. The succubi and incubi cut through their ranks with their weapons, and the demoralized arcanists withdrew to their chambers to evade the onslaught. Master Zaophas made his final stand in the lecture hall on the top floor of the tower against Azaeresh, and when all seemed to fail, he cast one of his most powerful spells, a *time stop,* to gain the upper hand. At this exact moment, the characters recalled the Arcane Tower from the Astral Plane, and the planar shift caused the time-warping incantation to derail and fall back into an infinite loop. This rift in time caused the last three minutes of the raid to loop in on itself, over and over again, up to the moment when Master Zaophas casts his *time stop* spell.

Scene

The characters are stuck in a three-minute time loop that encloses a sphere with a radius of 500 feet around the Arcane Tower, including the planar pirate ship, the succubi and incubi raiders, and all inhabitants of the Arcane Tower. Any creature or object that starts its turn in the area is subjected to the effects of the **time loop**.

Time Loop. The time loop resets everything to its original location and condition every three minutes. All creatures, including the characters and every object, reset at the end of the third minute exactly to and how they started the loop cycle. Objects reappear where they were, all damage taken disappears, spell slots and item charges used are refilled, any dead creatures return to life, resetting their hit points to where they entered the area of the time loop.

The time loop affects the memories of those on the Material Plane and those who returned from the Astral Plane differently. Those on the Material Plane, including the characters and their allies, remember everything from each time loop cycle, while those who returned from the Astral Plane, including the fiendish pirates and the inhabitants of the Arcane Tower, lose their memories of the previous time loop when a new cycle starts.

The first round of the thirty-round time loop starts in area 1 of the Vaults of the Arcane Tower (location 50.). Keep track of the number of rounds spent moving, acting, fighting, and conversing by the characters during these thirty rounds. At the end of the thirtieth round, everything in the Arcane Tower resets to its status in the first round until the time loop is broken.

The characters will probably go through several time loops, during which they must understand the situation in which they find themselves, explore the Arcane Tower, and find out how to end the time loop by preventing Master Zaophas from casting the *time stop* spell. The characters do not need to replay every event. Once the characters have passed an encounter, they can choose to re-enact it as before with the same outcome and consuming the same number of rounds, or optimize their speed by replaying it. Once the time loop ends, the flow of time is restored and remains continuous.

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The Arcane Tower

Fourth Level

Third Level

Second Level

Ground Level

1 tile = 5 feet

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GROUND LEVEL

Background

A few essential facilities can be found on the ground floor of the Arcane Tower. These areas are not necessarily maintained daily by the residents of the academy.

1. Vault Stairs

Background

These simple stairs lead to the vaults of the Arcane Tower, where most of the unused items of the tower are stored. Master Zaophas placed a powerful *glyph of warding* and an *alarm* spell on the landing in front of the door to be alerted about and apprehend anyone who would cross this section of the tower without permission. In a normal situation, he would come to investigate, but he is currently too busy saving his own life in area 18.

Environment

Simple stone stairs lead up from the vault to a landing with a simple door.

Scene

Master Zaophas' *glyph of warding* spell is 10 feet in diameter covering the top of the stairs and the entire landing. It is imbued with a *maze* spell, and the *alarm* spell is set to alert the archmage mentally. The glyph is triggered by anyone who is not a student or academician of the Arcane Tower that steps on the glyph. A creature that activates the glyph is immediately subjected to a *maze* spell with a duration of 10 minutes. A character actively searching for traps can locate the glyph with a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

2. Circular Library

Background

Academicians and apprentices use this multi-level library extensively. On many occasions, there are short queues of students at some of the ladders, especially when they all have to prepare from the same topic.

Galfor, the Head Librarian, destroyed a section of the corridor on the ground floor to lock himself away from the slaughter upstairs with an incubus in disguise whom he believed to be one of the apprentices. To his horror, the apprentice turned out to be one of the incubus pirates, who eventually attacked him. Galfor escaped the fiend by locking himself inside the infirmary in area 6, with the incubus outside the door.

Environment

This system of heavy oak bookshelves reaches from floor to ceiling and runs on the outer side of the central walls of the Arcane Tower on every floor. Tall, slightly curved, squeaking wooden ladders are attached to the side of the shelves to help the wizards reach books at every height of the continuous bookcase. The ladders can be moved around alongside each section quite easily, even if someone stands on them.

Library of the Arcane Tower. The books in the library vary in content on each floor of the tower. Sections are marked by topic, and books are ordered alphabetically within each section. The ground floor contains books and manuscripts on religions and related content. The books on the second floor are about nature, flora, fauna, and the elements, with numerous scrolls of maps added to the collection. The third-floor library covers topics on history and famous individuals. The books on the fourth floor are related to every segment of arcane, planar, and mystic lore. When a resident of the tower borrows a book from the shelf, an illusory image of the book appears in its place with the borrower's name inscribed on its spine in large glowing letters. The illusion dissipates if the book is returned to its place. Some of the books missing are either with students or with Galfor, but one item of importance is a missing folder of parchments labeled "Dark Star parchment," bearing the name Abulior Whitegate as the borrower and the word "Misappropriated" written next to his name. It can be found on a high shelf on the third floor. Galfor, the Head Librarian adds new books to the collection. A character

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who uses the library to research a particular fact can make the **Intelligence** ability check with advantage.

A section of the central corridor on the ground floor is demolished, and a large stone rubble completely blocks the path.

Scene

A wounded **incubus pirate** (with 33 hit points left) named Thanrhyst is trapped between the rubble and the door to the vault, but it is interested in neither. It wants to kill the wizard hiding in area 6 before finding a way to regroup with its mates. The incubus wears the form and the equipment of one of the apprentices. It fakes confusion, mistrust, and terror when the characters enter the room from the vault stairs. First, it wants to know who they are, and then tries to convince them that it has locked an incubus pirate inside the infirmary. Characters who explicitly state that they are suspicious about the apprentice can make a **DC 19 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice that the apprentice is trying to deceive them. It asks the characters to storm the infirmary and capture the supposed incubus but will not interfere if the characters start to clear the rubble from the corridor.

"Stop! Who are you? I trapped one of the incubi in the infirmary. It took the form of Galfor, the Librarian. They are all over the place!"

Thanrhyst the incubus trying to deceive the characters.

The door to the infirmary in area 6 has been secured by an *arcane lock* spell by Galfor. It can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 30 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 30 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

A character who wishes to clear the path by moving the rubble must succeed on a **DC 10 Strength** ability check to clear it in five rounds. For every 5 points of success above the DC, the character can finish one round earlier to a minimum of 2 rounds.

3. Greenhouse

Background

The wizards of the Arcane Tower cultivate and cross-breed several plant species in this greenhouse.

Environment

The air is warm and heavy with moisture in this brightly lit room. Narrow passages run between plants of different sizes planted into small boxes standing on tables and large casks. Pots and vases are stacked on the floor. A large, mossy water tank made of glass stands by the wall, housing several undersea plants.

Scene

The greenhouse has several different everyday and rare plants on display, some of them hybrids created by the wizards. Identifying a rare plant requires a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check. The water tank hides six broad leaves of a very rare aquatic plant called **fishlung kelp**. A bouquet of plants in a circular vase that weighs 20 pounds and stands on a wheeled trolley is a rare pampas grass, the curative **Silken Touch of the Mistress.** A small glass dome holds three thorny stems of magical **night roses.**

Salazar Ashbloom

Salazar Ashbloom (use the **apprentice of the Arcane Tower** monster entry) is hiding behind one of the

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bushes, in fear of his life. The practiced herbalist and apothecary can describe the nature of the plants found within the greenhouse. He is afraid to join the characters but will support them with spells from the rear, if needed.

Fishlung Kelp. This magical kelp grows in shallow waters and has wide, curved leaves. Frequent use of the plant can be deadly as it severely damages the lungs of the imbiber. A creature who smokes the dried and crushed leaves of the plant gains the benefits of a *water breathing* spell for 1 hour, after which the imbiber gains two exhaustion levels.

Silken Touch of the Mistress. This pampas grass grows to a height of 5 feet and has bright white leaves. It slowly and softly strokes creatures that sleep next to it. A creature that spends a short or long rest within 5 feet of a living Silken Touch of the Mistress regains double hit points during the rest.

Night Rose. This rare magical dark bluish rose grows solely on the Feyrealm and is the size of a human's fist on top of extremely thorny stems that can grow to lengths of several feet. The night rose's petals are closed during the day, even if they are not exposed to daylight, and open when the sun sets. Once open, the stamen of the night rose releases a potent aroma that causes most creatures to fall into a dream-infused stupor. A character who inhales a night rose's aroma must make a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature falls unconscious for an hour, and if it has a Charisma score of 6 or higher, its psyche is also transferred to the Dreamrealm for the duration. A creature that becomes unconscious due to the effects of the night rose cannot be awakened by simple physical means.

4. Golem Workshop

Background

The Arcane Tower has a long tradition of golem crafting, originating from its founder, Master Arlen the Constructor. This workshop is always personally overseen by the academician bearing the title of the Golem Controller. For safety and accountability, the Golem Controller is the only person allowed to operate the constructs of the Arcane Tower.

Environment

A multitude of tools and resources are placed in an orderly fashion in this room filled with shelves and a workstation. A small oven for heating materials stands next to an anvil. Several golem and construct parts are stored in labeled boxes and on shelves next to books and rolled-up scrolls.

Scene

A **daedal wright** stands motionless in the room, its wires connected to a very complex control panel attached to its back. A character who spends three rounds to program the construct and succeeds on a **DC 15 Intelligence** ability check can activate the daedal wright for one minute. The daedal wright can be programmed to do two of the following tasks, each for five rounds.

- Attack the closest creature directly in front of it.
- Use its heavy drill to break through objects.
- Create a 1-foot cube object out of raw materials as if using the *fabricate* spell.
- Use or operate a mundane item usable by a medium or large creature.

A book entitled "Complex Constructs, by Laromarius, the Golem Controller of the Arcane Tower" lays on one of the workbenches.

Complex Constructs. The thick handwritten book contains comprehensive information on all sorts of golems and constructs, quoting Master Arlen's theories on many pages. A character who consults the book for ten minutes gains advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) skill checks made in conjunction with construct creatures.

Treasure

The room has 50,000 gold pieces worth of magical supplies usable only to create a clay golem. The magical clay body pieces weigh 1,000 pounds.

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5. SHRINE OF THE WONDERMAKER

Background

Some of the more religious wizards of the Arcane Tower come to this shrine to pray for knowledge or power and praise the essence of magic itself.

Environment

A central altar is faced by rows of benches is the focus of this small chapel. The holy symbol of the Wondermaker, the god of magic, is painted on the room floor. The depictions of the arcanist angels of the god stand in the corners, each of them in the process of casting a spell. Small prayer books rest on some of the benches.

Scene

The prayer books hold many prayers to the Wondermaker. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check notices that the pages that contain one of the liturgies entitled the "Supplication of the Powerless" are more frequently used than the others.

Supplication of the Powerless. This prayer, when recited with sincerity, brings minor magical power to the creature reciting it. A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw while reciting the prayer gains any desired cantrip spell that it can use once until finishing a long rest. A creature must finish a long rest before trying to gain the benefits of this prayer again.

Treasure

A small basin by the wall holds holy water in a quantity equivalent to five vials.

6. INFIRMARY

Background

Galfor, the Head Librarian, has locked himself into this room to escape Thanrhyst, the incubus outside the magically secured door. He has successfully saved against the charm ability of the incubus and is immune to its effects.

Environment

The room is sectioned into smaller, closed-off areas by curtains that hide hospital beds. The center of the room has a large operating table with several tools on a smaller table next to it. Large standing cases with glass fronts hold syringes, bottles, pads, and various medical equipment.

Scene

When the characters enter the room, they find a cornered, terrified Galfor (use the **academician of the Arcane Tower** monster entry with all 5th and one 4th level spell slot already used and an alignment of *lawful good*), who fears for his life. The incubus, who is in the form of the apprentice, accuses Galfor of being an incubus and urges the characters to strike him down. Galfor knows that the apprentice is an incubus and thinks that the characters are also fiends. He threatens to attack all of them if they do not let him go. A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check is convinced that Galfor is not acting and is honestly terrified.

GALFOR

"I know what you are, fiends! Stay back or I will blast you all."

Galfor threatens the characters with their lives.

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Treasure

One of the glass cases contains two healer's kits, four *potions of healing,* and a glass jar of *restorative ointment* with two doses. Galfor wears the *lorgnettes of the master scribe,* that he offers as a present for his rescue.

SECOND LEVEL

Background

The second floor of the Arcane Tower holds the apprentices' quarters. Each of its four sections has its own facilities to provide for every need of the arcane students. The apprentices spend only their spare time in these chambers.

Environment

Each living quarter contains two comfortable bedrooms with four beds, writing desks, and wardrobes that hold every personal belonging of the apprentices living there. The spacious bathrooms are fitted with large water barrels, mirrors, and toilets. A small kitchenette serves each quarter with utensils and cooking tools. Small storage rooms open from the corridors and hold mops, buckets, ladders, and other household items.

Treasure

Each quarter holds a total of 400 gold pieces worth of valuables in the forms of coins, jewelry, and artworks, all belonging to the apprentices who live there.

7a. North-West Quarters

Background

The residents of these rooms have been caught unaware and have been slaughtered by the incubus pirates of the Last Kiss.

Environment

The signs of combat and carnage are apparent in these rooms. Blood covers many of the surfaces, smashed furniture, torn books, and clothes lie scattered around the ground that are scorched in many places by the use of evocation magic.

Scene

The dead bodies of a bunch of apprentices and two incubi torn by volleys of *magic missile* spells lie scattered in the rooms of this quarter. Most of the apprentices were cornered and butchered in one place, allowing a few others to flee before being slaughtered themselves. Some bear the marks of weapons, while some of the more unfortunate ones look drained of their life essence.

Treasure

The valuables of the apprentices of this quarter have been looted by the incubus pirates.

7b. North-East Quarters

Background

The apprentices in this room were alerted by the sounds of combat next door and were quickly led by the Head Alchemist of the Arcane Tower, Moradinji, to area 14 to regroup with the others.

Environment

The rooms look intact, no sign of damage is visible, but they were obviously abandoned in haste.

Scene

Four **incubus pirates** - Mahlad, Esneth, Agorys, and Narith - are busy collecting the valuables left in the room. They attempt to charm anyone who enters, ordering subjugates to join the search or attack them if their charm fails.

Treasure

The room holds treasures worth 300 gold pieces scattered in many small stacks of gems and gold pieces. The incubus pirates looted the treasure from area 7a, totaling another 300 gold pieces.

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7c. SOUTH-WEST QUARTERS

Background

Four apprentices have barricaded themselves into one of the bedrooms. Two of them were charmed by the invading incubi and now trying to convince their fellows to give up their valuables in exchange for their lives.

Environment

The dead bodies of several apprentices and an incubus pirate lie on the floor outside the barricaded bedroom. The noises of a loud argument between the apprentices can be heard from inside.

Scene

Two **apprentices of the Arcane Tower,** Zhafre and Alynn, who were caught by the charm of the incubi, are trying to convince the other two **apprentices of the Arcane Tower,** Tufalo and Porodnyk, to remove the blockade from the door. The charmed wizards are unaware of their condition, but the other two have figured out what befell their peers. However, they are still hesitant to try removing the spells from their charmed fellows as they fear it might cause offense and lead to a battle of spells.

Forcing the blocked door requires a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The apprentices take notice of anyone speaking to them from outside the room, but it requires a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince the two hesitant apprentices that the characters are not incubus pirates trying to get to them. Characters can make this check with advantage due to the help from the two charmed apprentices. Once convinced, they remove the barricades in three rounds and open the doors. The two charmed wizards, who still possess their valuables from the room worth 300 gold pieces, loudly call out to the fiends and start bargaining for their lives. If not immediately prevented from doing this, the four **incubus pirates** arrive after two rounds from area 7b. They first try to charm everyone they can and order them to hand over their riches. They attack if this tactic fails.

Treasure

All of the open rooms have been ransacked by the incubi, but the surviving apprentices of the quarter took everything of value to the barricaded bedroom.

7d. SOUTH-EAST QUARTERS

Background

A short battle took place in this quarter. Two of the apprentices took the fight to the incubi while the other two fled to the northeast quarter, whence they could escape to safety with the others under Moradinji's command. The incubus pirates have already thoroughly searched the bedroom and took all the treasure they could find. The other bedroom is in the private use of Master Eydan, the former archmage of the Arcane Tower.

Environment

The area shows the signs of the raiding incubus pirates, who pillaged them. Two dead apprentices lie in a pool of blood in one of the bedrooms. The door to the other bedroom is encased in stone over its pane, completely covering the entrance.

"Dreaming of a better world, please do not disturb. Master Eydan"

A text formed out of embossed stone letters on the door.

Master Eydan's room looks exactly like the other bedrooms, except it contains only a single bed at its center surrounded by many vases full of **night roses.** Master Eydan sleeps in the bed, snoring softly while a clear spindle stone spins above his head.

Scene

Master Eydan (use the **archmage** monster entry with an alignment of *neutral good*) has secured the door to his room by casting an *arcane lock* spell on it and encasing it into stone with the use of a *stone shape* spell, so he could prevent anyone from interfering with his

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travels on the Dreamrealm. As a result, the door has AC 17, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It requires a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to force the door open or a **DC 25 Dexterity** ability check to pick its lock with thieves' tools. The incubus pirates were not able to enter his room, so they abandoned it to deal with it later.

Master Eydan

The petals of the night roses will only open in a few hours, releasing their magical aroma that will continue to keep Mastery Eydan in the Dreamrealm and allow anyone in the room to cross to the plane as well. (See section Dreaming with the Archmage for more information.) A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check knows how the night rose affects creatures. (see area 3 for details about the night rose.)

Treasure

The stone spinning above Master Eydan's head is an *ioun stone of sustenance*. Master Eydan's spellbook also lies next to him in the bed. It has all of his memorized spells plus *shield, darkvision, locate object, magic mouth, dispel magic, tongues, major image, arcane eye, locate creature, greater invisibility, legend lore, telekinesis, true seeing, forcecage, mindblank,* and *foresight*.

THIRD LEVEL

Background

The third floor of the Arcane Tower houses the private chambers of the academicians, the communal grand hall, and some of the most frequently used study labs.

Environment

Each of the academicians' living quarters is lavishly furnished and decorated. Each suite includes a living room, a bedroom, a bathing area with a toilet, and a small personal storage compartment.

8. Acidic Corridor

Background

Master Zaophas' desperate fight against Azaeresh and its incubus pirates on the top level of the Arcane Tower has badly damaged the floor of the Training Hall of Evocation (area 17). The room is partially flooded with acid, which caused it to crack, allowing the potent acid to pour down to the level below, just above the staircase.

Moradinji, the Head Alchemist of the Arcane Tower, tried to direct every surviving mage to the Grand Hall (area 14) to show force against the invading fiends. During their flight up the stairs, he recognized the potency of the dripping acid. Knowing that incubi are not immune to acid, he quickly decided to wall off the corridor by casting *wall of stone* spells on both ends, hoping to block the progress of the raiding fiends.

Azaeresh has telepathically ordered the remaining incubus pirates on the Last Kiss to exploit the structural damage and keep bombarding the damaged spot on the side of the Arcane Tower with the cannon of the flying ship. A section of the tower's outer wall soon gave in and collapsed, revealing the acid-soaked stairs and a section of the corridor to the fiendish ship's crew.

Environment

Foul-smelling acid seeps through like rain through a tangled web of cracks on the ceiling of this section

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of the corridor. The shelves and the books have been soaked through, turning the pool of acid on the floor into a strange pulpy soup of melted paper and wood that slowly flows down the stairs and on the side of the tower through an enormous hole.

The large hole that has been blasted into the side of the Arcane Tower reveals the entirety of the stairs and a large part of the corridor. From outside, the sound of the Last Kiss' huge flapping wings can be heard as it hovers in mid-air at an altitude of 40 feet and a distance of 100 feet from the tower. The streaks of magical energy shot by the cannon make a loud sound on impact.

Scene

The acid that pours down from the cracked ceiling fills the entire area as if it was raining and covers the floor in a pool a foot deep. At the start of every turn, the rain of corrosive liquid deals 3 (1d6) acid damage to everything and any creature in the area, and an additional 3 (1d6) acid damage to everything and anyone in contact with the pool on the floor.

The crew of the Last Kiss can spot any creature through the blast hole that moves up the stairs or through the corridor. A character who wants to pass unnoticed must succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check or be shot at by the flying ship's cannon. Each creature in the cannon's psychic blast of a 20-foot radius sphere must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw. A target takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage and 14 (4d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The magically created stone walls are 6 inches thick, and the acid has slowly started to corrode them. The stone walls currently have an AC 15, 100 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage resistance against slashing and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

9a. Moradinji's Quarters

Background

These are the rooms of the eccentric snow elf Moradinji, who arrived in Aglarion over a hundred years ago from an icy mountainous land beyond the Vordan Mountains. After he finished his studies at the Arcane Tower, Master Eydan offered him an academic seat. The good-hearted, yet strange and often abstract snow elf accepted and finally had a chance to focus all of his studies on his favorite subject, alchemy.

Environment

The living quarters of the Master Alchemist of the Arcane Tower are relatively simple in decoration. The living room features the complex personal alchemy lab of the snow elf wizard. The wizard's chambers have been looted and vandalized by the incubus pirates, who left nothing of value behind, except for some of the alchemical substances they could not identify.

Treasure

The large selection of rare herbs and minerals in one of Moradinji's small cabinets is worth 250 gold pieces. The laboratory equipment holds four flasks of alchemist's fire, two vials of antitoxin, and four flasks of acid. In addition, observant characters can assemble a set of alchemist's supplies and a poisoner's kit from the laboratory.

9b. Galfor's Quarters

Background

These are the private quarters of the head librarian who brought some of the most interesting books to his personal library for safekeeping and study.

Environment

The smell of old books lingers in the living room and bedroom of this suite, which is packed with bookshelves that hold mostly ancient tomes. The original

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contents of the room have been violently ransacked and demolished as the pirates tore through it.

Scene

The Head Librarian's quarter was looted by the incubi for treasures. They missed some of Galfor's private collections that are rare and valuable, imbued with magic, or some that were outright forbidden and outlawed by previous monarchs. They lie scattered in the room under debris and piles of other, less valuable books.

A character who looks through the piles of books can appraise the value of one of these books with a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (History)** skill check.

Treasure

Galfor's collection of books numbers fifty valuable tomes and three magic books. The collection is worth 5,000 gold pieces and has a total weight of 250 pounds. The most valuable books in the collection are the following:

King Dasmag's Most Extravagant Bacchanalias - A Memoir by Deenus Longshorts. This colorfully illustrated ancient book in Sylvan was written by sprite scribes on the Feyrealm in tiny letters. The book contains songs and sheet music from the satyr lord's court, including the king's favorite tune - the Merry Hunt of the Horned Hero. The book is worth 500 gold pieces alone.

Aegis of Foresight (Rare Magic Item). This small manual is bound in deep purple velvet with a title in gold letters on its front and is written in Common. The yellowed pages are worn, but the text is legible. The book contains a magical formula that explains a complicated computation that can foretell the outcome of certain events in the future. Any creature that consults the Aegis of Foresight for one hour can reroll one dice after it has been rolled, once per day. Once used, the magic of the book can't be used again until the next dawn.

Manuscripts of Ba'aldannorr (Rare Magic Item). The rugged cover of this tome is bound in hezrou skin, and it is written in the blood of several types of different demons. It was written in Infernal by Ba'aldannorr, a pit fiend hunter of demons. Any creature that consults the Manuscripts of Ba'aldannorr for one hour on a specific type of demon gains advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) skill checks related to demons and saving throws made against that type of demon for 1 hour. Once used, the magic of the book can't be used again until the next dawn.

Lore of the Gnomes (Rare Magic Item). This small but heavy hardcover book is over 1,000 pages, written in Gnomish on fantastically thin sheets of paper. The book describes the origin and workings of magic items and alchemic procedures known to all gnomes in a slightly condescending tone. Any creature that consults the Lore of the Gnomes for a total time of one month can make a **DC 20 Intelligence** ability check. Following a successful ability check, the creature can double its proficiency bonus on all Intelligence (History) skill checks related to magic items, alchemical objects, or technological devices.

The Deadliest Jokes of the Continent (Cursed Magic Item). This thin booklet, written in Common, features the image of a laughing winged clown pointing at the reader on its cover. It contains a selection of hilarious jokes that were perfected on countless doomed individuals. Any creature that consults The Deadliest Jokes of the Continent for a round must make a **DC 16 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is affected by a *hideous laughter* spell for ten minutes that does not allow recurring saving throws to end the spell's effect. After the spell ends, the creature also gains a level of exhaustion and must make a **DC 16 Wisdom** saving throw or be compelled to continue reading the jokes.

9c. Master Zaophas' Quarters

Background

Master Zaophas has bound Shussin, a djinni, to his living room decades ago. The djinni serves the archmage as an advisor and friend who only agrees to be

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bound by the wizard's magic to keep it from being summoned elsewhere. The djinni has forced the intruding incubus pirates out of the room and waits for more to come.

Environment

The quarters of the archmage are untouched except for the living room, where everything is ruined as if a tornado hit it. Pieces of broken furniture, torn books, and misplaced household items are scattered everywhere. A soft breeze blows in and out of the room as if the whole room is breathing slowly.

Scene

Shussin (use the **djinni** monster entry with the ability to cast *invisibility* at will) can't leave the room and protects the archmage's quarters to the best of its capabilities. It waits for more intruders invisibly and uses its *detect good or evil* spell ability to evaluate them. It appears to any non-evil characters and engages in a discussion, demanding to know who they are and what they plan. It has a friendly, outgoing attitude and is easily convinced to help good characters in any way against the incubus pirates. It will not allow anyone to loot the archmage's bedroom under any circumstances and cannot leave the room.

Master Zaophas keeps a magical safe in his bedroom made out of adamantine. The safe has AC 21, 55 hit points, a damage threshold of 15, it has damage resistance against bludgeoning damage, and damage immunity against slashing, piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It has no locking mechanism and only opens if Master Zaophas wills it to open.

Treasure

Master Zaophas' safe holds 43 silver pieces, 693 gold pieces, and 21 platinum bars in separate pouches, a *potion of speed,* three doses of *restorative ointment,* a *rope of climbing,* a *ring of protection,* a *wand of secrets,* a *+1 wand of the warmage,* and an *eyes of minute seeing.*

9d. Laromarius' Quarters

Background

Laromarius, the Golem Controller of the Arcane Tower, is the closest confidant of Master Zaophas. The wizard is an expert on constructs and is trusted exclusively with the operation of all the constructs within the Arcane Tower, especially the iron golem at the grand hall in area 14.

Azaeresh ordered some of its incubus pirates to neutralize the wizard. Unfortunately, Laromarius was charmed by not one but three incubi who are currently engaged in various forms of carnalities with the wizard, thereby inhibiting him from protecting the Arcane Tower.

Environment

Laromarious' rooms were looted, and his bedroom is a tangled mess of clothes, bedsheets, cushions, glasses, and wine bottles.

Scene

A special **homunculus** that can speak Common, the creation of Laromarius the Golem Controller (use the **academician of the Arcane Tower** monster entry with an alignment of *lawful neutral*), stands in front of the door to this quarter. It alerts the wizard if anyone approaches, and Laromarius conveys this warning to the incubi as well.

"Go away. The master is busy."
The homunculus addressing the characters in a rude tone.

Laromarius and three **incubus pirates** are in each other's arms on the canopy bed in Laromarius' bedroom. The wizard seems to be in a euphoric state of mind and invites the characters to join their group on the bed. Two of the incubi do the same and try to charm any characters they can. If the characters attack the incubus pirates, they fight back and telepathically order Laromarius to retreat behind them and fight the characters with his most potent spells.

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If the charm ends on the wizard, he becomes overwhelmed by shame, embarrassment, and guilt. He quickly dresses and takes a minute before he regains his composure, even if the fight with the incubi is still on. A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can snap him out of his state and make him cooperative immediately.

Laromarius

"I... I really have no excuse except for being charmed. Extremely charmed..."

Laromarius looking for an excuse in the awkward situation.

Laromarius wears the Golem Control Amulet around his neck at all times. This magic amulet allows its wearer to control any of the Arcane Tower's constructs until they remain within the walls of the Arcane Tower.

Treasure

Laromarius keeps a collection of small rubies in the drawer of his nightstand that are worth 510 gold pieces in total. He also has a *+1 dagger* and the Golem Control Amulet on his person.

10. Study Room

Background

The apprentices use this room during private study sessions and when they want to focus on their studies in small groups.

Environment

A few smaller tables and chairs stand in this room with a few notes, glasses, or writing equipment left behind on them. A blackboard with a few notes and the sketch of a plant with a long stem and a bulbous head drawn with chalk covers one of the boards.

Scene

The plant drawn on the blackboard is the **Silken Touch of the Mistress** that is also cultivated in the greenhouse in area 3. The notes describe its regenerative properties.

One of the desks has a small scribbling of a head with an enormous nose and huge nostrils and a tiny text next to it that says: "Professor Widegape".

11. Magic Item Workshop

Background

Both the apprentices and academicians of the Arcane Tower spend long weeks in this workshop when creating magic items for personal use, for the Royal Treasury, or for sale. The apprentices who worked in the room abandoned it in a hurry when the incubus pirates attacked.

Environment

Small but well-equipped workstations are lined up in this room. Each workbench features sets of special tools affixed to them, like small magnifying glasses, scales, cutting and stabilization appendages, chisels, and injectors, to assist the work of the wizard using it.

Treasure

One of the workstations has an unfinished *wand of web* on it. A character who can cast the *web* spell can finish the item by spending a total of 200 gold pieces of raw magical components and one week of work, working a minimum of 8 hours a day on the

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item. There is a total of 330 gold pieces worth of raw magical components on all of the tables combined.

12. ALCHEMY LAB

Background

This laboratory is the domain of Moradinji, the Head Alchemist of the Arcane Tower, and the hall for experimental alchemy. Moradinji's lectures range from standard to outright weird, but they are always worth the time.

Environment

Two large tables are covered with laboratory equipment in the middle of this room. Glass vials, heating pans, distillers, mixing tubes, dosers, and numerous tools are available at both lab stations.

Scene

The alchemy class was interrupted by the blasts of the Last Kiss and the intrusion of the raiding incubus pirates. During the panic that ensued, the wizards knocked over several components that created a foul mix on one of the tables. The mixed substances sublimated into a poisonous gas that fills the entire room. A creature that enters the room must make a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes susceptible to magic and gains disadvantage on saving throws against magic. As a positive side effect, the creature also regains 1 hit point at the start of its turn. If the character takes damage from a magical source, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The creature dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate. This condition wears off in one day, but it can be cured as if it was a disease.

Treasure

The alchemy lab contains 500 gold pieces worth of alchemical raw materials. The laboratory equipment can be dismantled into three sets of alchemist's supplies and three sets of poisoner's kits.

13. LIVE EXPERIMENTS LAB

Background

Wizards of the academy practice their spells and make operations on rabbits, mice, and lizards in this room.

Environment

Four small operating tables are positioned in the room so that several apprentices can access them at once. The tables have restraining and operating equipment on them, and some of them still hold the dissected carcasses. Cages, aquariums, and terrariums line the walls. The air is heavy with the smell of rodents and their feed.

14. GRAND HALL

Background

This used to be the main meeting and dining hall of the academy. Moradinji, as the only active academician, has gathered all of the surviving apprentice wizards in this large hall. He theorized that the only way they would survive the invasion was by regrouping at this well-defendable location. On their way, the group faced some incubus pirates and were late to arrive at the Grand Hall. Master Zaophas drew Azaeresh and the incubi to the Lecture Hall above. He ordered the iron golem to guard the entrance from both incubi and his fellow wizards, fearing for their lives and hoping to defeat the pirate captain alone.

Environment

This large hall has two long tables for the apprentices and one for the academicians of the Arcane Tower. Large paintings of various wizardly activities hang on the wall depicting summonings, mage duels, the crafting of magic items, wizards in flight, and similar scenes. The statues of the last four former archmages, including Master Eydan, stand in the corners, depicting the mages in vivid poses mid-spellcasting. A large iron statue stands in the middle of the room within

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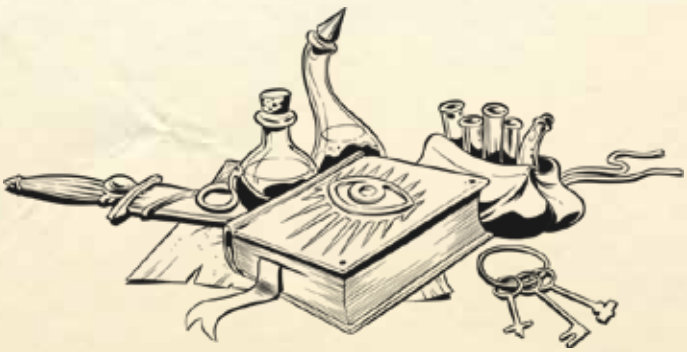
a shaft of blue, sparkling light that exits the room through a circular hole in the ceiling. The sounds of a vivid battle can be heard from the level above.

Scene

The shaft of blue light is a levitation shaft. A creature that stands in it can will itself to move up or down within the light, reaching the next level in one move action. The **iron golem** attacks anyone who tries to pass through to the levitation shaft. The command of the archmage can not be overridden, but the golem can be deactivated by anyone who uses the Golem Control Amulet, held by Laromarius in area 9d.

Moradinji (use the **academician of the Arcane Tower** monster entry with all 5th and 4th level spell slot already used and an alignment of neutral) and six surviving **apprentices of the Arcane Tower** (each with no 3rd level spell slots remaining) named Ortean, Daskal, Ivestrino, Ahatia, Lynn, Ktaria, and Zoromos, stand around the iron golem, facing every direction in anticipation of and ready for the incubus pirates to enter. When the characters enter the room, the wizards distrust them and threaten to attack if they don't clarify their intentions and explain themselves. A character who tries to convince the group about their good intentions must succeed on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. On a successful check, Moradinji and most of the wizards believe their story and relax. On a failed check, Moradinji raises an arm to ready the mages for a volley of magic missiles at the characters and demands they back away from the room and close the door.



Moradinji

"I don't know who you are and if your story is true or not. All I know is that I work from facts, and you fail to present them. Now, back off, or we will tear you to shreds with force missiles that penetrate even the toughest dragon hide."

Moradinji taking his stand.

If the characters keep pressing the issue and can't convince the wizards that they are neither fiends nor do they mean any harm, each of the wizards releases a volley of *magic missile* spells. The wizards keep bombarding the characters if they attack them or delay their assault if the characters stand down.

If the characters or Laromarius deactivate the iron golem with the golem control amulet, the characters are free to pass into the chamber above. The wizards follow them and join the fight with the incubus pirates above.

15. Scriptorium

Background

Apprentices are required, as part of their practical training, to create new scrolls every couple of weeks,

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spending several days in this room bent over the tables, especially on rare occasions when they are tasked with copying complete books.

Environment

Small but elevated tables with long-legged high seats stand in this room. The tables are covered with writing equipment, scrolls, pieces of cloth, and other items used by scribes. The two bookshelves on the side of the room are covered with scrolls old and new.

Treasure

The bookshelves hold the following magic scrolls: *burning hands, charm person, comprehend languages, detect magic, false life, grease, magic missile, silent image, blur, darkness, flaming sphere, invisibility, locate object, magic weapon, rope trick, shatter, disable construct, instant tent, music of the spheres.*

16. Academicians' Room

Background

This is the meeting room and workplace of the academicians of the Arcane Tower. The professors discuss student advancement and work-related issues and this is where they store equipment for their classes.

Laromarius, while he was in control of his actions, instructed the flying poisoned daggers and the rug of smothering in this room to attack anyone who enters. Thus, the constructs killed one of the incubus pirates, whose body now lies under the carpet.

Environment

A large colorful carpet covers the ground in front of the main entry door, stained by several splotches of blood punctured by small holes in several places. A bump in the carpet suggests that something, the size of a human, lies underneath. Four large writing desks covered in heaps of papers, ledgers, books, and arcane components dominate this room, with a small filing cabinet alongside each desk. Large bookshelves and a long blackboard with many smaller notes written in chalk stand by the walls. The two rooms on the sides are filled with filing cabinets that hold notes, documents, and papers on all current and previous students of the academy.

Scene

The carpet on the floor is a carpet of smothering (use the **rug of smothering** monster entry), and the bloodstains are from the incubus hidden under the carpet. The damaged carpet of smothering has 42 hit points left from its maximum of 99 hit points. It lashes out at anyone who enters the room. Six flying daggers (use the **flying sword** monster entry that deals 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage and 7 (2d6) poison damage on a hit) also swoop out from below the tables and attack anyone smothered by the carpet of smothering.

Treasure

Moradinji's desk drawer holds two *potions of clairvoyance,* once confiscated from one of the apprentices.

FOURTH LEVEL

Background

The fourth floor of the Arcane Tower is the center of arcane studies. Classes are held daily in the central lecture hall, from where students can enter all of the specialty training halls that are reserved for each spell school.

A wild battle rages on the top level of the Arcane Tower between the archmage and the forces of Azaeresh. Master Zaophas has blocked passage to and from this level by ordering the iron golem in the grand hall at area 14 to attack anyone who would try to cross through the levitation shaft. He decided not to risk his fellow wizards' lives, and he is trying to defeat Azaeresh and the numerous incubus pirates he could lure here. He also knows that if he were defeated, the iron golem would probably be able to kill many of the fiends before they reach the rest of the residents of the Arcane Tower.

The archmage is exempted from the effects of the *private sanctum* spell, allowing him to use *dimension*

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door or *misty step* spells to relocate to a safe spot if he gets surrounded by the fiendish pirates. Master Zaophas' tactic is to jump into one of the training halls on the fourth floor and wait for his attackers to enter. This provides him a safe distance to cast his spells at a possibly larger group of incubus pirates.

17a. Training Hall of Abjuration

Background

Apprentices are trained to protect themselves in this area, both from physical and magical attacks.

Environment

Several rotating combat training dummies stand in one section of this room not far from a strange, large ranged weapon-like device that can be rotated on its platform.

Scene

The rotatable device is a ray-caster that can shoot a ray of energy that functions as a *ray of frost* spell but can deal either acid, cold, fire, or lightning damage set by the button pressed on it. Its magic ceases to function if the device is removed from its platform.

17b. Training Hall of Conjuration

Background

Apprentices train how to conjure and aim elements at targets and study their effects. More advanced students and academicians also practice summoning actual elementals or other creatures and demonstrate their capabilities through a series of tests. Every student must also practice short-range teleportation between two dedicated platforms.

Environment

Large targets stand in one section of this hall, their surfaces damaged from countless impacts. A table with several wooden blocks of different shapes and colors stands next to a large magic circle engraved on the floor. The middle of the room is dominated by an area where various elements have damaged the floor.

17c. Training Hall of Divination

Background

In this hall, apprentices train to predict the future and reveal things hidden for the mundane eye. Devices used are to test divination spells.

Environment

The training hall features a large rotating wheel that is segmented into different colors, a pedestal behind a series of folding screens, a large round table with a mirrored surface, and a stone eye that levitates above a slender block of stone.

Treasure

The levitating eye is a magic device that opens its stone eyelids and turns towards anything within 10 feet that is magical or invisible. It only functions if it hovers above the 5-foot tall stone block under it, which weighs 150 pounds.

17d. Training Hall of Enchantment

Background

Apprentices practice enchantment magic on each other within this room. These sessions are always carefully supervised by one of the academicians.

Environment

Numerous finely crafted, comfortable armchairs face each other in a wide circle in this room.

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17e. TRAINING HALL OF EVOCATION

Background

Apprentices practice harmful evocation magic in this training hall. The battle between Master Zaophas and Azaeresh's forces has spread into this area of the Arcane Tower for a brief period. The archmage conjured a rain of acidic substance that remained in the room, badly damaging it structurally.

Environment

A nose-twisting acidic smell fills this room. Large barrels of water and sacks of sand are placed near the entrance of this hall. Further into the area, a complex indication of distances and other geometric forms is inscribed on the floor. The back of the training hall is covered in a pool of acid that is 4 inches in depth. There is a melted skeleton of a humanoid with bat wings lying in the pool. The acid has already partially melted the stone floor, which has cracked, slowly draining the acid away into the level below.

Scene

The barrels and sacks are for precautions to neutralize hazards if needed. The markings on the floor are measurements for the area effects of the most common evocation spells. The pool of acid deals 10 (3d6) acid damage per round to a creature who stands in it. The skeleton in the shallow pool of acid is that of an incubus pirate.

17f. TRAINING HALL OF ILLUSION

Background

Apprentices practice the weaving of illusion magic in this room.

Environment

A simple chair sits in the center of this hall. The floor around the chair is marked on the floor with a 5 by 5 feet square, while a larger, 20 by 20 feet square area is marked 10 feet away.

Scene

The chair is an illusion that is a joke on new students who are requested to take a seat. A character who interacts with the chair can make a **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to discern it as an illusion. On a failed check, the chair seems to be real. The measurements of the floor mark the most common sizes for illusion spells.

The training hall can be commanded by anyone who knows the command word to create an effect similar to a *hallucinatory terrain* spell that lasts for 1 hour.

17g. TRAINING HALL OF NECROMANCY

Background

Apprentices study undead creatures and the forces of necromancy in this training hall.

Environment

A foul stench of decay lingers in this room. Four undead creatures are chained to the widest wall opposite the entrance. Several large ceramic pots are lined against one of the walls, each holding the same type of plant in a different stage of decomposition, from fresh to wholly withered. In front of the other wall, a series of large tubular glass containers hold the bodies of different types of creatures soaked in embalming fluids. A sizeable operating table with mechanical appendages stands in the middle of the room.

Scene

The chains at the end of the hall hold a **skeleton,** a **zombie,** a **ghoul,** and a **wight,** of which the latter two have had their tongues removed and their mouths sewn shut. The creatures in the tubes are a kobold, a grimlock, a human, a large dog, a dolphin, and a harpy, all long dead.

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17h. Training Hall of Transmutation

Background

Apprentices can practice transmutation magic in this hall, experimenting with different materials and transforming their bodies in a safe environment.

Environment

The training hall features a complex athletics and acrobatics course with climbing, jumping, and balancing challenges. Another section of the hall has several raw materials that the apprentices can manipulate through magic.

18. Lecture Hall

Background

Master Zaophas has already killed many incubus pirates by the time the characters and his fellow wizards arrive in this area, but he is running out of spells. He is surrounded by a large group of incubus pirates and Azaeresh, who are about to slaughter him.

Environment

A large podium stands at the lowest point of a downward-sloping amphitheater - the main lecture hall with circular rows of seatings. A few stairs run between the levels. Soft cushions are placed on each of the chairs to accommodate the apprentices. The levitation shaft opens to this level in front of the podium.

Scene

Master Zaophas (use the **archmage** monster entry with an alignment of *neutral* and with no spell slots available for 5th level or lower) casts his *time stop* spell exactly thirty rounds after the characters conjure the Arcane Tower from the Astral Plane in area 1 of the Vault of the Arcane Tower. Master Zaophas will not cast the *time stop* spell if the characters can provide the upper hand for the archmage in combat. If characters witness Master Zaophas casting the *time stop* spell, they can make a successful **DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check to realize that this spell will cause the time loop. If they immediately notify him of the consequences of his spell before he casts it, the archmage will refrain from doing so. The time loop is broken if Master Zaophas does not cast the *time stop* spell.

Master Zaophas

"Praise the Wondermaker! Now that we have gathered in force, strike down the fiends!"

Master Zaophas urges his pupils, professors and the characters to join his fight.

Eight **incubus pirates,** named Ussyn, Xeyshar, Catith, Irrinx, Ailyr, Zakal, Therons, Vaylstan, and their succubus leader **Azaeresh** have cornered Master

Azaeresh

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Zaophas in front of the blackboard when the characters and the wizards arrive. Any surviving academicians and apprentices cast *magic missiles* every round at the incubi, starting by using their highest available spell slots. Master Zaophas cast lower-level spells from his 6th and higher-level spell slots to combat the fiendish pirates.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can break the time loop.

THE LAST KISS

Background

The Last Kiss, captained by Azaeresh and crewed by its crew of incubus pirates, was hired by Blister of the Matrons of Malice to destroy the Arcane Tower along with the wizards inside. The Last Kiss has only a few incubus pirates on deck at the time of the raid on the Arcane Tower.

Environment

This astral vessel is partly organic and partly constructed out of a light but resilient metal alloy. All areas are naturally dark and have a height of 10 feet except for the helm and bridge in area 6, which is 20 feet in height.

Doors and Double Doors. Doors open inwards and are made of the same metallic alloy as the hull of the ship. They are fitted with iron hinges and handles that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check, or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The doors have AC 19, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage immunity against piercing, poison, psychic and slashing damage.

Windows. Windows are 10 or 20 feet high and wide and are made out of toughened crimson glass. They can not be opened and have AC 15 and 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against piercing and slashing damage, and damage immunity against poison, and psychic damage.

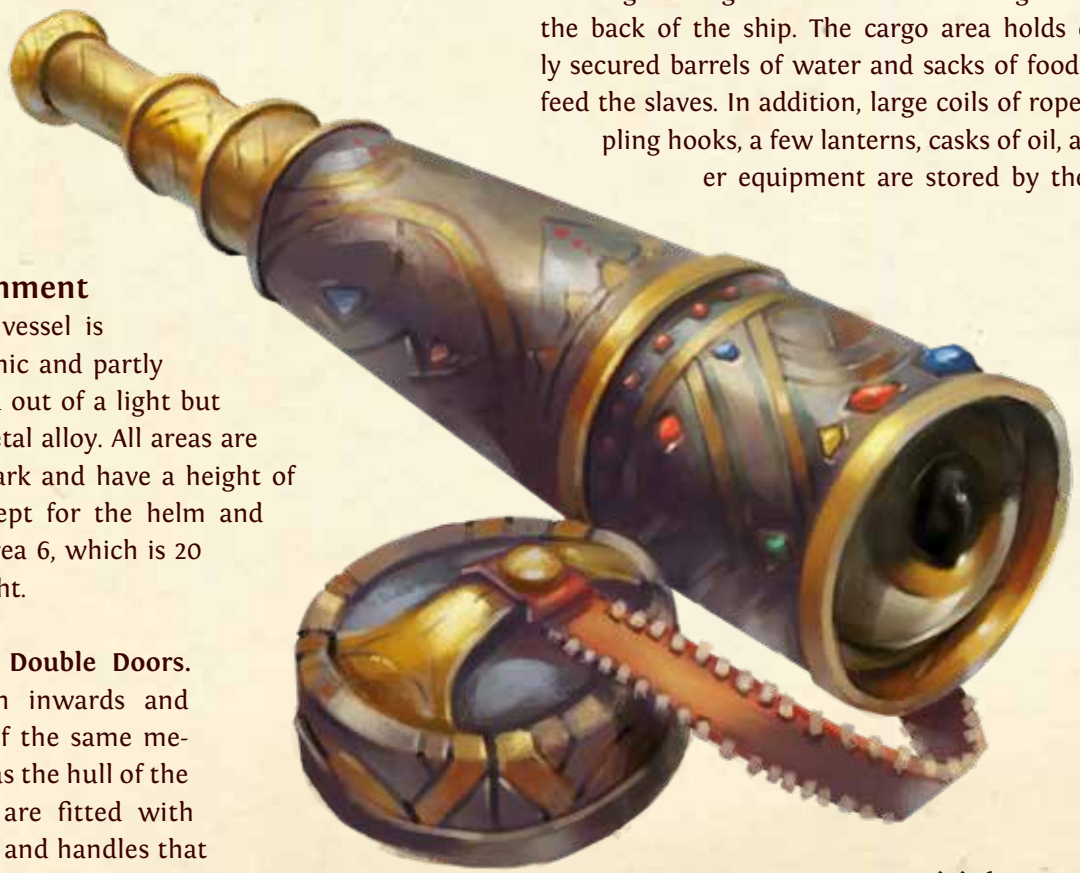
1. AFT HOLD

Background

The pirate incubi keep their plunder and mundane resources in this storage area.

Environment

The large sliding doors lead to the storage area from the back of the ship. The cargo area holds carefully secured barrels of water and sacks of foodstuff to feed the slaves. In addition, large coils of ropes, grappling hooks, a few lanterns, casks of oil, and other equipment are stored by the walls.



SPYGLASS OF DEVILISH REVEALING

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Treasure

The area holds 500 feet of hemp rope in five large coils, five grappling hooks, three bullseye lanterns, six flasks of oil, 50 feet of chain in five coils, three crowbars, two ladders, four manacles, and a portable ram. Two large chests are filled with 200 pounds of a strange violet colored crystal dust packed in several larger sacks, worth a total of 1,200 gold pieces.

2. Slave Pens

Background

The slaves are used to fuel the ship's engine and the psychic cannon in area 7. They were kidnapped months or weeks ago from various planes of existence either by charm or through force. The incubi move the slaves to area 7 through their quarters where they usually engage them in bodily pleasures before connecting them to the psychic engine.

Environment

Rusty chains and manacles hold a handful of slaves in both of these otherwise unfurnished rooms. The air stinks of decay, and excrement covers the walls that bear marks of scratches and dried blood.

Scene

Those slaves who can't see in the dark have almost lost their sight due to the long time in utter darkness. They are weak and underfed, afraid for their lives, and unaware of where they are and how they were captured.

"Save me. Anywhere is better than here!"

One of the slaves at the edge of insanity.

The western slave pen holds the following slaves:

- Four middle-aged Vordani human **commoners** of various genders - Argandos, Vholan, Troca, and Balazi - who remember that they used to be farmers before being captured.
- A female **azer** named Whiteblaze, who was captured from the Elemental Plane of Fire.
- A male **centaur** named Philenios, who was captured from the divine plane of the Eternal Mother, the god of nature.
- Two **goblins** named Pyp and Tailgnawer, who were captured from a trading station for astral pirates.

The eastern slave pen holds the following slaves:

- Two savage **bugbears** named Gorkog and Zaard, who were captured from their tribe far from the continent known to Aglarionians on the Material Plane.
- Three **dretches** that have no names and who were salvaged from another astral ship that used them as projectile weapons.
- A middle-aged male halfling **bandit captain,** who is mad beyond belief and only mumbles to himself constantly, unable to communicate.
- A female **gnoll** named Bloodbite, who was captured from a jungle on the Material Plane far from Aglarion.
- A female **wererat** dwarf named Unistra, a princess of her tribe, who was taken from a raid on an underground village on the Material Plane far from Aglarion.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they free the slaves.

3. Boarding Deck

Background

The pirates enter and exit the Last Kiss through these corridors and doors on the ship's sides.

Environment

Thick carpet covers the floor of these corridors. Paintings of obscene scenes cover the northern wall opposite two weapon racks on the southern wall next to the entrances.

Treasure

The four paintings, each worth 200 gold pieces, show scenes of debauchery from actual places in Hell, the

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The Last Kiss

1 tile = 5 feet

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Abyss, on the deck of the Last Kiss, and the interior of the Burning Desire (Onadbyr location 26.) on the Material Plane. The weapon rack holds eight short swords, eight rapiers, eight hand crossbows, and 160 bolts.

4. Captain's Quarters

Background

Azaeresh spends most of its time in this room when in need of privacy. The captain takes personal slaves or other incubi to its room from time to time to gratify its passions.

Environment

The captain's room features a large ceramic bathtub filled with a milk-like pink liquid and a canopy bed covered in blood-red sheets and cushions. A small iron chest stands next to the bed. A small writing desk holds a few items. Realistic paintings of naked fiendish and humanoid bodies painted in miniscule detail cover the walls. The smell of sweet perfume lingers in the air.

Scene

The bathtub is filled with the sap of a rare extraplanar tree called "Kharzian soul tree" that causes feelings of pleasurable euphoria in any creature in contact with it for over a minute. The liquid causes two creatures immersed in it for over 10 minutes and in physical contact with each other to swap souls, inhabiting each other's bodies while they remain immersed in the liquid and only for up to 1 hour.

Treasure

The writing desk holds an abacus and an hourglass. The iron chest is locked with an ordinary lock and contains twenty sets of fine clothes in various fashions, 2,182 gold pieces in one big pile, and a plum-sized ruby worth 500 gold pieces. The six highly realistic paintings are each worth 200 gold pieces.

5. Crew's Quarters

Background

Crew members spend their downtime in these rooms. With no need to eat, drink, or sleep, they are usually either engaged in bodily pleasures or explore other physical sensations like consuming extraplanar delicacies and drugs.

Environment

A large circular bed stands in the middle of each room next to a comfortable sofa. The floor is littered with weapons, clothes, bottles, glasses, pouches, and vials. A few stains of blood on the furniture and the floor indicate the viciousness of the fiends that usually occupy this room. Steep stairs lead down to the bridge in area 6.

Treasure

The floor is covered with a set of ten fine clothes. A golden earring with a black diamond worth 315 gold pieces lies on the floor below the bed.

6. Helm and Bridge

Background

The ship can be steered from this bridge. Most incubus pirates are located in this area when the ship is in pursuit or hovering during a raid.

Environment

The helm is positioned in the front of a high terrace from where two sets of stairs lead to the lower deck 10 feet below. The large red windows allow a broad view over the area in front of the ship.

Scene

Four **incubus pirates** occupy this room. One of them is at the helm, navigating the Last Kiss and replenishing the slaves in the psychic cannon if needed. They try to charm any humanoid intruders on sight or attack if this tactic fails.

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Characters can control the Last Kiss by adjusting velocity, altitude, and direction using a simple control panel.

7. Psychic Engine and Cannon

Background

The psychic engine and cannon was invented by the pit fiend Raazn'roth who excelled in creating hellish machines and torture devices fueled by the souls of mortal victims.

Environment

An enormous and complex machine takes up half of this room. The devilish device incorporates three seats that have iron straps for the feet, hands, and head of a small or medium creature that is placed in it. Appendages with long curvy tubes connect the seats to the machine behind them. The machine's numerous indicators, levers, and valves emit an intricate pattern of pulses, hisses, and shakes with invisible energies that feel suppressed and directed inside. Three shaking and growling orcs are firmly strapped in each of the three seats, wired into the machine behind them.

The psychic engine powers the Last Kiss and makes it fly. Humanoids attached to the machine allow it to operate for one day per 5 points of psychic damage dealt to each victim. This damage has already been deducted for the day of the raid. The engine also acts as an aggregator for the psychic cannon.

Psychic Engine and Cannon. This devilish magical engine and siege weapon amplifies psychic energies drained from the victims attached to it. It requires three victims to be connected to it to be operational. A creature that is completely strapped to the seat by its hands, feet, and head immediately takes 5 hit points of psychic damage and has its maximum hit points reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. The engine continues to damage the strapped creature every day until it dies. A creature can fire the cannon as an action. Every creature in the chairs takes an additional 5 points of psychic damage when the cannon is fired. The cannon has a range of 150 feet. Each creature in the cannon's psychic blast of a 20-foot radius sphere must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw. A target takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage and 14 (4d6) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Scene

Three **orcs** that have 10 hit points left are strapped into the seats of the engine. They moan and growl in pain whenever the cannon fires but are otherwise too weak to struggle for their freedom. Use the manacles item entry for the straps.

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Dreaming with the Archmage

Background

Master Eydan was appointed as the archmage of the Kingdom of Aglarion by King Daerios Azennar, the father of King Waldrann Azennar. Master Eydan served both kings loyally with his arcane knowledge and managed the education of the wizards of the Arcane Tower until his self-proclaimed retirement. The former archmage accompanied King Waldrann Azennar on the mission to the Feyrealm to rescue Queen Lyrencia from the clutches of the satyr-lord King Dasmag, as they were tricked into believing. Master Eydan witnessed the tragic confrontation of the king and his son Prince Krasnar Azennar on their way home and vowed not to speak about it to anyone on his return to the Material Plane. The archmage secluded himself in his quarters for months after his return, avoiding the company of his academicians or students while brooding over the events and the oath he took. However, master Eydan wasn't alone during these months. He used his most powerful magic to track down and contact his friend, Father Lestor, another member of the fated rescue mission. The cleric of the Wise One refused to take the oath of silence about the death of Prince Krasnar Azennar and was exiled, never to return from the Feyrealm. The archmage eventually decided to nominate his first student, Zaophas, as his successor before planting and cultivating many night roses in his room to fall into a self-induced dream-like coma in which he could escape his burden and commune endlessly with his friend Father Lestor through the Dreamrealm.

Environment

Master Eydan's room in area 7c of the Arcane Tower.

Scene

Master Eydan is alive, but his senses are nonfunctional, and he can't be awakened from his stupor. He has activated an *ioun stone of sustenance* before entering the Dreamrealm that still orbits his head, ensuring he doesn't die due to starvation or dehydration.

Once the time loop is negated, at the next sunset, the petals of the **night roses** (see area 3 of the Arcane Tower) open and release their intensely sweet aroma that fills the entire room within seconds. Due to the large concentration of night roses in the room, characters must make a **DC 20 Constitution** saving throw or be affected by the flower with a duration of 24 hours instead of an hour. A character who decides to give in to the effect of the night rose can choose to do so.

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The Dreamrealm

The Dreamrealm has no physical dimensions or location, but still exists as a separate dimension. It is composed of the dreams of intelligent creatures from across the multiverse that empower its random and shapeless forms. The Dreamrealm is an entirely malleable environment, which can be shaped by those who have learned to control it. There are very few creatures native to the Dreamrealm, and most of the time, they are only the mere representations of the most commonly shared visions of dreamers that detach themselves and become free to act on their own.

When entering the Dreamrealm, only the creature's psyche is transferred to this plane of existence, while the creature's body stays behind, usually in a state of coma or deep slumber. The creature retains all of its abilities and statistics on the Dreamrealm, which are but a representation of itself based on its self-awareness. It can do anything that it could normally do. A creature present on the Feyrealm can willingly enter the Dreamrealm any time while sleeping during a long rest. Any changes to the character's statistics, spell slots, or use of items are not translated to the real world when the character awakens and returns from the Dreamrealm.

A creature can shape the environment, create landscapes, objects, other images, or any effect on the Dreamrealm by merely thinking of it. As an action, a character on the Dreamrealm can duplicate the effects of any spell, except for those in the divination school, by succeeding on a **Charisma** ability check with a **DC equal to 10 + the spell's level**. Spells emulated this way are considered to be cast at a spell slot level equal to the result of this **Charisma ability check - 10**, to a maximum of a 9th level spell slot. Emulating a spell effect is not considered as casting a spell and it doesn't require any components. The save **DC for the manifested effect is equal to 8 + the character's proficiency bonus + the character's Charisma modifier**. Spell attacks are based on the character's Charisma modifier. These emulated spell effects don't require concentration to maintain once created, and those that can be made permanent can immediately be willed into existence as such. Try to encourage your players to describe the effect they want to achieve and try to translate it to an existing spell effect.

A creature on the Dreamrealm is alone, but it can try to enter the dreams of other creatures if it knows them and knows that they are also present on the Dreamrealm. A creature can choose to allow other creatures to enter its own dream if it knows that they wish to enter. A group of creatures can occupy the same dream hosted by one of them and move together on the Dreamrealm as a unit, being subjected to the same effects together. A creature can only be present in one dream, either its own or someone else's. If not allowed to enter, a creature can force itself into another creature's dream by pressing through the fabric of the Dreamrealm to reach their destination in a dream different from theirs. Each creature has its own dreamward that protects it from such attempts and can eject the intruding creature from the Dreamrealm.

Dreamwards are different each time and vary in power based on the dreamer. Their main purpose is to eject a creature from the Dreamrealm. They require creatures to excel in a skill, survive harsh environments, overcome debilitating emotions, harmful effects, or survive the onslaught of monsters of overpowering strength. Use the following generic rules, combine them, or make up your own effects to create a dreamward.

The **DC of the dreamward is equal to 8 + the passive dreamer's proficiency bonus + the passive dreamer's Charisma modifier**. A *dream* spell allows a creature to enter another creature's dream, bypassing the protective dreamward surrounding it. It otherwise functions as detailed in the spell's description.

Destructive Elements. The dreaming character is subjected to violent forces of any damage type, and additionally, they need to survive some sort of physical challenge. The creature is subjected to damage every round equal to the creature's total hit die in

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d6's. The creature can make a saving throw of the related type to halve the damage. The dreamward could take the form of a large body of liquid, a cloud, a thunderstorm, a slide, a vortex, a sound, an emanation, a terrain, or any similar physical form related to the different damage types. The physical challenges involved can be anything that blind, trip, push, grapple, restrain, paralyze, or stun the creature with a saving throw or skill check of the related type associated with them.

Monster Threat. A monster or several monsters attack the dreamer, with a combined CR equal to the total hit die of the dreaming creature.

Baneful Impact. The dreaming creature is subjected to a deadly effect with a saving throw of the related type to survive the effect. The baleful impact manifests for three rounds as fear, pain, suffocation, exhaustion, unconsciousness, petrification, or being polymorphed in any form that results in death if all three consecutive saving throws are unsuccessful.

A creature that dies or becomes unconscious on the Dreamrealm is ejected from the plane and wakes up from its sleep. In this case, the ejected creature is prevented from benefiting from that rest and takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. A creature can force itself to wake up once per hour and exit the Dreamrealm by succeeding on a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. In any case, the dreamer's dream continues to exist while it is occupied by at least one other creature.

A creature can recall the details of any event on the Dreamrealm by succeeding on a **DC 10 Intelligence** ability check during the first day after awakening from the Dreamrealm. This ability check increases to **DC 15** on the second day and to **DC 20** for all following days.

Don't award experience points for defeating any creature in the Dreamrealm. Instead, award 700 experience points to the party for overcoming a dreamward or an encounter.

Father Lestor's Dreamward

Background

Father Lestor had an almost fatal experience when he fell off a fishing boat when he was a child. His thalassophobia, the fear of deep water, manifests in his dreamward.

Environment

The dark, murky, sizzling waters are ominous to behold. The muffled wailing sounds of large water creatures can be heard from a distance resonating through the water. Above the sea level, an infinite ocean spreads towards the horizon. The sky is dark with thunderclouds that roar from time to time as if they were threatening the dreamer with their anger.

Scene

Once the characters have entered the Dreamrealm, they have to pass through Father Lestor's dreamward. The dreamward drops the characters 60 feet below the surface of an endless, boiling ocean. The hot water deals 17 (5d6) fire damage per round or half that much on a successful **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw. A character who speaks or casts a spell with a verbal component immediately starts to suffocate. Visibility in the water is limited to 5 feet.

On the second round of the dreamward, a flying **killer whale** (with a fly speed of 60 ft. and damage immunity to fire) per character appears in the water and attacks them viciously, flying after them if they would leave the boiling waters.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for passing through Father Lestor's dreamward.

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Conversing with the Archmage

Background

Master Eydan is conversing with Father Lestor and the Tomelords on the Dreamrealm within Father Lestor's dream.

Environment

Father Lestor created the image of the Awakened Library (Bleak Mire location 45 in Chapter 5) as the setting for his dream. The enormous hall is filled with rows upon rows of shelves packed with books. Two figures in simple robes talk to each other while four seemingly animate and sentient tomes hover around them.

Scene

Once the characters pass through Father Lestor's dreamward by escaping the boiling ocean and defeating the killer whales, they appear on the floor of the Awakened Library, soaking wet from their previous encounter.

One of the figures in the library is Father Lestor, the former head priest of the Temple of Knowledge in Onadbyr, while the other is Master Eydan (use the **archmage** monster entry with an alignment of *neutral good*), the former archmage of the Arcane Tower. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (History)** skill check recognizes Father Lestor. The four books hovering around the pair, listening to their conversation and giving advice when they can, are the Tomelords of the Awakened Library, sentient books of great knowledge, named the Oakbound, the Sage, the Historian, and the Abbot. The group glances in the direction of the characters as they appear, and everyone, except for Master Eydan, immediately ejects from the dream.

Master Eydan is at first suspicious of the characters. It requires a successful **DC 12 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince him of their good intentions. On a failed skill check, Master Eydan becomes reluctant to converse with the characters and tries everything to eject them from the dream. On a successful skill check, Master Eydan shares his conviction that the events started with King Waldrann Azennar have escalated with terrible consequences.

"All I wanted was peace and to be left alone, but the news you bring sounds terrifying. I have an obligation to this kingdom, and I made errors that need to be corrected. I will tell you everything we know so far, but have patience. My memory is not as it used to be and sometimes I remember only fragments."

Master Eydan pledging his allegiance to the characters.

Master Eydan does not know about the events that have taken place on the Material Plane since his self-imposed seclusion, nor the Midnight Curse. He is both shocked and feels guilty about his negligence towards the kingdom. He is unaware of the complete picture, the plans of the midnight hag coven or House Ausstyl, but knows much more than the characters do, and he is more than willing to help. Unfortunately, Master Eydan's memories of the Bleak Mire and the Hagtree have faded away. With a heavy sigh, he tells the characters everything that the characters have already learned from Lord Cyne Monder's journal and the following additional information and deductions, which he made with Father Lestor and the Tomelords via divinations and simple logic.

- Swigglegard, the former Feyrealm domain of King Dasmag was taken over more than a hundred years ago by the Matrons of Malice, a coven of powerful midnight hags, named Blister, Tyke, and Splinter who turned it into vile, malignant land called the Bleak Mire.
- The Matrons of Malice captured Queen Lyrencia in the guise of King Dasmag to lure King Waldrann Azennar to the Bleak Mire, and to curse the *crown of Aglarion*. By the rules of magic, each major curse must have a dissolution clause that has to be set by the one who created it.

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- Prince Krasnar Azennar is alive and has been revived by the aberration venerating drow of House Ausstyl, who have fleshwarped his body and turned him into a horrific, tentacled creature.
- The drow of House Ausstyl have taken over the Bleak Mire and dethroned the Matrons of Malice. The drow are preparing a strange ritual around the Chasm, laying aberrant ground by their Gibbering Fort, Krasnar's organic lair.
- The library within Father Lestor's dream is the Awakened Library of the Tomelords, a group of sentient books.
- The Bleak Mire is warded against planar travel, and the only way in and out is through a portal, but its characteristics, shape, and location are unknown even to those who have passed through it, including Master Eydan and Father Lestor.
- King Waldrann Azennar and his companions were led to the portal by a deep-wood stalker named Freall, who chanted in Druidic as she was leading them through the forest. The spriggan guards of the coven tell a tale about her being turned into a bird creature and imprisoned in the Nest of the Cackling Crows (location 30.), a family of giant rocs in Aglarion.
- Master Eydan remembers the chant required for the Stride of the Elders in the secret Druidic language and translates it to the characters.

"The skin of the trees,
a word with the ape,
nurture the bridge, and
meet the stag at the gate."

Words of the chant in Druidic.

Moments after Master Eydan finishes his thoughts, the sounds of a loud roaring monster can be heard from every direction at once as giant claws rip through the roof of the dream image of the Awakened Library.

Nightmare on Dragonback

Background

The aberrant drow of House Ausstyl have made an alliance with one of the most powerful monsters of the Bleak Mire, the doppeldrake Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor. They offered it as a steed to Krasnar to make him an even more formidable tool for their machinations on the surface of the Bleak Mire.

Krasnar has learned about Father Lestor's Dreamrealm meetings with Master Eydan from his spy, Querrai Xalo, and is furiously hunting the cleric. The ex-paladin warlock prince knows he can't kill the cleric on the Dreamrealm, but he wants to find out where he hides and terrorize him before confronting him in person.

Scene

The gargantuan-sized **Malzdreziret** wearing the form of a red dragon tears off the roof of the dream version of the Awakened Library. **Krasnar Azennar** rides its back, himself the size of a huge giant. Together they attack everyone inside the dream.

In this encounter, use **Krasnar Azennar** with the following modifications:

- Krasnar Azennar is Huge size.
- He has 270 hit points.
- His attacks deal 2d4 extra damage.
- He has advantage on Strength ability checks and Strength saving throws.
- Dream Save DC 15.

In this encounter, use **Malzdreziret** with the following modifications:

- Malzdreziret is Gargantuan in size.
- It has 368 hit points.
- Its attacks deal 1d10 extra damage.
- Its breath weapon, regardless of type, deals 4d8 extra damage.
- It has advantage on Strength ability checks and Strength saving throws.
- Dream Save DC 18.

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KRASNAR AZENNAR

Master Eydan (use the **archmage** monster entry with an alignment of *neutral good*) attacks Krasnar and Malzdreziret, standing with the characters. When they defeat their opponents or if Master Eydan dies during the battle, he wakes up in his room. He is too fragile and weak to even move from his bed after such a long time, but when every character returns from the Dreamrealm, he swears allegiance to the characters in a raspy voice. He offers to help them as needed from the Dreamrealm, where he will continue to spend his retirement.

"I am fragile in body but strong in soul. The Arcane Tower will always aid you in your quest to cleanse the kingdom from the Midnight Curse."

Master Eydan reaching to clasp the hands of the characters with a shaky hand.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for defeating Krasnar and Malzdreziret and an additional 700 experience points for gaining the necessary information about Freall and the Nest of the Cackling Crows from Master Eydan.

"I will end my father's legacy by forcing you to join the Elder Cortex!"

Krasnar Azennar voicing his vile intentions.

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On the Stride of the Elders

Background

The Seven Flowers, an ancient druidic circle of gnomes, created this magically hidden pathway to hide and protect the planar gateway tree they planted (see section Traversing the Hagrtee). Those who wish to reach the portal tree must follow the pathway and overcome its protective wards. The wards were intended to keep those out who were not familiar with druidic spells that allow access through them. The pathway becomes visible only to those who recite the drudic chants that reveal them at a specific location within the Arden Forest. It is inaccessible in any other way, including the use of magic. The only person who knows where the hidden pathway of the Stride of the Elders begins is Freall (location 30.).

Environment

The Stride of the Elders (location 43.) begins between a collection of oak trees in the southern region of the Arden Forest. The overgrown forest blocks passage with tangled bushes on the ground level and thick foliage at its canopy. Thin rays of light break the otherwise shaded interior of the forest amidst the lively sounds of wildlife. A large stone disk stands at the center of the clearing, decorated with a flower motif and symbols of the four elements around it. This is a two-way portal that leads to the Maze of Flowers.

Portal of the Elements. This two-way portal can be activated by applying the four elements to the stone's surface - fire, earth, water, and wind. If all four elements are applied to the stone simultaneously, the portal opens and remains open for two rounds. A creature that passes through the Portal of the Elements appears on the other side of the portal at the shrine of the Eternal Mother in the Maze of Flowers (location 23.).

Scene

Reciting the druidic chant at the exact location where the Stride of the Elders begins reveals a small dirt path on the ground that runs between the seemingly impenetrable bushes on the side of the clearing as they part to reveal the path to a hidden glade.

TOPIARY GLADE

Background

The latest victims of the glade were Akryn Mistglade, a ranger, and his tiger companion, Steelfang. Akryn Mistglade knew the words of the chant and stepped on the path of the Stride of the Elders, but was unaware that the pathway was protected by powerful magic. They gave each other a last hug when they realized that they were being turned into topiaries by the powers of the glade.

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Environment

The glade is covered in thick grass, trim bushes, and a few larger ones that faintly resemble humanoid figures. One of the topiaries that is still discernible is in the form of a cloaked figure hugging a large tiger standing on its hind feet. The narrow path leads through the glade and vanishes in the thick forest ahead.

Scene

A creature that enters the topiary glade without an active *barkskin* spell must make a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn into a topiary plant and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

GREEN FUR

Background

Green Fur is an immortal awakened giant ape who was bound to this location by the Seven Flowers thousands of years ago as a form of punishment for his violent behavior on the Feyrealm.

Environment

The narrow dirt path meanders through the thick forest woods. Suddenly, with a tremendous roar and the sounds of crashing branches, a giant green-furred ape lands on the ground in front of the characters, in a furious fit of rage.

Scene

Green Fur almost never sees any other creature in his isolation on the mystic pathway and reacts to the characters with an unusually wild rage. He immediately calms if he is spoken to in Druidic or with the use of a *speak with animals* spell. The giant ape is happy to converse with anyone it can understand, telling its story and some basic information about the Seven Flowers as described in the History section of the Kingdom of Aglarion chapter. Green Fur does not see the pathways in any direction and can't leave this location.

Green Fur (CR 8, 3,900 XP). Use the **giant ape** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Green Fur has an Intelligence score of 10 and speaks Druidic.
- ***Fey Ancestry.*** Green Fur has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.
- ***Thunderclap.*** As an action, Green Fur can tump its mighty chest to create the effects of a *thunderwave* spell.
- ***Rejuvenation.*** If it dies, Green Fur returns to life in one day and regains all its hit points. Only a *wish* spell can prevent this trait from functioning.

CHASM OF SPIKES

Background

The path leads to an impassable chasm where the Seven Flowers connected the two sides by growing thick vines through the use of *plant growth* spells that act as bridges.

Environment

The narrow dirt path ends at the edge of a chasm of unusually gigantic proportions. Its sides are lost in the thick vegetation after about 200 feet in both directions. It is 60 feet wide and 80 feet deep and a few thin strands of tangled vines connect its ends. The bottom of the chasm can't be seen due to a mass of spiky plants that have proliferated in it to a height of 30 feet.

Scene

The thin strands of vines that run across the chasm are extremely hard to navigate. A creature who tries to cross the chasm by walking on the vine strands must make a successful **DC 20 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check. A character who falls into the chasm takes 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 30 (12d4) piercing damage from the thorns of the plants.

Anyone who goes around the chasm loses sight of the mystic dirt road, which can be rediscovered only by returning to the Stride of the Elders.

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TRAIL OF THE MIRACLE STAG

Background

The only creature that knows the exact location of the hidden planar portal of the ancient Seven Flowers druids is the immortal Miracle Stag. This stag with an alabaster hide is not a real creature but rather the essence of Nature itself that can not be reached, affected, or bound by anyone. It wanders the mystic forests that are only accessible through the Stride of the Elders and regularly visits the corrupted tree portal now known as the Hagtree. The druids of the Seven Flowers used the *locate creature* spell to find and follow the miracle stag to the portal.

Environment

The narrow dirt road continues from the chasm into the dense forest that acquires a silvery hue after a mile or so. In this region, some of the trees have faintly glowing white puffs of fur snagged on their branches, while others bear scrape marks on their trunks.

Scene

A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check near these places can find the hoof prints of a massive stag. Following these tracks is incredibly difficult due to the long leaps the miracle stag makes in the extremely overgrown vegetation in this part of the Arden Forest. A character who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check can spot the miracle stag and follow it from a safe distance as it leaps and teleports from place to place, eventually stopping in front of the Hagtree for a brief moment before it continues on its trail. The miracle stag is unaffected by any spell or attack, which simply passes through it as if it was only an illusion. On a failed skill check, the miracle stag cannot be found, and it must be tracked for another day before characters can attempt a new check to locate it.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they successfully follow the Stride of the Elders and find the Hagtree.

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Traversing the Hagtree

Background

Thousands of years ago, the Seven Flowers, a circle of ancient feyrealm-born gnomish druids, cultivated a planar tree that extended its roots into all coexistent planes - the Material Plane, the Shadowrealm, the Ethereal Plane, and the Feyrealm. Since then, the tree has existed on each of the planes simultaneously. The gnome druid elders used the tree as a portal to these realms, and they regularly passed through its roots to traverse the planes.

A few decades ago, the Matrons of Malice discovered the planar tree in their new domain and corrupted it by bounding the souls of various hags who resisted or threatened their dominance into the tree, creating the Hagtree. The midnight hag coven has closed off the Bleak Mire from planar travel and left the Hagtree as the only gateway to their realm. Having been given malign sentience, the Hagtree is a greedy and insatiable entity that hungers for the virtues of those who try to pass through its hollow portal. Therefore, it prevents anyone from crossing to other planes unless they willingly sacrifice a part of themselves. The only exceptions are the Matrons of Malice, whom the Hagtree obeys, and those whom the hag coven explicitly allows to find the Hagtree and cross it from any of the planes.

Environment

The ancient Hagtree looms on a dark patch of earth battered by the choking rain in the middle of the forest. Dark clouds roil in the skies, releasing green bolts of lightning around the gnarled form of a giant oak. The numerous eyes on its trunk and branches blink in an unsettling rhythm as menacing symbols of witchcraft dangle on its branches and sway in the wind. A small hollow between the roots of the enormous tree provides just enough space for a grown person to squeeze inside.

Scene

The **Hagtree** is a sentient creature that protects itself when attacked but otherwise does not interact with any creature until they enter its hollow at the base of its trunk. A creature that enters the Hagtree must crawl its way through an inconveniently narrow and dark tunnel inside the wooden body of the tree, quickly disappearing from the sight of those who watch from outside.

The Hagtree calls out telepathically to any creature who has entered its trunk. It asks their destination and demands the creature to name one of its valued virtues, skills, feats, or abilities that it is willing to sacrifice to the tree in return for the passage to the other plane.

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"Be damned if you don't pay our toll, with something you hold dear from your soul! You will be less, but you will be more, with the shadow, spirit, and feyrealms you explore."

The Hagtree setting its demands.

Those who deny the request or offer something invaluable are returned to their original destination when they exit the hollow on the other end of the tunnel. Those who offer a valuable sacrifice from themselves are allowed to exit the tree to their desired planar destination. Sacrifices can be only reclaimed if the Hagtree is destroyed. However, this fact remains unknown to the characters. The Hagtree accepts the following sacrifices, but you can also allow your players to be creative with their choices.

- A skill learned by the character over time. All checks made with a chosen skill that the character is proficient in suffer disadvantage.
- A well-established resistance of the character. All saving throws with a chosen ability score suffer disadvantage.
- A form of movement speed and capability of the character. The movement speed of a chosen movement type is reduced by 10 feet.
- The sanity of the character. Randomly apply a madness to the character using the indefinite madness table.
- A natural resistance of the character against a condition. The character gains disadvantage against a chosen type of condition.
- A feat acquired by the character over time. The character loses the benefits of a chosen feat.
- A special ability of the character. The character loses the benefits or use of a chosen class or racial ability.
- A sense of the character. The character loses one of its senses like touch, hearing, sight, special vision type, scent, or taste.
- A language learned by the character. The character loses the knowledge of a chosen language.

Any creature that passes through the Hagtree must make a **DC 19 Wisdom** saving throw as if subjected to a *modify memory* spell that affects even those creatures who are immune to being charmed. A creature that fails its saving throw and moves 300 feet away from the Hagtree forgets about the location of the Hagtree or how to reach it.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they successfully travel to the Bleak Mire through the Hagtree.

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A Treacherous Quest

The Midnight Curse is highly complex and breaking it requires an elaborate series of steps that are intertwined with morally questionable actions and hidden consequences. First, characters must rescue the Matrons of Malice from the clutches of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, summon and calm King Dasmag's ghost, vanquish the aberration-infused prince Krasnar Azennar, and then force the hags to conduct the Ritual of Cleansing. They also have to assume sovereignty of the realm from the Matrons of Malice before they can escape the Feyrealm domain of the Bleak Mire.

The Beak Mire

As the characters traverse the Bleak Mire, they encounter a realm that has been repeatedly corrupted, first by the Matrons of Malice, then by the aberrant drow of House Ausstyl, who are in the process of sacrificing the entire realm to their dark masters from the Farrealm. The characters must first find the three hags and learn the requirements for removing the Midnight Curse and secure the assistance of the hags by capturing the source of their immortality - their phylactery. Along the way, they will come face to face with the horrible legacies of the hags' reign, find out about the machinations of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, and unite the surviving fey.

The Ritual of Cleansing

Once all requirements have been met for lifting the curse, the Ritual of Cleansing can be performed. The Midnight Curse is broken and the *crown of Aglarion* is free from its vile magic. However, unbeknownst to the characters, the soul of Krasnar Azennar is transposed to its phylactery on the Material Plane where it rises as the Lich-Knight and takes over the Kingdom of Aglarion. The characters will need to claim sovereignty over the Feyrealm domain in order to return home, to a post-apocalyptic landscape ravaged by the Lich-Knight's undead armies.

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Chapter 5

Breaking the Midnight Curse

Characters should be level 11 when they start Chapter 5 of Crown of the Oathbreaker.

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A Treacherous Quest

Background

The Matrons of Malice have successfully manifested their vile intentions in the form of the Midnight Curse and corrupted the Kingdom of Aglarion on the Material Plane. However, in the process, they lost their grasp on their domain in the Feyrealm. The Bleak Mire is gradually slipping from their dominion, as the aberration-venerating drow of the ancient House Ausstyl have risen to take control of the realm as soon as the hag coven's attention shifted from their prized Feyrealm domain. The Inheritors of the Unbegotten, the druid leaders of the drow house, are preparing a realm-wide ritual to plant aberrations into its foundation, seize control of the plane, and eventually sacrifice the entire domain to feed the insatiable hunger of their otherworldly masters. The drow druids have conjured an Elder Cortex from realms beyond reason and have planted it under the Chasm, whence it can grow its tentacles that would encircle the land. Meanwhile, their vassal aboveground, the aberration-infused Krasnar Azennnar, is laying a swath of tainted ground in the wake of Bwael Phindar as this organic fort travels around the Chasm. Blister, the only sister from the Matrons of Malice who is free to act on her own will, desperately balances maintaining the Midnight Curse on the Material Plane and regaining the upper hand on the Bleak Mire by freeing its sisters from the grasp of the aberrant drow.

The characters will have to achieve the following tasks before lifting the Midnight Curse from the *crown of Aglarion* and returning home. These tasks will include choices and allegiances that are both morally questionable and difficult to make.

RESCUING THE HAGS

The characters will travel across the Feyrealm domain of the Bleak Mire, where the corruption of the once-verdant realm is plain to see. In time, the characters will learn that the ritual that can cleanse the *crown of Aglarion* involves the active participation of the Matrons of Malice - only they can remove the curse. Next, the characters will have to find the three midnight hags and find a way to make them perform the ritual. Two of the midnight hags, Tyke and Splinter, have been imprisoned in Quellar Ausstyl, the fortress of the aberration venerating drow in the Dark Below, while Blister is in hiding out at the Witchcave by the foot of the Mountains of Rust.

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TRAVELING TO HELL

The only thing that can force the Matrons of Malice to reverse their curse is the fear of losing their immortality, which is housed in their phylactery. This otherwise unremarkable item, an egg closed in a glass cube, collects their souls if slain and rejuvenates them to full health within a matter of days. The characters will need to find the portal that leads to the hag coven's lair in Hell, to Demonbane Isle, where they can face the Matrons of Malice as a coven and finally secure the phylactery needed to force the hags to remove the Midnight Curse.

CONDUCTING THE CLEANSING RITUAL

The Matrons of Malice will gleefully admit that they have set impossible requirements for the Midnight Curse to be lifted. The ritual that lifts the curse must be performed by all three of the Matrons of Malice and requires a pyre to be built from the trunk of the Hagtree, on which the dead body of Krasnar Azennar must be burnt while the *crown of Aglarion* sits on the prince's head and the dead satyr lord, King Dasmag, sings his favorite song.

TAKING OVER THE REALM

By destroying the Hagtree, the characters essentially trap themselves in the Bleak Mire with no way out, as the restrictions to planar travel laid by the Matrons of Malice are still in place until they are the sovereigns of the realm. The only way to change this condition of the fabric of the Feyrealm is to take control of the Bleak Mire itself. Characters will need to conduct an elaborate ceremony to claim sovereignty of the Feyrealm that allows them to change its rules and even modify its landscape and weather. This ceremony must be conducted under the Chasm at the ancient Hall of the Sovereign. First, the challenger must learn how to undertake this task. Once discovered by magic or from ancient beings, the challenger must present a range of components from each region of the realm to prove that it is familiar with the domain. And lastly, the current rulers must either transfer their power willingly or be defeated by the new challenger and their remains presented in the hall.

The characters aren't the only ones who seek control over the Bleak Mire. The caves below the Chasm at the Hall of the Sovereign are already taken over by the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, where the Elder Cortex is mid-way through the ritual to create the portal that would summon the unspeakable entities from beyond time and space. And even when the threat of the drow has been cleared, another challenger for control of the plane will step forward.

AN UNEXPECTED CHALLENGER

With the Matrons of Malice and House Ausstyl out of the picture, a new, unexpected challenger announces his bid to control the Feyrealm domain. Frumby has been plotting to take control of the plane for a long time. He has served the Matrons of Malice, learned all of the secrets necessary, and uses the characters to fulfill the tasks instead of him. Finally, when everything has been dealt with and prepared, he rises to take dominance with the assistance of Freall and Sam "Weaver" Ebonhilt, both of whom he had charmed and convinced to aid his intention to become the sovereign ruler of the Feyrealm domain.

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The Bleak Mire

HISTORY

Time of the Wild Flowers

No one can remember further back than the Time of the Wild Flowers, an age when blooming plants and vegetation grew rampant in the Feyrealm. The various fey creatures and the beasts who lived under the enormous canopies of gigantic trees and fungi were merely manifestations of emotions and the primordial form of the creatures that later came to populate the Feyrealm and many other planes. It was a plentiful place with nourishment for all to make them flourish and grow. There were no rulers claiming dominion over this realm, only fey and feyrealm-born creatures like elves and gnomes who mastered their powers through the prolific flora and fauna that surrounded them. After countless millennia, the fey and their allies rejected those among their kind who were too wild or bloodthirsty and exiled them to other planes of existence or underground into the caverns of the Dark Below. Leading this effort were the mightiest fey of them all, a pair of colossal fey dragons, Xolenthas and Xantharos, each measuring the size of a small kingdom. Their passive observations of the malicious fey changed from calm tolerance to perturbation, and over the last millennium, into anger. The mighty fey dragons banished every baleful creature they could find and finished off those who resisted their might. After the short yet bloody purge, the Feyrealm became the playground of the remaining joyful and tolerant creatures of various species, while the fey dragons mated and began a thousand-year-long slumber. All seemed bright and cheery, but that was soon about to change.

The Bloodgarden

Time flowed briskly over the sounds of never-ending cheers and delight, but in the shadows, evil extended its dark roots. The Dark Below bred creatures with wicked intentions, and they soon found a way to contact those the fey dragons banished. One of the banished who escaped the purge was Faeryl Myrryn, a mighty drow conjurer matron of her drow house, who found refuge and patronage for all of her extended family and servants in the Abyss. Faeryl Myrryn offered her services to Orcus, who recruited her into its army as a vampire. In exchange for

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her life and eternal service, she was given almost unlimited access to the hordes of the demon lord, tasked with spreading chaos into the Feyrealm. She waited for the right moment to strike against the fey dragons and their allies. Their time came when the Dark Star and its fallen angels crashed into the Material Plane, a cataclysm that also tore a massive chasm into the co-existent plane of the Feyrealm and covered everything in utter darkness. The arch-summoner opened planar gates for demonic hordes to enter, gathered all of the exiled and vengeful creatures from the Dark Below that thirsted for revenge, and gifted her blessing of undeath on many, forming them into a massive army under her control. Under a magically darkened sky, Faeryl Myrryn's forces swept over a large section of the Feyrealm. Through her genius military tactics, the power of the armies at her command, and the weakened state of the resistance, she soon took over the domain. During the final battle between Faeryl and the fey dragons, the vampire queen killed Xolenthas and banished Xantharos to the Material Plane with a spell. She was finally able to enslave the rest of the survivors and claim the domain in the Hall of the Sovereign to reshape the realm in darkness. She named her domain the Bloodgarden, where her living and undead minions worshiped her as a goddess and where her dark and bloody rule saw endless suffering and death.

Swigglegard

For centuries darkness reigned supreme, and though it empowered the drow vampire ruler of the realm, it also hid the resistance of the surviving fey. One of the most powerful of these groups was the Seven Flowers, a group of feyrealm-born gnome druids who fled the Material Plane after the arrival of the fallen angels and returned to the Feyrealm. The druids decided to hide in seclusion in the Bloodgarden rather than remain on the Material Plane, for this was their ancestral home and because their burrows under the Hollowroot - deep below the roots of a magical oak - were completely sealed off and undetectable even by the undead and demonic forces of Faeryl Myrryn. They fought a war on two fronts from their secure hiding place - one against the drow vampire conjurer in the Feyrealm and the other against the Dark Star on the Material Plane. It took long decades to gather allies and build a force to match their enemies in both worlds.

In the Feyrealm, the druids invested their powers into Dasmag, a great satyr hero, who over years of hardships and sacrifices assembled and recruited the largest standing army of fey ever seen - composed of centaur cavalries, squadrons of sprites, legions of satyrs, a squad of treants, magically adept feyrealm-born elves riding giant owls, and an infantry of thousands of feyrealm-born creatures. In the meantime, on the Material Plane, the Seven Flowers found their allies against the fallen angels amongst the followers of Sarath of the Shining Light, whom they helped with their magic from across the planes. The grand offensive orchestrated by the powerful gnomes against both oppressors was executed on both planes simultaneously. The Seven Flowers helped build a kingdom-wide contraption for Sarath to focus her light, and through its use, she destroyed the moon held in place in front of the sun by the Dark Star's powers. Thus, she opened the way for the power of light, the other half of the dark celestial entity, to recall the fallen angels to their original divine realm. Dasmag and his fey army also launched their offensive against the armies of the dead and the demons in the Bloodgarden. The battle lasted for years on the Feyrealm and in the Dark Below, and eventually, the armies of the satyr hero and the Seven Flowers defeated the drow vampire overlord and forced her back to the Abyss. Dasmag claimed the realm in the Hall of the Sovereign and was crowned as the first King of the Fey. He slowly reformed the realm to his liking and renamed it Swigglegard. The emergence of the new ruler meant endless festivities and revelry in the king's glorious courts and halls, an ongoing celebration of his victory over their former oppressors.

The Bleak Mire

However, King Dasmag's unceasing festivities turned into debauchery over the centuries, and they soon

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took their toll on the once-mighty satyr warrior. A coven of midnight hags, the Matrons of Malice, who were initially banished by the fey dragons to Hell and who later resisted the drow summoner's call to the Feyrealm and bided their time, took notice of the king's weakened state. The hags kept a close eye on the satyr king from their home on Demonbane Isle in Hell and soon learned about all of his desires and weaknesses. They took a wide range of fey forms to join the feasts, so they might expedite his deterioration through vile concoctions with which they spiked the king's drinks. They planned their strike for the moment when Dasmag was in his worst state. Instead of slowly draining his energies, one fateful night, they turned him to stone in his intoxicated slumber and then crushed his statue to pebbles amid hysterical cackles. Finally, they presented the satyr king's remains in the Hall of the Sovereign and claimed the realm.

The Matrons of Malice were free to take control of the planar domain and started to infuse it with their wicked natures spawned in the pits of Hell. They killed and tortured all the fey they could get their claws on in mass executions, fed on their victims' suffering, and harvested countless souls. Some they left alive, but only so their suffering would endure under the hags' wicked curses, transformations, or magically-powered commands. Slow corruption spread all over the planar domain, which soon turned into the Bleak Mire - the hags' fetid swamp of suffering and hopeless torture. The Matrons of Malice barred all planar travel to and from the Bleak Mire, locking everyone inside as if in a prison. They corrupted the planar tree leading to the Feyrealm by infusing it with the souls of hags, making it the only functional gateway in and out of the Bleak Mire and the other two coexisting planes of existence. However, the Hagtree takes its toll from all trespassers.

Ascendance of Quellar Ausstyl

For centuries, the only group of creatures on the Feyrealm whom the hag coven could not intimidate into submission was the drow of House Ausstyl, led by a druidic circle that venerates interdimensional horrors. These drow were direct competitors of House Myrryn since the early ages of the Feyrealm. They fled to the alternate dimension of their unimaginable masters beyond the stars when threatened by the onslaught of the fey dragons. They returned from their exile with their bodies and minds infused with the essence of extradimensional aberrations only after the destruction of the vampire Matron Myrryn by King Dasmag. They then lay in wait and plotted from their fortress in the Dark Below to overthrow the satyr lord, but they were too few in number to oppose the powerful army of fey. The flesh-warping druids first conjured an Interdimensional Strangler. This cosmic horror could transport aberrations from other realms to the Bleak Mire, growing their numbers from creatures snatched by the Interdimensional Strangler from the Farrealm and their aberrant creations from slaves captured from the Dark Below. They watched patiently as the Matrons took over the realm and took the time to perfect a ritual to infuse creatures with the essence of an aberrant entity. They also rekindled their alliance with Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, to serve them when needed.

The drow bided their time until the hags grew preoccupied with their machinations in the Material Plane, which created the perfect opportunity to strike. House Ausstyl ascended from deep below the former courts of King Dasmag in a lightning strike. However, the Matrons were not present, and they only found a prisoner, a wretched knight in chains. This was Krasnar. After deducing that half the oathbreaker knight's soul was missing, the drow freed the fallen prince and offered him unspeakable powers to fuel his revenge against the hags that tricked him. They also bid Malzdreziret to serve as his mount. Then, they utilized the ritual they perfected and pulled the power of a Greater Entity from the realms beyond to infuse into the void left by Krasnar's missing soul. With the ritual complete, Krasnar lost all sense of his humanity and former motivations, driven only by the aberration that has come to dominate his hateful nature. He now sits across his throne of flesh in Bwael Phindar that the druids flesh-crafted as the seat of his power, preparing the way for the aberrant

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Elder Cortex that has been planted below the Mire to seize control of the realm, rip the fabric of the Feyrealm domain, and replace its entirety with that of the Farrealm.

WEATHER

It is immediately apparent to anyone who enters the Bleak Mire how the Feyrealm domain received its current name. Dark clouds roil over a dismal landscape of wetlands, swamps, marshes, and twisted forests. There is no sunshine in the skies, only a faint glow behind the cloud cover, and rain is almost continuous, sometimes falling for days on end. Lightning storms are frequent, as are lashing winds, and those who are exposed to the rains soon find that they are soaked to the bone and shivering from the winds. The weather of the Bleak Mire represents the personalities of the hags who molded the realm into a disheartening, miserable, and joyless place of suffering and corruption.

TIME

Time flows strangely in the Feyrealm world of the Bleak Mire, sometimes even backward and often changing tempo. However, in general, and relative to the Material Plane, it passes at an incredibly swift pace. Years can pass on the Material Plane during even just a short visit to the Feyrealm, and there are some legends of people disappearing, only to return centuries later, but still slightly older as when they were last seen. One year spent in the Bleak Mire equals ten years on the Material Plane.

PLANAR TRAVEL

All forms of planar travel were restricted in the Bleak Mire by the Matrons of Malice through mass sacrifices to power their spells when they gained dominion over the former lands of King Dasmag in the Hall of the Sovereign under the Lake of Bile. The plane is essentially a specific demi-plane that is parallel to the Material Plane, coexisting with the Kingdom of Aglarion. The only form of passage to the Bleak Mire is through the Hagtree and a secret two-way portal to Hell in the Sporedark. The neighboring domains of the Feyrealm have also been closed off from the Bleak Mire by the Matrons of Malice, through shaping the landscape itself as the rulers and controllers of the Bleak Mire - summoning the Everstorm, forming the Dazzling Wastes, turning the western mountains into the Glass Mountains, and corroding the iron mountains to the north into the Mountains of Rust.

REGIONS

Everstorm

On the border of the Bleak Mire, storm clouds roll over the land, obscuring the way forward by a sheet of solid rain. As a result, the entire area of the Everstorm is heavily obscured. Those who enter the infinite storm find they can wander forever in the rain and never reach the storm's eye, getting weaker and more exhausted with every step. The effect is the same but a much more virulent form of the **choking rain** that has spread over Aglarion, affecting the traveler within minutes of stepping into the storm, when it must make a successful **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw each minute while being exposed to the choking rain or gain a level of exhaustion (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

Dazzling Wastes

The muddy and wet ground suddenly gives way to wastelands baked dry as one enters the Dazzling Wastes. The ground emits motes of black and white sparkles that dazzle the eyes and result in permanent blindness if exposed to them for a longer period. Creatures who enter the Dazzling Wastes are dazzled and suffer a -2 penalty on Dexterity saving throws, ability, and skill checks, as well as attack rolls after 10 minutes spent in the area. If exposed to the motes for an hour, the sparkles cause permanent blind-

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ness. The ground is brittle and inhospitable. Nothing grows in the mudflats, and only bones bear witness to those who enter the endless wasteland. It is best to avoid entering the area lest one wander aimlessly, without seeing the way forward or out of the wastes.

Mountains of Rust

The Mountains of Rust are an impenetrable border to the Bleak Mire. Those who climb its slopes find that the peaks are insurmountable, and one can never reach the summit. The crimson peaks of the mountains can be seen from anywhere in the Bleak Mire, touching the dark skies above. Few creatures venture onto the ragged slopes since the rusting surface is an inhospitable terrain that doesn't support any life, except for rust monsters and a special **ironthorn moss** that eats ore and can shoot forth a cloud of tiny metal slivers when disturbed. A few locations can be found at the foothills of the mountain range, like the Crimson Tarn at the mouth of the Russet River, the Lake of Tar, or the nest of Ateroxx, the giant black owl. Some smaller giant owls are still alive in the western part of the mountains, as are some giant goats that keep to the sheer cliffs to escape the rare predator.

Ironthorn Moss. Ironthorn moss is a plant that feeds on metal and has a defensive mechanism to repel herbivorous creatures. Each patch of ironthorn moss covers a 10-foot square. Creatures that come within 10 feet of a patch of ironthorn moss or start their turn within 10 feet of the patch must succeed on a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw. A failed save results in 22 (4d10) piercing damage, or half as much on a successful saving throw.

Glass Mountains

The Glass Mountains border the Bleak Mire, and it is almost impossible to climb their slippery surface unless one wears special boots with sticky soles. Otherwise, it requires a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to ascend the cliffs. The sharp edges of protruding and broken glass shards will damage non-metal armor, clothing, and flesh, no matter how careful the traveler, resulting in 7 (3d4) points of slashing damage every hour moving on the mountainside. A creature wearing metal armor is immune to this damage. When sunshine still reached the ground of the Feyrealm domain, the reflective surfaces of the Mountains were dazzling to behold. However, under the dark clouds of the Bleak Mire, the surfaces are grey and gloomy, with reflections of swirling forms that seem to be trapped behind the glass surfaces. Upon closer inspection, the forms are actually shadows that rise out of the glass and attack the living who dares to disturb their eternal torments. The shadows seeped into the Feyrealm through the Hagtree and have been drawn to gaze upon their undead visages in the mountains, with no salvation in sight.

Blightwoods

Formerly the abode of King Dasmag and his fey court, the mighty forest of pines and various deciduous trees like chestnuts and oaks was once lush with blooming flora and all manner of beasts that made their homes amid the tall trees. The southern parts of the forest lie on higher ground, where the hills are crisscrossed with warrens and burrows. The beauty of the forest turned dismal and diseased after the hags placed a curse of blight on the satyr king's stable of war-goats that quickly spread a blighting disease over the entire woodland, giving the forest its name. The Blightwoods are dotted with the ruins of once-magnificent buildings that served as the halls of the fey and fey-realm-born creatures, beautiful works of whimsical architecture that are just faded reminders of the magnificence and enchanting nature of the lands and their former inhabitants. Now, the trees of the Blightwoods are diseased and tortured, while blighted beasts of all types roam the forest and perpetuate the hags' curse of necrotic energies that slowly drain the vitality of lifeforms who come into contact with the afflicted. As a result, creatures who spend extended time in the woods have a chance of contracting a disease - **blighted**. Each day, characters who are in the Blightwoods must make a successful **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or contract the disease. The disease

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manifests after a short rest, after which the diseased creature feels tired and regains only half its hit points from hit dice spent during a short or long rest. The disease can be removed only by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher.

Bloodrime Forest

The former winter court of King Dasmag and the surrounding hunting grounds lie among the majestic but bare pine trees of the Bloodrime Forest where blood-red snowflakes of various sizes, some even a foot wide, fall from the clouds above. Cold reigns eternal in the snow-capped forest, a legacy of the Bloodgarden and Faeryl Myrryn's cruel reign. A creature exposed to the cold must succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw at the end of each day or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures wearing cold-weather gear (thick coats, gloves, and the like) and creatures naturally adapted to cold climates. The forest is the natural habitat of white elks and a pack of crimson-hued winter wolves, who were kept as prey animals by king Dasmag to be hunted during the annual Wolfhunt but now roam free.

Forest of Gloom

This mangrove forest is a labyrinth of waterways and small outcroppings of wet ground fed by the Stormy Marches. The gnarled mangrove trees cover the wetlands in constant shadow, giving the forest an eerie and gloomy atmosphere. The waterways under the overhanging branches are home to giant crocodiles, some of them rotting zombies, as well as giant snapping turtles, giant constrictor snakes, and ibises that make their nests in the foliage.

Twisted Forest

The Matrons of Malice corrupted the once flourishing forest of willows with a terrible curse of thorns that has spread among the majestic trees, engulfing them in the rapidly spreading brambles. All indigenous flora are now twisted and gnarled, casting long and oppressive shadows over the thick underbrush. It is almost impossible to travel the forest in the dense growth infested with swarms of giant rats. The swarms of ravens that nest among the foliage also make traveling from branch to branch a dangerous undertaking. The entire forest is considered difficult terrain, and all creatures with an AC 15 or lower that move within the area take 5 (2d4) piercing damage for every mile traveled in the forest.

Burning Woods

This once verdant and glorious maple forest is hidden behind a veil of illusionary fire resulting from a curse by the Matrons of Malice. This phantasm manifests in psychic burns on those who enter the forest and whose will is weak. Any creature that enters the forest suffers 3 (1d6) points of psychic damage every

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round at the end of its turn. The creature can use its action to examine the phantasm with a **DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. If the check succeeds, the creature realizes that the fire is an illusion and becomes immune to the effect. The large-scale illusion covers the entire forest, which has been infested with all manner of vermin that are immune to the mind-affecting nature of the illusion - swarms of insects, centipedes, beetles, and spiders. The northern part of the Burning Woods is overrun by colonies of nightmare spiders, huge wolf spiders whose bites cause deadly phantasms. The Black Worm, a colossal dew-worm, also makes its lair under the woods in the Dark Below and sometimes rises to the surface to feed on anyone in its path. It has left a maze of tunnels in its wake, few of which are direct entrances to the wider realms of the Dark Below.

Bogs of Rot

A heavy layer of mist always covers the Bogs of Rot, and the stagnant air is thick with the putrid smell of rot and decay. The area was once hilly and fertile ground where the Halls of Art welcomed all to find pleasure in the marvelous exhibits. However, Splinter has corrupted the entire area with a disease of **flesh rot** (see *contagion* spell), causing the fumes in the area to slowly eat the flesh of anyone who ventures into the moss-covered mats of bouncy ground. At the end of every day that a creature spends in the bog, it must make a successful **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or contract the disease. The bog bears the legacy of Splinter's mad love of torture and the abhorrent artistic tendencies of the fiendish hag. It had gruesome torture devices created for its unfortunate victims and displayed them as an exhibition of its own insane "art." Most of the victims have perished due to the suffering, their corpses still strapped to the devices.

Fleshbite Swamps

The Fleshbite swamps are a maze of waterways lined with black-trunked trees that reach over the slow streams and drip water from their low-hanging branches. The dead vegetation is rotting, and the water is cloudy and covered with scum. Giant frogs, leeches, and slugs crawl in the muddy waters while the air is thick with clouds of horseflies, mosquitoes, and gnats that constantly buzz and suck the lifeblood of anyone who ventures into the swamps. The entire Fleshbite Swamps is considered a lightly obscured area due to the dense clouds of swarming insects that inhabit it. The groundwater spring flowing into the Lake of Blood on the western side of the swamp was the site of mass slayings by the Matrons of Malice to cull the inhabitants of the Bleak Mire and harvest them for their souls.

Stormy Marshes

The Stormy Marches result from the overflow from the Everstorm, flatlands that have been inundated with the waters of the magical storm. The tidal waters are teeming with swarms of vicious quippers, and saber-toothed tigers lurk among the tall bluish reeds covering the entire marshland. A rise a mile across is the only landmark to break the endless sea of reeds that wave in the strong winds. Two horns protrude and rise for miles towards the dark skies from the center of the elevated ground. The entire area is actually just the top of the colossal skull of Xolenthas, one of the two fey dragons who was slain here by Faeryl Myrryn eons ago.

Hungry Downs

The Hungry Downs are low-lying hills dotted with boulders covered by a strange slippery moss the color of ochre. It requires a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to avoid patches of the slippery moss. On a failed check, a creature that travels the Hungry Downs might fall into the crevasses between the boulders unless they succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw. Giant poisonous snakes make their lairs below, in the water-filled cracks that criss-cross the hills.

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Russet River

The Russet River flows in reverse and meanders from its groundwater source in the Fleshbite Swamps, where the water has been turned to blood by the Matrons of Malice as they sacrificed the inhabitants of the realm by the thousands. The river flows through the Lake of Blood and up the hills at the foot of the Mountains of Rust, where it empties into the Crimson Tarn. The aberrant effects of Bwael Phindar have further corrupted the waters on the lake's eastern shore. A tribe of iara hunts the river and lures travelers with its captivating scents.

Valley of Bloom

The valley between the Chasm and the Burning Woods is a lowland area filled with all manner of flowers and fungi. Vegetation grows rampant, with many plants and mushrooms towering over the sickly green flower beds that cover the valley floor. A unique tree called lightwood can be found in the valley, so light that it floats in the air 20 feet above the ground, collecting water in gigantic cusped leaves. The verdant plants, fungi, and trees wave in the strong air currents that run through the valley. The region is dangerous, as a skincrawler vine has spread among the flora, spreading a disease that turns any creature that comes into contact with it into shambling mounds.

Lake of Tears

The Everstorm constantly roils over The Lake of Tears, gales throwing crashing waves on its western shores. The waters are almost impossible to traverse, and strong winds also seriously hamper air travel. A small island 300 feet from the shore can sometimes be seen behind the rolling waves. Further along the lake's southern shore, a gigantic vortex swirls 500 feet above the ground at the edge of the Everstorm, drawing the storm itself into its center, where the waters disappear as if sucked into a gigantic drain.

Lake of Tar

The Lake of Tar lies at the foot of the Mountains of Rust, slowly bubbling forth from underground vents. The air is thick with potent and pungent odors, and the surrounding area is void of all vegetation. Tarlings, elemental creatures, lair in the lake and sometimes hunt for prey on the sticky shores where the unwary can easily get trapped in clouds of fumes that bubble from the lake. If submerged in the lake, a creature takes 33 (6d10) fire damage each round.

Lake of Blood

The Lake of Blood, or as it was formerly known as the Crystal Lake, is a large body of water turned red by the blood of thousands of victims as they were sacrificed by the groundwater springs of the Fleshbite Swamps. The water has an iron smell, and the corpses of dead fey and feyrealm-born creatures float on its surface. The lake has overflown and has created an estuary into the Chasm, where it cascades thousands of feet into the Lake of Bile at its bottom. The passage of Bwael Phindar and the aberrant ground left in its wake have further corrupted the waters and the wildlife. The riverside is dotted with the carcasses of dead animals, and the vegetation around the lake is also mutated and twisted into aberrant shapes. Beasts that have survived are horrific in appearance, aggressively protecting their territories and merrow ghouls lurk in the lake's depths, nibbling on the bloated corpses that float on the surface. The village of Perfidy sits dismally on the western shores of the lake where the Russet River widens in its course up towards the Mountains of Rust.

Lake of Bile

The foul waters overflowing from the Lake of Blood have collected at the bottom of the Chasm, slowly draining even further down to the depths of the Dark Below. This body of water is known as the Lake of Bile to the inhabitants of the Mire, who never ven-

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ture down the cliffs of the Chasm to the dark and putrid waters. The lake is teeming with giant aquatic and a tribe of chuuls also makes it its lair. At the bottom of the Lake, flooded passages connect to the caverns of the Hall of the Sovereign. If exposed to the lake's waters, a creature must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned for one day.

The Chasm

At the center of the Bleak Mire is a pit the size of a mountain - formed from the plummet of the Dark Star that was imprinted on the plane's fabric during the Mountainfall. In the shape of a reverse mountain, the Chasm is two miles deep with sheer cliffs and rough crags on its slopes. Due to the almost constant rains in the Bleak Mire after the arrival of the Matrons, the waterways surrounding the Chasm have overflown, and their water rushes down the cliffs in gigantic cascades. The Chasm is infested with groups of ropers, surviving off the refuse of the waterways of the Bleak Mire.

Cortex Pods

The Hall of the Sovereign deep below the Lake of Bile serves as the pool of the Elder Cortex, which has sent out its tendrilous roots deep into the ground below the Bleak Mire. Six Cortex Pods have sprouted from the aberrant ground left in the wake of Bwael Phindar, as it is making its slow way around the Chasm. Each cortex pod manifests a different spell-like power of the Elder Cortex that was fed to it by the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. Other than these unique druidic spell-like abilities associated with each pod, every pod also has defensive abilities shared by all of them.

Burrows of the Black Worm

The Black Worm, a colossal dew-worm from the Time of the Wild Flowers, has wriggled endlessly through the earth and stone under the Feyrealm domain, leaving a maze of tunnels in its wake that comprise the Dark Below. The legendary worm sometimes rises to the surface and has turned the bed of the now dried up Brightlight River over the countless millennia into a gigantic mound that crosses the surface of the Mire. The Black Worm sometimes rises to the surface but prefers the earth under and above the Burning Woods over any other territory. It consumes everything in its path and devastates its prey. The wake of the worm has left a few direct passages to the wider realms of the Dark Below - at the Torn Passage (location 63.) and the Black Worm (location 57.) locations.

The Dark Below

The endless labyrinth of interconnected passages under the Bleak Mire is mainly the result of the Black Worm burrowing through the earth, carving wide tunnels into the bedrock since the Time of the Wild Flowers. Groundwater from the surface world has accelerated this process, forming immense cave and cavern systems and subterranean rivers and lakes. The underground passages are considered difficult terrain, and Wisdom (Survival) skill checks used to forage for food are made with disadvantage. The Dark Below is only accessible from a handful of locations - the Torn Passage (location 63.), Tangible Darkness (location 7.), Skull of the Fey Dragon (location 46.), Shrine of Faeryl Myrryn (location 33.), and the Black Worm (location 57.).

The hidden caverns of the Dark Below have been inhabited since time immemorial by all manner of creatures formed from base emotions, who found the joyful revelry on the surface world detestable. The ranks of the dark fey swelled as Xolenthas and Xantharos banished the wicked from the surface world, and many sought refuge from the might of the fey dragons in the Dark Below. With the cataclysmic events of the Mountainfall and the return of House Myrryn alongside the demonic hordes, the Dark Below became a staging ground for a campaign of mass annihilation against the surface. After the drow vampire's conquest, the blood from endless blood sacrifices seeped into the ground from the

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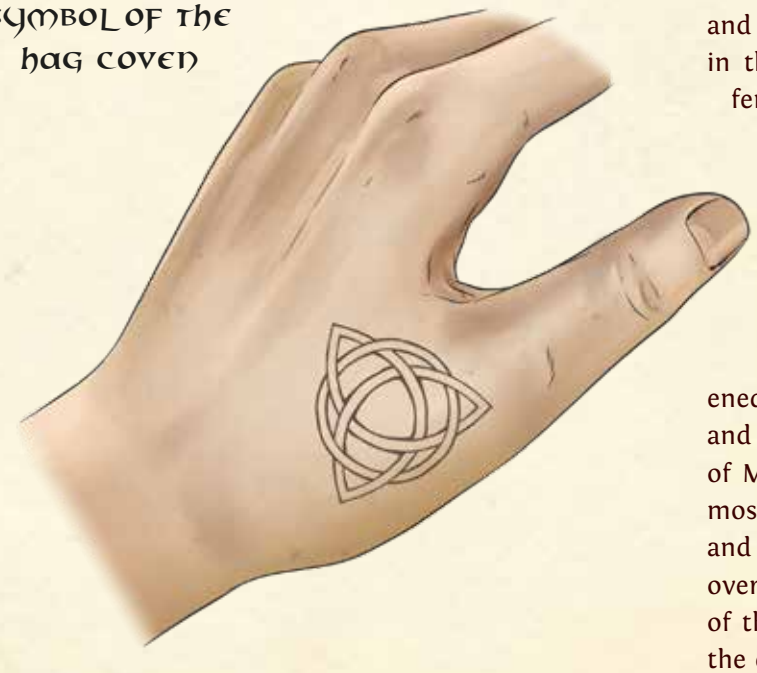
Bloodgarden, where the darkened skies beckoned to the dark fey who now found a new master in the person of the drow vampire conjurer. When King Dasmag and the Seven Flowers established Swigglegard, the dark fey were mostly slain. The few who survived were once again driven underground, only to be forgotten amidst the feasting and frolicking. The caverns are mostly abandoned, but remnants of the black-hearted still lurk in the darkest places of the Dark Below, as does House Ausstyl, which has returned from the Farrealm and has retaken control of the Bleak Mire from their ancestral caverns in the deep.

FACTIONS

SYMBOL OF THE HAG COVEN



Matrons of Malice

The followers of the midnight hag coven are some of the most wicked and vile souls across the planes. Some venerate the hags out of sheer terror, some for promises of advancement or power, and some for purely materialistic motives. One of the latter is a tribe of spriggans called the Snafflewhopps, numbering a couple of dozen, employed by the Matrons of Malice as agents of terror for promises of treasure and magic. With the rise of Krasnar and the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, most of the spriggans have retreated to their burrows under the southern hills in the Blightwoods. They plot to contact their fellows up north, who are still serving Blister's bidding from her hideout at the Lake of Tar. They will not miss opportunities for thievery and extortion tactics if encountered. However, their plight might drive them to cooperate, only to delay their inevitable double-cross.

Another group of individuals bound to the hags by their heritage and monstrous natures resides in the village of Perfidy. The populace here is composed of the vile offspring of the hags from natives of the Feyrealm. These hagspawn were begotten through forced copulations between the Matrons of Malice and feyrealm-born creatures and were discarded in the village of Perfidy, where they were left to fend for themselves over the years. The village has grown to about fifty souls through, often unsuccessful, inbreeding. With the disappearance of the hags and Krasnar Azennar's rise to claim rulership of the Bleak Mire, the villagers are in a constant state of terror and have turned upon each other, their wickedness exposed and heightened. All the villagers bear distinguishing features and personality traits from all three of the Matrons of Malice - their mothers and grandmothers - and most have gone mad due to the constant threats and abuse since Krasnar Azennar has become their overlord. The villager's only salvation is the freeing of the coven and the return of their patrons from the clutches of House Ausstyl.

Other vile creatures in the employ of the Matrons of Malice are dryad witches, an awakened raven spy named Cyllek, families of wild trolls, hill giants, ogres, and numerous forms of undead.

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House Ausstyl

Drow of House Ausstyl

Ausstyl, a drow house led by a circle of druids who venerate dark entities from the Farrealm, are in the process of taking over the Bleak Mire from their underground fortress in the Dark Below and through their aberration-infused champion Krasnar Azennar on the surface of the plane. Since their return to their ancestral home from their otherworldly exile, House Ausstyl has had a single purpose - ripping the fabric of the Bleak Mire so it can become host to the Farrealm and summoning unspeakable dimensions to devour the fabric of reality of the Feyrealm domain. Welvynn Ausstyl, the leader of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, has succeeded in capturing two of the hags - Tyke and Splinter - to set the circle's plan in motion and has tasked the aberration-infused Krasnar with laying the tainted ground for the grand ritual on the path of Bwael Phindar, his Gibbering Fort around the Chasm. The druids have planted the Elder Cortex at the bottom of the Chasm to infect the plane with its web of tentacled roots.

The drow number half a dozen druid nobles who command scores of flesh-warped barbarians and a sect of monks dedicated to the ways of the tentacle. They are masters of infusing aberrant energies into living flesh and summoning alien entities to do their bidding.

The Inheritors of the Unbegotten lead their house with zealous fervor and a cruel hand. The archdruid, Welvynn Ausstyl, consults only his two aboleth advisors, Voolroon and Kannakar, on his most important decisions, with the latter joining Krasnar Azennar on his conquest above ground. All non-nobles of the house are divided into two lower castes. One of them comprises the zealous fighting monks of the house who act as loyal bodyguards and personal servants to the noble druids. The other is a larger group of almost feral barbarians who were raised as savages in the outer sections of Quellar Ausstyl. These barbaric drow are bred only to serve the house's purposes in times of war and to keep the similarly primitive grimlock slaves in line. The non-noble drow of House Ausstyl are never given names. The drow barbarians and their meat-shield grimlocks patrol the main tunnels of the Dark Below and only rarely venture to the surface to collect rare components and oversee the progress of Bwael Phindar.

King Dasmag

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Subjects of King Dasmag

There are extremely few survivors of the extermination campaign waged by the Matrons of Malice against the fey inhabitants of Swigglegard. Most were either slaughtered outright, sacrificed for soul-harvesting, or kept as victims for endless tortures by the hags. Those who have escaped these fates have gathered in the Forest of Gloom, under the care of Gemhaz, the former huntmaster, and friend of King Dasmag. The two-score motley assembly of fey and Feyrealm-born creatures - a couple of centaurs, a dryad, a handful of sprites, a family of satyrs, and a few dozen various feyrealm-born survivors - are sheltered in the Refuge, as the specially-grown dome of mangrove trees hiding the refugees has come to be called. The group is well hidden by the dense foliage of the Forest of Gloom. The group members were led here in small teams by Gemhaz and Commander Pricklethrust. However, they rarely make forays out of their haven, since none of the members of their expeditionary forces have returned.

Trade, amongst the fey, while currently almost nonexistent, is usually through barter and the exchange of goods for payment of gems, magics, rare ingredients, or pieces of art.

Seven Flowers

The Seven Flowers druidic circle is an ancient organization of feyrealm-born gnome druids whose roots reach deep into the history of the Feyrealm domain from where the druids spread the bounty of the plane to the Material Plane. When the Dark Star ascended over Aglarion, the organization found a haven in the Feyrealm in the chambers of the Hollowroot and plotted for generations to overthrow evils on both worlds - the Dark Star in the Material Plane and Faeryl Myrryn in the Bloodgarden. They finally achieved victory with allies they gathered and aided. However, after the liberation of the realms, the druids were forced to retreat once again to the Feyrealm, fleeing from the persecutions perpetrated by the Order of the Eternal Light that saw most of their numbers executed. For over a century, just a single remaining member of the Seven Flowers has resided in the Feyrealm, Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut, after the remainder of the order scattered accross the verdant planes of existance in the multiverse. With the arrival of the Matrons of Malice, Bumdri's predicament has worsened as he has been trapped in the Hollowroot by the destruction of the blooming oak circle surrounding the hideout.

THE SEVEN FLOWERS

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BLEAK MIRE

MOUNTAINS OF RUST

GLASS MOUNTAINS

TWISTED FOREST

BOGS OF ROT

FOREST OF GLOOM

STORMY MARSHES

HUNGRY DOWNS

BLIGHTWOODS

LAKE OF BLOOD

LAKE OF TEARS

LAKE OF TAR

BURROWS OF THE BLACK WORM

THE CHASM

FLESHBITE SWAMPS

BLOODRIME FOREST

VALLEY OF BLOOM

BURNING WOODS

THE EVERSTORM

DAZZLING WASTES

MILES 0 10 15 20 25

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1. The Hagtree

Background

The Matrons of Malice desecrated the portal tree of the Seven Flowers and merged it with the souls of their hag enemies to create the Hagtree at the foot of the Glass Mountains.

Matyko, the billie blind advisor of the late King Dasmag, regularly sneaked through the planar tree from the Feyrealm but was stuck on the Bleak Mire when the midnight hag coven created the Hagtree. He witnessed how the Matrons of Malice infused the tree with the screaming souls of other hags, and Matyko is unwilling to enter it. The billie blind wants to escape the Bleak Mire but has no means to do so. Matyko has already spent over a decade by the Hagtree and is increasingly frustrated with every year.

Environment

The Hagtree stands alone on a small earthen outcrop surrounded by a copse of smaller gnarled trees and a sea of misty bogs as far as the eye can see. The dark surfaces of the Glass Mountains loom over the location. In the Bleak Mire, the Hagtree has been decorated with totems crafted from corpses that hang from the tree's branches as from gallows in a horrific display - all manner of fey and feyrealm-born creatures, even children and babies.

Scene

If attacked, the **Hagtree** animates and defends itself and tries to destroy any creature that harmed it. The tree fights until destroyed or until targets are within 1,000 feet of it.

Matyko (use the **billie blind** monster entry) approaches the characters very cautiously and makes gentle inquiries about their goals, ready to disappear any time if threatened. He opens up if he is treated in a friendly way and tells the following information about all he has seen by the Hagtree over the past decade, what he knows about the Feyrealm, and offers his help to guide the characters.

- Matyko sadly relates King Dasmag's death and that his realm, Swigglegard, has been corrupted into the Bleak Mire by the Matrons of Malice.
- He saw a few groups go through the Hagtree - a few spriggan mercenaries who came from the north and Frumby, a richly dressed goblin who arrived from the east and led a miserable-looking unicorn on a chain through the tree, then returned without the unicorn. However, he avoided them all out of fear.
- Matyko also met King Waldrann Azennar and his company, but the king bluntly rejected the billie blind as a child when they first met at the tree, and the distraught king ignored him when they returned, missing two of his company. Only Master Eydan spoke to Matyko briefly, noting that they received the blessings of King Dasmag and that horrible events also transpired on their voyage.

The concerned fey is happy to help anyone who wants to help restore the joyful Feyrealm he knew and is willing to tag along with the characters. Matyko knows many details about the locations of Swigglegard under King Dasmag, but not about the effect of the Matron's corruption on them or their current state. Matyko can direct the characters

MATYKO

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to important locations, such as the Orchards, King Dasmag's Court, King Dasmag's Festhall, Court of Amber, Caprine Stables, Ambrosia Winery and the Vineyards, Halls of Art, Pool of Rainbows, Awakened Library, Skull of the Fey Dragon, Milk Pool, Panacea Lilacs, Winter Court, and Pool of Starlight.

Treasure

If the Hagtree is felled, a single *seed of the Hagtree* falls from its branches.

SEED OF THE HAGTREE

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they befriend Matyko and accept him as their guide.

2. The Snafflewhopps

Background

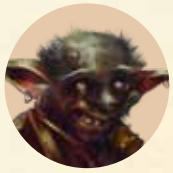
A tribe of spriggans called the Snafflewhopps were in the employ of the Matrons of Malice, undertaking various tasks ranging from thieving forays into Aglarion to overseeing the hags' rule on the Bleak Mire, as well as serving as protection, all in exchange for regular doses of potions and gifts of treasures. After Krasnar Azennar's takeover of the Bleak Mire, the Snafflewhopps have retreated to burrows in the elevated ground around the southern Blightwoods. They have relocated their trove of treasure that they guard ferociously, biding their time to move against the drow and their aberrant servitors. Their lair is a network of caves dug by a colony of giant badgers, whom the Spriggans have controlled using a *ring of animal influence* granted them by the Matrons. The spriggans send out regular exploratory and badger-riding raiding parties to the surrounding areas like the Orchard and are in contact with Frumby for useful wands. However, they have not dared to cross the Bleak Mire to the Lake of Tar and have no news of Blister and their fellows who are stuck there.

Environment

The burrows of the spriggan tribe are a network of narrow passages and low-ceilinged chambers dug from the natural earth. The antechambers can accommodate Large creatures, while the inner chambers count as cramped space for creatures that are larger than Small size. The chambers include living spaces, a nursery for the young of the tribe, and storage areas for food and the tribe's treasures.

Scene

Eight **giant badgers** and two **spriggan mercenaries** guard the antechamber of the burrows. The animals ferociously keep out intruders but only if commanded to do so by the spriggans. The spriggans will direct their animals to attack, joining the fight in their enlarged forms. An additional eight **spriggan mercenaries** arrive from inside the burrows in 2 rounds as reinforcements. The spriggans will realize their mistake in thinking themselves mightier than the characters when half their numbers have fallen, and the remaining spriggans will sue for a truce.



"Truce, let us have a truce! We spriggans just don't abide tall folk to enter our warrens uninvited. Perhaps we might be to each other's use if we can find common ground, ey? None know the Bleak Mire better than the Snafflewhopps, who are feared by all!"

A spriggan speaking in Sylvan, boasting of the Snafflewhopps and setting the stage to a bargain.

The spriggans have a wealth of information on the Bleak Mire through their service to the Matrons of Malice. They keep their alliance with the hags a secret until the characters mention that they are looking for the hags. In this case, the spriggans relate that they know the hags but will continue to lie about their involvement with them. They are keen to regroup with their tribe in the Hungry Downs, which they conceal,

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and hope the characters can clear the way. Characters who make a successful **DC 9 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can notice that the spriggans are hiding facts and are deliberately too terse with their replies.

Also, the thieving fey cannot suppress their natures for long and will attempt to steal items from the characters, especially if they learn of the *crown of Aglarion* or see the *chest of magic nullification*. If the theft leads to battle, and it most likely will, since the spriggans will try to take the items by force or not wish to hand them back, the spriggans fight until two additional members of their tribe are slain, at which point they surrender.

The spriggans know all Blightwoods locations, the three locations at the southern part of the Bogs of Rot, the Pool of Rainbows, and Dolonriarnodo. In addition, the spriggans know of Krasnar and Malzdreziret but do not know the purpose of Bwael Phindar or the aberrant ground around the Chasm and will avoid these areas entirely.

Treasure

One of the spriggans carries a *wand of sleeping faerie*, while another wears a *ring of animal influence*. Additionally, there are two ripe apples from the magical apple tree at the Orchards. When eaten, the apples function as a *lesser restoration* spell. These apples will only retain their ripeness for another 3 days, after which time they lose their magical ability.

3. Miraddin

Background

Frumby Goldtooth is a scheming, power-hungry liar who would do anything to achieve his goals. It was Frumby who sold Proenad the unicorn to the Gorso family and Softplume the owlbear to King Waldrann himself. Frumby knows and uses the Hagtree to come and go between Aglarion and the Bleak Mire but prefers his exile in the Feyrealm, usually feeling sorry for himself and his fate but dreaming of his rise as a rightful ruler of the Feyrealm domain. He has sacrificed his truth to the Hagtree when entering the Bleak Mire, so he can only tell lies about his background and motivations, usually what he thinks people would like to hear. He travels the Bleak Mire on an animated ship with wheels, called Miraddin, but when not on his travels, he likes to return to the southern Blightwoods, where he is currently waiting out the turn of events. He crafts and stores his magic items here, protected by traps and the ship's magic.

Miraddin is a magical ship, with the soul of a djinni named Mushaaf the Humble bound to it by the Matrons of Malice for the services of Frumby as a wand crafter. Frumby is attuned to and can control Miraddin, which has the powers of Mushaaf the Humble when the captain sits in the captain's chair. The soul of the djinni can be freed by a *dispel evil and good* spell or a similar spell of the same or higher level. Breaking all the mirrors in area 5 also releases the trapped djinni.

Environment

Miraddin is an 80-foot long magical wooden ship with wheels, an open forecastle, and relatively spacious interiors. The vessel sits on four giant wheels and seemingly has no means of propulsion. It is amphibious and can travel land and water alike with a speed of 30 feet. The ship's bow post is the figure of a djinni painted in bright colors, holding a lantern that lights the way before the boat with a *continual flame*.

Scene

Miraddin can be encountered as it slowly travels across the Bleak Mire or standing still in the hills of the southern Blightwoods.

1. Forecastle

Background

Frumby sometimes spends time reading in the Captain's Chair as he traverses the Bleak Mire, observing the lands which he dreams of ruling one day.

Environment

This open deck features a once-magnificent and gold-leafed single velvet armchair, seemingly one with the ship's wooden planks. The chair has seen better days.

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Its golden lacquer has worn off, and the velvet covering of the cushions has torn in many places. Discarded parchments, some scroll cases, a pair of faded and worn-out slippers, and a bunch of soaked books litter the deck around the chair. An open corridor leads into the ship, slightly slanting towards the stern area.

Captain's Chair. Whoever sits in the magical chair of the ship gains a telepathic connection with Mushaaf the Humble and can converse with the djinni. The djinni enquires about the new captain-to-be and can explain the workings of Miraddin and its creators, the Matrons of Malice. Attuning to the chair, which requires 24 hours for this item, allows command of the ship and the use of the djinni's innate spellcasting ability while on the ship as if the attuned creature was able to innately cast the spells.

Scene

Frumby Goldtooth sits in the captain's chair on the open deck and welcomes potential shoppers with grandiose gestures and promises of wondrous magic items he crafted himself. He is eager to discover what the characters are doing in the Bleak Mire and their worth. Frumby is entirely self-confident in his warlock abilities and his ship to fear anyone, and presents himself in a most self-assured manner. He is a habitual liar, and due to his sacrifice to the Hagtree, he cannot tell the truth about his background. Characters who converse with Frumby can recognize the compulsive nature of the lies with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check. The goblin warlock will invite the characters inside and escort them to area 3 to share a hookah and discuss his wares.

Frumby will immediately recognize the potential of an excellent opportunity to destabilize the power structures in the realm and even to take over its dominion through the new arrivals.

If he finds out that the players own the *crown of Aglarion,* he will strive to get his hands on the item, hide it, and force the players to make him the ruler of the Bleak Mire for its return. Frumby knows all locations marked on his maps, as well as the Witchcave and the Hall of the Sovereign. He will keep his plot to become the sovereign of the realm until the very last moment when he can challenge whoever steps forward to claim rulership of the realm.

"Welcome, welcome all to Miraddin, where you may perhaps acquire most treasured items of the magical sort, personally crafted by none other than your humble servant and purveyor of wonders, Frumby Goldtooth. You have my permission to board and my invitation to a smoke, the likes of which you have never experienced. But business can wait. Let us know each other first so that I may tailor magics with a personal touch."

Frumby bowing with a flourish as he rises from his captain's chair to greet the characters.

FRUMBY GOLDTOOTH

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Miraddin

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The books and scrolls are mostly illegible, having dissolved in the rain. However, the sections of ink that have not washed off seem to cover topics of poetry, riddles, and jokes in a range of languages.

Treasure

Three of the scrolls, in a scroll case, contain regional maps of the Bleak Mire, marking their locations. One of the maps is of the Blightwoods, another of the Bloodrime Forest, while a third one details the Stormy Marshes, Hungry Downs, and Burning Woods on one map. All locations on the maps are marked.

2. Magic Item Workshop

Background

Frumby crafts his wares in this room, which includes a collection of items ready for enchantment - wands, potions, scrolls, and weapons. The items here are merely raw materials, but some are of exceptional quality.

Environment

This space is crammed with three tables and two chests of drawers that hold a multitude of items. All the furniture is sized for a Small creature.

Scene

The workshop holds two shortbows, two longbows, a short sword, two daggers, three spears, a ring on a velvet cushion, an elven vase, a harp, a set of tribal bracers, and six wands of various designs. One of the wands is an unfinished *wand of enemy detection*. A character who can cast the *locate creature* spell can finish the item by spending a total of 2,500 gold pieces worth of raw magical components and one week of work, working a minimum of 8 hours a day on the item. There are 1,300 gold pieces worth of raw magical components on the tables.

Treasure

Some of the items are actually somewhat valuable in themselves. Two of the potion bottles are beautifully blown glass vials that sparkle with scintillating colors and are worth 15 gold pieces each. One shortbow, a longbow, and a shortsword are masterfully crafted and are worth double their base value. The ring is silver and set with an opaque turquoise worth 70 gold pieces. The elven vase is porcelain and features fey motifs and flowing patterns. It is worth 100 gold pieces. Finally, some of the wand shafts contain various gemstones worked into their shafts - a piece of lapis lazuli, a white opal, a malachite, and a snowflake obsidian - worth 30 gold pieces apiece.

3. Hookah Lounge

Background

This chamber is where Frumby conducts his business with potential buyers, welcoming them to share a hookah while negotiating on prices.

Environment

The room is lavishly decorated with bright rugs and large, comfortable cushions. The air is filled with the sweet aroma of exotic spices and some lingering smoke. A large water pipe stands in the center of the room, unlit but filled and ready for use. In a corner, an intricately crafted standing mirror with smaller mirrors worked into its frame reflects the haze of the room.

Hookah of Visions. This magical hookah causes pleasurable hallucinations in those who inhale its smoke from any of its pipes. When a creature holds a pipe, the hookah's smokeables light up and continue to burn until the pipe is held. When a creature takes a drag from the hookah of vision, it is subject to a *hallucinatory terrain* spell, causing the subject's most desired terrain to materialize around it. There is no chance to disbelieve the illusion, which lasts for 1 minute.

Mirror Portal. The standing mirror is a magical portal to the pocket plane of the Mirror Maze. If a creature touches the mirror's surface, it becomes liquid-like and starts to swirl, distorting its reflections. Any creature that steps through the mirror is transported to the entrance of the Mirror Maze in area 5.

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Scene

Frumby usually invites potential clients to converse and negotiate over a good smoke. The goblin warlock likes to surprise guests with his magical hookah and will knowingly smile as he softens up his buyers with their most desired visions. He will not use the Mirror Portal if anyone is present and will lead customers off the ship before securing any item for sale from area 6.

Treasure

The Hookah of Visions is worth 1,000 gold pieces. There is also an assortment of tobacco, herbs, and spices for smoking, worth 137 gold pieces.

4. General Storage

Background

Frumby uses the aft chamber of the ship for general storage and as a trap against unwanted intruders.

Environment

The room's walls are lined with piles of equipment - old rolled-up carpets, faded and ripped cushions, bales of rope, a broken hookah, sacks of food and supplies, and boxes filled with a range of mundane equipment for repairs. A large wooden chest with metal braces dominates the center of the room.

Scene

The chest is a normal chest locked with a standard padlock. The lock is meant to prevent the coin mimic swarm from breaking out of the chest. A **coin mimic swarm** lies dormant in the form of 40 unmarked platinum bars, each seemingly worth 100 gold pieces. They remain in object form until touched when victims become subjected to their adhesive special trait. At this point, the coin mimic swarm attacks and flies to adhere itself to any creature it sees. Next, it polymorphs back to its amorphous form to attack its victims with advantage while grappling. It switches between this tactic and regular bite attacks each round.

Coin Mimic Swarm (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **swarm of ravens** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The coin mimic swarm is Large size.
- It has 48 hit points.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.
- ***Shapechanger.*** The coin mimic swarm can use its action to polymorph into an object or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.
- ***Adhesive (Object Form Only).*** The coin mimic swarm adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the coin mimic swarm is also grappled by it (escape DC 13). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.
- ***False Appearance (Object Form Only).*** While the coin mimic swarm remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.
- ***Grappler.*** The coin mimic swarm has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

5. Mirror Maze

Background

The Mirror Maze is a pocket plane that was created as part of the ship, housing the soul of Mushaaf the Humble within its mirrors. The djinni guards the ship against intruders according to Frumby's command and will not allow easy passage through the maze.

Environment

All surfaces of this maze are mirrors, infinitely reflecting travelers through its passages. The maze's center has a wooden door that seems to hang in the air without any frame. The door leads to Frumby's secret chamber in area 6.

Scene

When the characters travel more than 15 feet into the maze, the image of the **djinni** Mushaaf the Humble appears within the mirrors and commands the characters to turn back and leave the Mirror Maze. If char-

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acters proceed in the maze, the djinni manifests its innate spellcasting abilities from inside the mirrors. It conjures an **air elemental** in the first round, then casts *thunderwave* spells on each subsequent round as long as the characters remain in the maze. When the characters reach the wooden door at the center of the Mirror Maze, Mushaaf the Humble steps out of the mirrors in the chamber and blocks their path. If the characters insist on forcing their way through, the djinni will become furious and fight to the death.

Mushaaf the Humble

"I, Mushaaf the Humble, must regretfully inform you that Captain Frumby has most adamantly commanded me to allow none to enter the door, other than his most esteemed self. There is really nothing I can do against the command of one who sits in the captain's chair. I am, as you say, a djinni without its wishes..."

Mushaaf the Humble explaining his actions.

6. Frumby's Chamber

Background

Frumby stores his valuables in this room and comes here to secretly worship his patron, Faeryl Myrryn.

Environment

A wooden door, similar to the one in area 5, leads into this circular chamber, whose floor is covered by comfortable multicolored cushions, three chests of various sizes, scrolls on multiple topics - mostly vampirism, magical item creation, and historical poems. There are also some personal items, including a black hooded cape with a blood-red trimming, a set of false vampire fangs held in a jar of alcohol, a balm made of chalk to whiten skin, and an altar made of fangs covered in blood.

Scene

Frumby spends very little time here, only to retrieve sold items or play the role of a vampire, donning a black cloak, with face painted white, and wearing fake fangs. He briefly pays homage to the Blood Queen by spilling fresh blood onto the fangs of the altar, sometimes his own.

Treasure

Frumby's treasure consists of 6,729 gold pieces in a large chest and 4,873 silver pieces in another. A third chest holds several items: 10 potions, all of different colors, which is a complete set of *potions of resistance* against every damage type; four wands - a *wand of wonder,* a *wand of the war mage +1,* a *wand of web,* and a *wand of secrets;* and a black book bound in demonic skin, entitled "Grimoire of the Blood Queen", which is Frumby's grimoire from his pact of the tome feature.

4. Amphitheatre of Horror

Background

This large amphitheater is where productions were held for King Dasmag's court of fey before the arrival of the Matrons of Malice. However, now, the stage is set for a truly grisly scene. The bodies and body parts of King Dasmag's favorite musicians were turned into living instruments by the Matrons of Malice, like drums made from bones and skins, a harp from spinal columns and sinews, string instruments from torsos, along other vile mockeries of musical instru-

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ments. The souls of the instruments haunt the area as will-o'-wisps, hovering in the air and swaying to the dark melodies in invisibility.

Environment

The amphitheater is carved into the stony slopes of the southern Blightwood hills from marble, sloping downwards to a stage at its bottom that is 100 feet from its perimeter.

Scene

The five instruments (use the *animate object* spell with statistics for a Large object) animate and start to play warped melodies that resonate with a compulsive effect as soon as the characters approach the rim of the amphitheater. Every creature within 300 ft. of the instruments that can hear the song must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. The instruments must take a bonus action on subsequent turns to continue the performance. They stop playing music when there are no listeners within 300 feet or if all the instruments are incapacitated. While charmed, a target is paralyzed. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to the instruments' music for the next 24 hours.

The souls of the performances still linger around the amphitheater in the form of five **will-o'-wisps** that feed on the fearful tunes of the orchestra and any creature that approaches the area. The will-o'-wisps linger around the theatre's seats in invisibility and swarm to consume the lives of those who approach.

5. The Orchards

Background

The Orchards of King Dasmag were once legendary for their produce but now are overgrown with thorny rosehip briars that entwine the dying fruit trees. A single apple tree at the center of the orchard remains healthy, whose fruits have magical curative properties. Elentaria, a studious feyrealm-born wood elf druid, guards the Orchards. She was once the caretaker of the glade but was then commanded by a *geas* spell to cultivate the thorns planted here by the Matrons of Malice. She is vexed by a group of spriggans who use a unique *wand of the sleeping faerie* they bought from Frumby Goldtooth that only puts fey creatures to sleep, and the spriggans occasionally pilfer Elentaria's apples. In her bitterness, her only wish is to put the entire garden to the flame and plant it anew, but she is also obsessed with catching the thieves if she can only stay awake.

Environment

The Orchards cover an area 600 by 600 feet in size, featuring all types of fruit-bearing trees covered by rosehip briars. The area counts as difficult terrain due to the briars, whose thorns deal 1 point of piercing damage for every 5 feet of movement within the area. The single healthy apple tree at the center of the garden is untouched by the rosehip briars, and several plump and shiny apples hang from its branches.

Scene

Elentaria (use the **druid** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template) guards the rosehip thorns and the apple tree, according to the enchantments of the hags. She is wary of intruders into the Orchards, but if the characters show goodwill, she will relate her sad story and the twisted command of the hags. Due to the enchantment, she will not allow the characters to harm the rosehip briars or take the apple tree's fruit and will attack in desperation if they try to do so. If the characters can remove the effect of the *geas* spell, Elentaria will be more than grateful and will invite the characters to harvest the apple tree. She will immediately start to root out the rosehip briars and tend to the diseased trees.

Characters can harvest 1d4 + 2 ripe apples from the tree. When eaten, an apple functions as a *lesser restoration* spell. An apple remains ripe for five days, after which time it loses its magical ability.

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ELENTARIA

"I see you are not of the Snafflewhopps, and not natives of the Feyrealm either. Those thieving buggers will soon get what's coming to them. But please stay away from the Orchards, I beg you. I would be compelled to harm you if you force my hand despite your good intentions. 'The thorns must be tended, and none may approach the tree!' as the Matrons command."

Elentaria explaining her predicament and imploring the characters to stay away.

Elentaria is familiar with the location and inhabitants of Tolggy's Grove, Tipper's Tree, and Hollowroot. She also knows of the Primal Bloom and its dangers. In addition, she can direct the characters towards King Dasmag's Court, King Dasmag's Festhall, Court of Amber, Caprine Stables, Ambrosia Winery, Vineyards, Halls of Art, Awakened Library, Skull of the Fey Dragon, Milk Pool, Black Worm, Lifeflow Honey, Panacea Lilacs, Hunting Grounds, Winter Court, and Pool of Starlight. However, she is unaware of their corruptions by the Matrons of Malice and what dangers await at these locations, merely their states under King Dasmag. She is also familiar with the Pool of Rainbows and the command phrase "Colors of the Rainbow."

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for freeing Elantari from her curse and restoring the Orchards.

6. PRIMAL BLOOM

Background

One of the few remnants of the Time of the Wild Flowers, the Primal Bloom is hidden in a corner of the Blightwoods, having survived for eons despite the malign influences that have affected the Feyrealm domain time and time again. The Bloom continues to spawn and respawn plants of all sizes, shapes, and colors in a gigantic mass of verdant and multi-hued vegetation that entirely covers this section of the Blightwoods. The Primal Bloom is incredibly dangerous, as it transforms those that survive its engulfing spread into plants, killing them in the process.

Environment

Gigantic plants of all types form an almost impenetrable wall of bloom, rising to the tops of the trees 80 feet from the ground. The Bloom writhes as it continually grows and reshapes into new and never-before-seen types of vegetation.

Scene

One can easily be engulfed by the living tangle of plants that turn any organic material their vines catch into new saplings and brand new forms of plant life.

When a creature approaches the edge of the Primal Bloom to within 10 feet, the entire mass of vegetation moves to engulf the creature unless it succeeds on a **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the Primal Bloom. On a failed save, the Primal Bloom enters the creature's space, and it becomes engulfed, and the creature takes 31 (7d8) piercing damage as plants start to root under its skin. The engulfed creature must make a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is infected with a disease - **sapling roots**. An engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 13 (3d8) piercing damage at the start of each of

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its turns when it can repeat the Constitution saving throw. An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a **DC 16 Strength** ability check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the Primal Bloom.

Sapling Roots. Once a sapling root has rooted in a creature, it slowly grows to maturity. An infected creature must imbibe double the necessary rations of water per day. Every day at dawn, the creature suffers 13 (3d8) piercing damage as a sapling starts to gestate within its body. Over time, the creature becomes plantlike as leaves and flowers stem from branch-like appendages and wood-like skin. After a week, the creature's movement speed is halved. After two weeks, it gains damage vulnerability to fire. After three weeks, its type changes to plant. After four weeks, the roots reach the infected's brain and it has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. After five weeks, the plant sprouts from the creature's skull, killing the creature in the process. The sapling roots wither away if the disease is cured before the stem's emergence. During this transformation, the infected creature has dreams about previous claimants for sovereignty at the Hall of the Sovereigns, like the Matrons of Malice, King Dasmag, or Faeryl Myrryn, and learns the procedure that is required to gain sovereignty over the Fey-realm domain.

7. Tangible Darkness

Background

The gently sloping passage that is the main entryway to the Dark Below from a cave in the Blightwoods becomes steep and narrow as it descends into deeper tunnels, culminating in a cave obscured by a thick and partially solid darkness. The mist is a tangible barrier and is spewed forth by a wellspring of darkness. A group of giant darkmantles hides in a cave at the end of the passage and waits patiently for any traveler that is foolish enough to stumble into their lair.

Environment

A 30-foot wide tunnel with numerous side tunnels and narrow fissures descends into the Dark Below for over a mile, before it is covered in an area of absolute darkness, as per the *darkness* spell, in a 100-foot section. However, the darkness is semi-solid, and creatures' speeds are halved while moving in this section, made treacherous by the 200-foot deep crevasse hidden under cover of darkness. The wellspring of darkness that feeds the effect is located at the bottom of the crevasse in the center of the area.

The cave that opens at the end of the obscured section of the passage is 60 feet across, with a ceiling height of 25 feet. Several skeletons of humanoid and fey creatures cover the ground.

Scene

On a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check, characters can find a shortcut to the cave beyond the tangible darkness and avoid its hazards. Inside the area of the tangible darkness, characters are essentially blinded and automatically fail the Perception check needed to notice the crevasse before falling in. However, the characters can attempt a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw with disadvantage to catch an outcrop and avoid falling into the crevasse. On a failed save, they fall to the bottom and suffer 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage from the partially slowed fall. The wellspring at the bottom of the crevasse can be plugged by a circular item of at least small size for the darkness to dissipate after 2 days.

Four **giant darkmantles** wait patiently for prey, hanging on the cave ceiling, blending into the stalactites. As soon as the darkmantles notice the characters, they cover the area of the cave with their *Darkness Aura* action. When at least two characters have entered the cave, the darkmantles drop to crush opponents.

Giant Darkmantle (CR 2, 450 XP). Use the **darkmantle** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The giant darkmantle is Large size.
- It has 55 hit points.
- Its Strength score is 20.
- ***Crush.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

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The giant darkmantle attaches to the target. If the target is Huge or smaller and the giant darkmantle has advantage on the attack roll, it attaches by engulfing the target's head, and the target is also blinded and unable to breathe while the darkmantle is attached in this way. While attached to the target, the darkmantle can attack no other creature except the target but has advantage on its attack rolls. The darkmantle's speed also becomes 0, it can't benefit from any bonus to its speed, and it moves with the target. A creature can detach the darkmantle by making a successful **DC 16 Strength** ability check as an action. On its turn, the darkmantle can detach itself from the target by using 5 feet of movement.

- Its *Darkness Aura* has a radius of 30 feet.

8. Crystals of Sadness

Background

Several crystalline caves compose this area of the Dark Below, forming into a central cavern, covered with a multitude of crystal formations of various shapes, sizes, and colors. If light shines on the crystals in the central cave and one views their reflection in the crystals, the view is distorted into a myriad of colors and shapes, forming rapid visions of the viewer's most painful memories and scenes of possible ill fates from the future stemming from these memories. The visions are glimpses of the darkest times from the viewer's life and allow the viewer to use the information gained from the vision. The Inheritors of the Unbegotten sometimes visit the cave to gain glimpses into the outcome of their plane-shaking plans.

Environment

Reflective crystals cover the sides, stalactites, and stalagmites of a series of caverns in the Dark Below, forming a maze of passages and caves in the darkness. The relatively recent remains of a camp lie abandoned in one of the caves, and excrement covers the ground in the bend of a side passage.

Scene

If the darkness of the central cave is pierced by light, characters can see their reflections distorted and fragmented by the crystals. The reflections shift and turn into rapid flashes of events from the character's past and future, showing them in the saddest and most painful moments of their lives. A character must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw to avoid falling into a state of profound melancholy from seeing this barrage of images. On a failed save, the character gains disadvantage on Charisma saving throws but also gains the **Boon of Pains Foreseen**. The disadvantage on Charisma saving throws can be removed by a *heal* or higher level curative spell, which also removes the Boon of Pains Foreseen from the character.

Upon inspection of the campsite and a successful **DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check, characters can determine that the camp was set by about half a dozen humanoid creatures over a week ago. The charred remains of subterraneous lizard meat can be recovered from the campfire's ashes. If the characters examine the heap of excrement and succeed on a **DC 14 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check, they can determine that the composition, color, and smell of the feces are unnatural and reminiscent of aberrations.

Boon of Pains Foreseen. The boon allows a creature to use brief glimpses into the most painful events of its life, allowing it to change the course of its fate. The creature gains inspiration every time they succeed on a Charisma saving throw.

Treasure

Many of the crystals in the caves are perfect specimens and can be carefully mined from their formations if characters have the necessary equipment and skills. If characters spend at least 1 hour carefully removing the crystals, they can collect several large and perfectly clear white quartz crystals worth a total of 600 gold pieces and weighing 60 pounds.

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9. Visions of the Sun

Background

The small manor house in this part of the woods was a superb specimen of fey architecture, composed entirely of colored glass and multicolored crystals. It was used by King Dasmag and his court for retreats, where the fey could enjoy the dazzling effects of the building's surface as it refracted the light into all manner of beautiful shapes and colors. The building was razed by the bone devil Zarondoxiss at the command of the Matrons of Malice, and the reveling fey found here were slain. The spirit of the Feyrealm has manifested at the location, replaying this dreadful moment of change over and over again.

Environment

The building lies in ruins - just heaps of broken glass and crystals remain in a massive pile at the center of a spacious clearing in the forest.

Scene

As characters approach the ruins to within 30 feet, the bleak ambiance of the Blightwoods is suddenly miraculously pierced by the rays of the sun as the spirit of the Feyrealm itself manifests at the location. The blight lifts from the trees, the vegetation blooms in all the colors of the rainbow, and a manor house rises in its original magnificence. As a beautiful and blissful scene unfolds, the characters feel their hearts warmed at the sight of satyr children playing and running around the building amidst a joyous picnic. Then suddenly, the cackles of the three hags echo around the area, and a bone devil charges from the forest, roaring Infernal curses as it slays the revelers and destroys the building. The sunshine disappears, the landscape turns grey, leaves wither, and bleakness returns. The Bleak Mire reveals its true self once again.

The scene is created by an effect similar to a *programmed illusion* spell. A character who uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful **DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. If a character discerns the illusion for what it is, they can see through the image, and the noises of carnage sound hollow. If a character fails to discern the illusion, the sudden shift from feelings of bliss to horror materializes in an overwhelming sense of confusion that lasts for 1 minute, as if the creature was targeted by a *confusion* spell. At the end of each of its turns, an affected target can make a **DC 18 Wisdom** saving throw. If it succeeds, this effect ends for that target.

10. Tainted Waters

Background

The aberrant ground left in the wake of Bwael Phindar and the tendrils of the giant Elder Cortex below the Chasm that have sprouted around the shores of the Lake of Blood have corrupted the waters with foul ichors. The taint has soaked into the very ground, transforming the local ecology of the lakeside into mutated and gnarled forms. Animals that were strong enough to survive the malign influences bear grotesque features, malformed limbs, and deformed and multiple heads. They are extremely aggressive and feral. The largest of such creatures is an aberrant grizzly bear, who hunts the lakeside for meat. The location is also the western end of the rainbow bridge that connects this location to the Pool of Rainbows (location 42.).

Environment

The western shores of the Lake of Blood, where the corpse-covered waters meet a blighted forest, are most unwelcoming, more so for the beasts in the area that have mutated into aberrant lifeforms that can be encountered here. Many have strange protrusions and tentacled appendages, multiple heads, slimy skin, and elongated claws or teeth. A crumbling bridgehead with a few steps rises over the waters on the lake's western shore before breaking off in the air.

Scene

If characters spend more than a day by the shores of the Lake of Blood, they become hunted by the alpha predator of the area, an **aberrant grizzly bear.** The mutated, two-headed bear will stalk the characters at night and wait to attack until one of the party's members is alone from the group. Characters who succeed

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on a **DC 11 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check made with disadvantage can notice the stalking beast. If the bear sees that the characters are hastily retreating or standing their ground, or if it is attacked, it will charge in and fight ferociously until death. The bear telepathically sends grisly images to the characters' minds that speak of influences from alien dimensions as it roars its challenge with both heads.

Aberrant Grizzly Bear (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **polar bear** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The aberrant grizzly bear gains the traits of the **aberrant** monster template.
- ***Multiattack.*** The aberrant grizzly bear makes four attacks: two with its bite and two with its claws.

The crumbling bridgehead is one side of the Rainbow Bridge that can connect the location to the Pool of Rainbows in the Hungry Downs. Characters who cast the *detect magic* spell can see an inactive magical aura of the conjuration school. With an *identify, legend lore,* or similar spell, a character can learn the command phrase "Colors of the Rainbow" that activates a bridge of solid rainbow that immediately transfers any creature that steps on the bridge to the Pool of Rainbows. The bridge fades after one minute.

11. Tolggy's Grove

Background

This small grove is unaffected by the blight and is the domain of Tolggy, an ancient treant who is over 600 years old. Tolggy is living out the end of its days surrounded by just a few of the loved trees that it helps survive against the blight of the forest.

Environment

An immense maple tree stands at the center of a small grove, surrounded by several dozen trees unaffected by the woods' blight. The trees seem to be smeared with raw maple syrup.

Scene

Tolggy, the ancient **treant,** is usually sleeping, but only for short bursts, after which it is invigorated and experiences some moments of mental clarity. It tends its grove with applications of its magical syrup that has an invigorating effect and keeps the effects of the blight at bay. When characters approach the grove, Tolggy wakes from its slumber and stretches its giant limbs amid creaks and a long yawn. It warns the characters to leave it alone and let an old tree enjoy its last slumbers in peace. The characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince Tolggy of their good intentions. On a successful check, Tolggy invites the characters to its grove to reminisce about the changes of the centuries. The treant speaks ever so slowly and gets lost in insignificant details, sometimes dozing off mid-sentence. Tolggy rarely has any visitors but welcomes guests who can keep it awake to listen to its tales from ages long gone. If a character makes a good impression by succeeding on a **DC 14 Charisma** ability check, Tolggy offers three drops of maple syrup from its withered branches to the character - magical sap that provides invigorating rest for those who imbibe it.

TOLGGY

"Have I told you about the Time of the Wild Flowers? I must have...I can't remember sometimes. But it seems like it was just moments ago....When mighty

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Xolenthas and Xantharos ruled the skies of the entire Feyrealm....humhumhum... In comparison, even the Bloodgarden is just a small tree in a mighty forest.... I saw the most amazing lightwood in my youth....Its trunk was twice the size of mine. And then all turned black..."

Tolggy reminiscing about better days.

Tolggy is a font of knowledge about the history of the Feyrealm. It is one of the few creatures who witnessed the Time of the Wild Flowers firsthand when it was a young sapling during the time of Xolenthas and Xantharos, the fey dragons. It has lived through the different transformations of the domain - through the Bloodgarden, then Swigglegard, and finally the Bleak Mire. The treant nostalgically recounts its glory days as a general of King Dasmag's fey armies and driving off the Blood Queen's demonic hordes and dark fey. After the emergence of Swigglegard, Tolggy spent less and less time in the company of others, becoming somewhat of an old loner, tending to its favorite trees in the forest. Due to its isolation, it has managed to stay clear of the Matrons of Malice and has survived the carnage. Tolggy is familiar with the location and inhabitants of Tipper's Tree and Hollowroot. It also knows of the Primal Bloom and its dangers. In addition, it can direct the characters towards King Dasmag's Court, King Dasmag's Festhall, Court of Amber, Caprine Stables, Ambrosia Winery, Vineyards, Halls of Art, Awakened Library, Skull of the Fey Dragon, Milk Pool, The Black Worm, Lifeflow Honey, Panacea Lilacs, Hunting Grounds, Winter Court, and the Pool of Starlight. However, it is unaware of their corruption by the Matrons of Malice and what dangers await at these locations, merely their states under King Dasmag. It is also familiar with the Pool of Rainbows and the "Colors of the Rainbow" command phrase to activate the bridge.

Tolggy's Sap. Tolggy's syrupy sap is infused by fey magic that provides invigorating rest. If a creature who imbibes the sap regains hit points at the end of a short rest by spending one or more hit dice, that creature regains an extra 1d10 hit points.

12. King Dasmag's Court

Background

The ruins of King Dasmag's fey court have become the lair of the doppeldrake Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, who has made its nest from felled trees and other vegetation in the central pavilion. The dragon has forged an allegiance with the Inheritors of the Unbegotten and responds to Krasnar Azennar's orders if the aberration-infused prince visits it.

Environment

The fey courts of the late King Dasmag have now fallen into ruin. Only a few decorated columns and wall sections still stand to bear witness to the former glory of

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the architecture and the sprawling size of the location. Large warped trees and trunks of once-majestic pillars rise to the dark skies and cast their shadows on the abandoned ruins. A cobbled open central plaza, overgrown with roots and spotted with muddy puddles, features a large pavilion in the center, which still retains its roof. Eerie sounds of melancholic pipes and singing can be heard throughout the somber ruins. Sometimes, the music becomes turbulent and frenzied with chords that send shivers to those who hear them.

MALZDREZIRET

Scene

When not engaged in feasting at King Dasmag's Festhall, **Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor,** usually spends its time in its newfound lair, lording over its domain and enjoying the ghostly sounds of music. It will not attack the characters outright, preferring to demonstrate its might and ancient exploits against Aglarion. Combining its *Read Thoughts* ability with half-truths makes Malzdreziret a master of deception. The doppeldrake will lie and say that it was a neutral player in the Feyrealm until it was found by the Inheritors of Unbegotten, who stole its sole egg. It tells that the drow have blackmailed it into servitude and commanded it to obey their champion Krasnar Azennar. It speaks of its plans to betray the drow and attack Krasnar at Bwael Phindar. It will be most appreciative of aid and offers half its hoard to the characters, worth around ten thousand gold pieces if they assist it in this raid. It will not divulge information on any topic until the characters have helped it deal with Krasnar Azennar and its drow allies. It is more than willing to show them the way to Bwael Phindar. The doppeldrake's ultimate goal is delivering the characters to its dark allies on a plate before slaying them. Characters can attempt a **DC 25 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to see through the deceptions. The DC increases to 30 if the character has failed its saving throw against Malzdreziret's *Read Thoughts* special trait.

"If you refuse to aid in my vengeance and my offers of payment, you puny creatures without scales, I will be forced to deal with the tentacled scum on my own. I have soared the skies on multiple realms and have destroyed those who challenged my might. Few have been foolish enough to cross me, the most brazen of which are these Inheritors and their exarch on the Bleak Mire, Krasnar. They shall pay with their lives for forcing my mighty self into servitude to that deformed prince."

Malzdreziret lying about its intentions with displays of strength.

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If the characters recognize the deceptions and confront Malzdreziret, it shifts into the form of a red dragon and attacks.

The eerie music is the remnant of the festive tunes of King Dasmag's court as it seeps from the Ethereal Plane into the Feyrealm at this location. If a character knows the words to King Dasmag's favorite song, the *Merry Hunt of the Horned Hero,* and sings it for 1 minute, the ghost of the satyr King materializes. If the character singing the song succeeds on a **DC 15 Charisma (Performance)** skill check, the ghost is tranquil and joins in the singing, then asks the characters what they are doing in his once majestic court. However, on a failed check, it displays its horrifying visage and screams in rage at the characters, demanding vengeance on the Matrons of Malice. The characters can attempt to calm the ghost and explain their predicament, their quest to cleanse the crown, and that they also seek the hags, by succeeding on a **DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. If the ghost of King Dasmag sees the Matrons of Malice, it will fly into a rage and attack the hags, and the same check is required to quell its fury enough to cooperate in the Cleansing Ritual.

GHOST OF KING DASMAG

"You sing the Merry Hunt of the Horned Hero well. I daresay better than I ever did. Beware the wicked hags! They have made my wrath immortal, and my spirit will not rest until all three are slain! Their poisons will not work on me now, and I am prepared for their wicked deceptions."

The ghost of King Dasmag warning the characters of the hags' deceptions and explaining his drive for vengeance if they succeed in singling the song.

Treasure

Malzdreziret's hoard is hidden in a partially collapsed basement of a ruined shrine covered by an immense boulder. The boulder weighs 700 pounds and requires a **DC 22 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to move. A character who actively searches the entire area of King Dasmag's sprawling courts and succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check can notice that the stone has been moved occasionally. The treasure contained in the hoard consists of 4,765 gold pieces dating back to the reign of King Daerios, various jewels and gemstones worth a total of 4,800 gold pieces, a *feather token (tree),* a *necklace of fireballs* with 2 beads, a *potion of superior healing,* a *potion of water breathing,* a *+2 pike,* a *decanter of endless water,* a *ring of warmth,* and a *pearl of power.*

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13. Lost Love

Background

Saroldynn, the once-beautiful feyrealm-born elf first consort of King Dasmag and a friend to the forest animals, roams the Blightwoods around the Court of Amber. The elf maiden was disfigured by the Matrons like all the satyr king's consorts but blinded as an extra measure, so she may never see beauty again. She wanders aimlessly in anguish, killing all wildlife she encounters that gaze on her desecrated visage.

Environment

Saroldynn roams the areas of the Blightwoods surrounding the Court of Amber.

Scene

Characters can encounter **Saroldynn,** as the lone and tortured figure of the feyrealm-born elf stumbles blindly around the Blightwoods and mumbles lamentingly of golden times. Saroldynn was magically disfigured and cursed by the Matrons of Malice to spread her anguish onto creatures that see her visage. If any character approaches Saroldynn without stealth, she turns her *Debilitating Countenance* towards the characters and uses her *Wail of Death* ability. Her curse can be cured by a *remove curse* or *greater restoration* spell. Her blindness can be cured by a *heal* spell or a higher level curative spell. If her curse is broken, Saroldynn loses her *Wail of Death* and *Debilitating Countenance* abilities. If restored, Saroldynn begs the characters to accompany her to King Dasmag's former consorts at the Court of Amber (location 14.). She can guide the characters to all locations in the Blightwoods that were around in the time of King Dasmag, as well as the Halls of Art and the Winter Court.

Saroldynn (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **noble** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Saroldynn has the traits of the **feyrealm-born** monster template.
- She has 54 hit points.
- She is blinded.
- She doesn't have a melee weapon attack.
- ***Wail of Death.*** Saroldynn can cast *circle of death* at will with a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw.
- ***Debilitating Countenance.*** If a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the Saroldynn and can see her, it must make a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains disadvantage on Constitution saving throws for 1 minute. A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it can't see Saroldynn until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If it looks at Saroldynn in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can restore Saroldynn.

14. Court of Amber

Background

King Dasmag rewarded the fairest and most beautiful of his consorts with the honor of residing in the Court of Amber - dwellings fashioned from the hardened sap of giant pine trees. Naturally, the Matrons of Malice turned their vile attentions against Dasmag's consorts and mutilated all the beautiful inhabitants of the halls - four satyrs, two nymphs, three feyrealm-born elves, and a human, of all genders. The disfigured members of the harem do not leave the Court, unable to bear anyone seeing their beauty turned to ugliness.

Environment

The building of the Court of Amber still stands but is veiled in dark shadows and has lost its golden sheen without the rays of sunlight to brighten the walls. The building is 30 feet tall, with flowing arches and pillars and a pointed gable. The entire structure is made from hardened pine sap poured into place rather than fixed with joints or nails. Inside the open entryways, the once lavish interior of the building is now a collection of broken mirrors, furniture, and decorations. Everything of beauty has been smashed to pieces.

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Scene

The ten former consorts of King Dasmag are huddled in their misery, secluded in the central chamber of the Court of Amber. The consorts are four **satyrs** - Shina, Prumi, Lancea, and Surratu; two **nymphs** - Sorisia and Therodonos; three **feyrealm-born** elves - Fhaelyssa, Licyreal, Shavarys; and a **feyrealm-born** human - Shary Night Rose. As the characters enter the building through its open arches, the whimpering huddled forms turn their horrid gazes at them and rise from the ground. The consorts welcome the characters and invite them to spend the night. They mournfully recount the fall of King Dasmag and their capture by and torture at the hands of the Matrons of Malice. They have heard rumors from hagspawn visitors from Perfidy, who sometimes come to taunt them from outside, mentioning a place called the Refuge where surviving fey are hiding and which the hags were seeking in the Forest of Gloom. They speak fearfully of Saroldynn, the first consort of King Dasmag, whom the Matrons of Malice have cursed to slay anyone who comes across her path.

15. King Dasmag's Festhall

Background

King Dasmag's immense festhall was a place of continuous revelry and feasting. The most magnificent food and drink seen on many a realm flowed without interruption from the kitchens, where scores of chefs crafted amazing delicacies for the satyr King's refined palate. That is until the Matrons of Malice arrived on the scene and laid devastation to the court. Blister personally claimed the halls, seeing an amazing opportunity to maintain the feasting, only according to her own odious tastes. She used the permanent compulsion of a *geas* spell on the sole chef left alive, tasking him to cook repulsive and nauseating fares from rotting ingredients and often from live victims. Ruckash, an orc chef who thinks he is a Feyrealm-born elf, bears the marks of the agonies caused by the spell as he tries but fails to resist the compulsion and is forced to cook edible courses from rotting carcasses continuously. As Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, claimed dominion over the ruins of King Dasmag's Court and Blister has fled to her Witchcave, the festhall has stood empty, the food and drink having rotted away. Malzdreziret has cleared the area, however, the doppeldrake has left the kitchens undisturbed, amused by the mind-controlled chef who still churns out delicious creations from the rotting carcasses it offers as ingredients.

Environment

King Dasmag's Festhall is a grand building and a perfect example of the heights of fey architecture. The hall is a rectangular building 240 by 80 feet wide, fashioned from white marble and holly wood, with beautiful arches and reliefs of fey revelry. The building is mostly intact, except many windows have broken and moss covers the poplar roofing and its plinth. The smells of cooking and rotting meat waft from inside the building. Inside, the grand hall features long tables that can seat 500 creatures of medium size. However, some of the seats are of large size, and many are small. The tables had been abandoned mid-meal, the foods long decayed, and all the silverware had been removed. A mound of rotting corpses of various fey and fey-realm born creatures lie collected in a pile in the corner of the hall. Sounds of cooking can be heard from the side chambers that lead to the kitchen.

Scene

Ruckash (Use the **expert** monster entry with **orc** racial traits), a self-loathing orc who thinks he's an elf, is deeply engrossed in cooking up the latest culinary masterpiece from rotting ingredients. He can be found roasting bones and grilling meat that he butchered from several carcasses lying on the workbench. If the characters interrupt Ruckash from his cooking, the chef will not stop his task but will engage with the characters and explain his predicament. If the characters can break the spell on Ruckash, the chef will slump to the ground in exhaustion and wholeheartedly give thanks to the characters for deliverance. Ruckash is familiar with all locations in the Blightwoods. However, he is stumped as to where to

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go for safety, preferring to stay in the Festhall until the threat of the doppeldrake is removed.

"Pardon my discourtesy in not welcoming you to food and drink, but this fare is only fit for such base creatures as the Matrons or Malzdreziret. The pains from the hags' curse are insufferable, so I must not dally and cook as commanded. It would be most appropriate if you withdrew. The dragon can arrive any minute to claim its feast."
Ruckash speaking Elvish with great eloquence, looking worried for the characters' safety.

If the characters have not visited King Dasmag's Court (location 12.) and met **Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor,** the doppeldrake arrives at the location, enters the hall, and demands its meal. (See King Dasmag's Court location for the doppeldrake's motives and tactics.)

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can break the spell on Ruckash.

16. Perfidy

Background

The village of Perfidy is a collection of shambling huts, which are home to fifty hagspawn descendants of the Matrons of Malice. The village has fallen into ruin and despair with the ascension of Krasnar Azennar, whose aberrant barbarian minions and regular flyovers by Malzdreziret the Scaled Impostor keep the village in a perpetual state of oppression and hopelessness. Even more crazed than usual by the circumstances, the hagspawn villagers have turned upon themselves and are rooting out their own, whom they accuse of performing good deeds like aiding, blessing, curing someone, or hoping for a victory over the raiding aberrant drow who have defeated the Matrons of Malice. They hold regular tortures of heretics on pyres at the village center, where they are executed using a 3-foot long silver spike. The village is led by the Howler, who is the most vociferous and ardent agent of persecution amongst the villagers, sending unworthy members to their deaths by silver after holding trial over them. The Howler has been branded with the *branding iron of the Hag Queens* on his forehead by Blister, a mark he wears proudly and as a sign of leadership. The hagspawn villagers provide the only means of transportation across the tainted waters of the Russet River on a rickety ferry that is propelled by two skeletal horses running a waterwheel.

Environment

The village sits at the shores of the Russet River and is composed of a circle of ramshackle huts around a central square, with unpaved streets covered in mud between the houses. The village is ill tended, half in ruin, and entirely filthy. A large bonfire burns in the village square with a cage suspended on a pillar above the flames. A crowd of villagers surrounds the fire, dressed in rags and displaying hag-like features like small horns, clawed hands, red eyes, and the like. They look eerily similar to each other and Queen Aphinah, with ugly compositions of the features of their progenitors, the Matrons of Malice.

A ferry station lies at the shores of the lake, 50 feet from the village proper, with a large flat ferry equipped with a wheel for propulsion. Two skeletal horses are strapped to the wheel and stand idly.

Scene

The newest target of the Howler (use the **Mordio Delons** monster entry with the **hagspawn** monster template and without its equipment). is a half-elf witch named Aislin (use the **witchservant cultist** monster entry with the **hagspawn** monster template), a cunning and mischievous half-elven hagspawn witch with a fennec familiar named Hellfox. As the characters enter the village, thirty-six hagspawn villagers (Use the **commoner** monster entry with the **hagspawn** monster template) surround a pyre onto which a metal cage is lowered with the screaming Aislin inside, who regenerates her wounds as her skin burns on the heated bars of the

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cage. The Howler leads the tortures, as one of the most avid servants of the Matrons of Malice. The already unsteady inquisitor of the hags has gone even more deranged with the terror over the village. As a result, he is driven to root out good deeds, helpful behavior, and positive thoughts.

AISLIN

When the Howler sees the characters, he will incorporate the new arrivals into his case against Aislin and try to get them to confess their virtues or good deeds. He orders the villagers to surround the characters and commands them to swear under his magical powers that they are not Aislin's collaborators in altered form. The Howler will try to draw out confessions from the characters using spells and his warlock abilities unless they can convince him by faking their vile intentions and succeeding on a **DC 12 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion)** skill check. If the characters intervene in the tortures and execution, the Howler will order the villagers to swarm the characters and lead them in the attack against them.

THE HOWLER

"Did you, or did you not lend your broom to Herla? Confess to this most kind-hearted and compassionate deed and receive final salvation by the silver spike, or suffer the cleansing flames! Ah, these must be your collaborators, here to free you, do-gooder! Quick people, surround them at once and let them swear their innocence under oath!"

The Howler spitting accusations against Aislin and directing the crowd against the characters.

If captured and interrogated, the Howler can point the characters towards Cyllek, Blister's awakened raven agent, who visited him not long ago and told him about its forays to observe the Chasm. The raven also told of Blister's hideout somewhere at the feet of the Mountains of Rust, but not its exact location. He is also familiar with the locations in the Twisted Forest and knows to avoid the Bogs of Rot, as it is the domain of the bone devil Zarondoxiss. If Aislin is freed, she will expound her innocence and proclaim her malicious nature, not offering any kind of gratitude or kindness for rescuing her from death.

The Howler charges a body part for transfer over the Russet River - like the top of a finger or a piece of an ear. The ferry can fit six medium creatures. The Howler can order the two **warhorse skeletons** to attack his enemies.

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Treasure

The three-foot silver spike is a silvered spear.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they avoid combat with the villagers.

17. Pit of Pigs

Background

The Pit of Pigs was dug for Blister by spriggan minions to have an endless supply of rotting meat to satisfy vile appetites and revolting feasts. Blister's favorite punishment was transforming victims into gigantic fat pigs that retained the victims' faces. The pit has been abandoned, and all the swine have perished.

Environment

Near the Festhall of King Dasmag, a muddy 10-foot deep and 40-foot wide pit is full with the carcasses of scores of fattened giant pigs that bear humanoid faces. The rotting bodies are covered by swarms of carrion worms a foot in length that wriggle at the bottom of the pit around the swine. The stench of rotting meat hangs heavy in the area surrounding the pit.

Scene

The bodies of the pigs are covered by six swarms of carrion worms (use the **swarm of magic-infused fire beetles** monster entry without the *Illumination* and *Magic-infused* traits). Any character that approaches the edge of the pit to within 5 feet risks falling into it by slipping on the muddy ground. The character must make a successful **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw or fall into the pit and land prone on top of the carcasses and the vermin. The carrion worms attack any creature that falls into the pit but will not leave the enclosure.

18. Caprine Stables

Background

The stables of King Dasmag once held a magnificent collection of mounts, mostly prized goats and rams, on vast green pastures and rocky outcroppings at the foot of the Glass Mountains. The hags made sure to curse the thriving animals and turn the animals' horns and hooves into noxious iron, which has quickly destroyed their habitat and culled their numbers. Whatever the animals touch with their hooves and horns is diseased with necrotic blight, a disease that has spread over the Blightwoods, giving the forest its name. The necrotic energy they spread has slowly expanded to the entire forest.

The hags constructed a unique transformation for King Dasmag's favorite mount Jewelhorn, turning this giant ram with gemstones embedded into its horns, into a raging, metallic, gorgon-like beast that breathes blighting fumes. The cursed rams are dispersed in the Blightwoods, while some remain in their former corrals, eking out meager sustenance on the trampled and blighted ground, where Jewelhorn is now king.

Environment

At the foothills of the Glass Mountains, where the thick shards of glass penetrate the diseased ground of the Blightwoods, a large area is enclosed by a pen. The enclosure is broken in several places. Large goats roam the slopes both within and outside the enclosure.

Scene

Twelve **giant blighted iron goats** stray in the area, led by the herd's alpha, **Jewelhorn.** The beasts keep out intruders and charge as a herd towards anyone who ventures too close.

Giant Blighted Iron Goat (CR 1, 200 XP). Use the **giant goat** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The giant blighted iron goat has AC 19.
- ***Ram.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or contract a disease - **blighted**. The disease manifests after a short rest, after which the diseased creature feels tired and

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only regains half its hit points from hit dice spent during a short or long rest. The disease can be removed only by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher. The giant blighted iron goat is immune to this disease.

Jewelhorn. Use the **gorgon** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Jewelhorn's type is beast.
- ***Blighted Breath (Recharge 5–6).*** Jewelhorn exhales a necrotic blighted gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Each creature in the area must also succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, a target contracts a disease - **blighted**. The effect of the disease manifests after a short rest, after which the diseased creature feels tired and only regains half its hit points from hit dice spent during a short or long rest The disease can be removed only by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher. Jewelhorn is immune to this disease.

Treasure

The gems in Jewelhorn's horns are of considerable worth, two diamonds worth 200 gold pieces apiece, three emeralds worth 150 gold pieces apiece, and two rubies worth 100 gold pieces apiece.

19. Ambrosia Winery

Background

The Ambrosia Winery once kept the delicious wines flowing endlessly to King Dasmag's fey court via a narrow marble duct from the foothills of the Mountains of Rust to the satyr King's Festhall. The winery buildings were ransacked by Blister and its spriggan allies, who took all barrels of the precious liquids to King Dasmag's Festhall. A pair of feyrealm born gnomes, Gixx and Brono, the former master vintners taking care of the Ambrosia have been left alive by the Matrons of Malice. However, the hags destroyed their crop and turned it into vicious living vines, so the gnomes do not dare to enter the Vineyards above, which still bear a few grape agates instead of grapes.

Environment

The group of wooden buildings on the hill is dilapidated, and abandoned. The duct is dry and overgrown with algae and moss, wholly covered within the Blightwoods.

Scene

Gixx and Brono (use the **expert** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template) still live in the ruins of Winery. The gnomes are despairing and stuck in this location. They dare not enter the Vineyards to collect the grape agates from the living vines or climb to the press-house at the top of the hill, where they hid some precious vintages. The vintners know all locations in the northern part of the Blightwoods, as well as the Reverse Waterfall and the Crimson Tarn. However, they do now know the exact dangers at these locations. They recount that the tarn is said to be haunted, and one can smell beautiful perfumes above the rushing waters on the river.

20. Vineyards

Background

The vineyards of King Dasmag along the banks of the Russet River once produced the most succulent grapes found anywhere in the multiverse, as well as grape agate gems instead of fruits. The hags cursed the area and transformed the vines into living plants that attack anyone who ventures onto the slopes of the Vineyards.

Environment

The slopes of the vineyards are tangled, and the vines dry and diseased. A few of the plants bear strange rocklike fruit - grape agates - instead of grapes. The small press house at the top of the hill is still intact.

Scene

There are four clusters of vines (use the **awakened tree** monster template) on the slopes, embued with intelligence, posing deadly threats to those who ven-

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ture too deep into their reach. They attack any creature that climbs the hill of the Vineyards.

The press-house at the top of the hill hides a secret cache of the famed "Fizzletongue" vintage from the glory days of King Dasmag's feasting. The secret trapdoor can be discovered on a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check.

Treasure

Some of the vines bear grape agates. Characters who spend one hour gathering the gems can collect 30 grape agates, each worth 10 gold pieces. In addition, the secret cache in the press house contains a rack with ten bottles of the most exquisite "Fizzletongue" wine, each worth 100 gold pieces.

21. Reverse Waterfall

Background

A strange water elemental lairs in the pool above the fall, feeding on the moisture within living organisms and sucking them dry of their life-giving fluids.

Environment

The sheer cliffs of the Mountains of Rust give way to highlands where the Russet River swiftly flows towards the mountain peaks. The area is known for rapids, and there is an estuary of the river where the waters cascade upwards in a wide reverse waterfall.

Scene

The **parching water elemental** lives in the waters above the waterfall. It attacks any creature that travels on or next to the river.

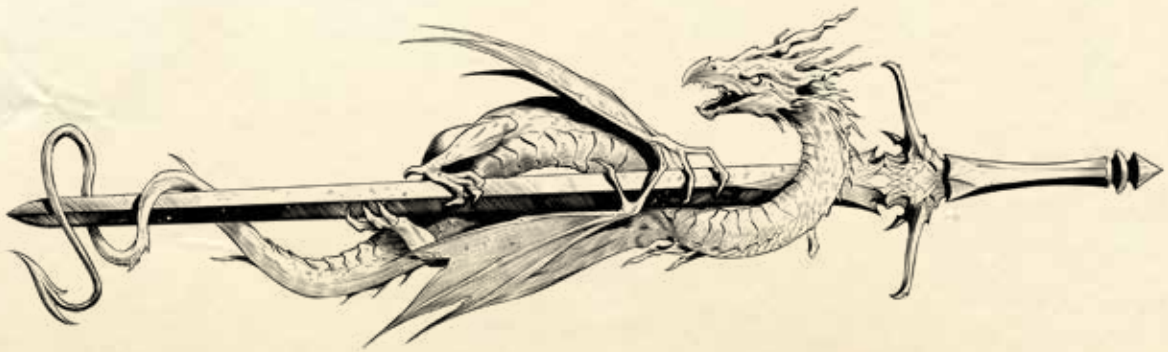
Parching Water Elemental. Use the **water elemental** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Dehydrating Slam.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target's Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.
- ***Dehydrating Whelm (Recharge 4–6).*** Each creature in the elemental's space must make a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target's Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If the creature is Large or smaller, it is also grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the elemental's space.

22. The Crimson Tarn

Background

The Crimson Tarn is the lair of a tribe of iara - deformed siren-like water witches that hunt bodies of water, luring anyone who wanders the shores of the river and the tarn with their mesmerizing scent that warps the mind. The iara also venture up the Russet River to the Reverse Waterfalls, luring travelers back to their lair at the Crimson Tarn. The tribe was in the service of the Matrons of Malice and is dedicated to the hags' causes if called upon to do so.



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Environment

The Crimson Tarn is a small lake that lies in an elevated valley between twin peaks of the Mountains of Rust, at the mouth of the Russet River, where it empties into the belly of the mountains. The lake drains into a large cave under the sheer cliffs that rise to the clouds. Inside, the cave is littered with bones, and an altar has been erected at its center, under which even more bones are piled. Some unfortunate, weak-looking humanoid figures crouch in the water at the feet of some strange mermaid-like figures that sit on the rocks above them.

Scene

If characters travel on the Russet River or along its shores from the reverse Waterfall, they smell traces of perfume from afar. Soon, the heads of four **iara** rise above the water's surface near them and attempt to lure the characters to their cave at the Crimson Tarn with their scent.

An additional four **iara** inhabit the cave. The witch-like water sirens will attempt to subdue the characters before slowly feeding on them. If half their numbers perish, the remaining iara will sue for a truce in exchange for information. The iara know all locations on the Russet River and the Lake of Blood, but they merely scouted the areas from afar, so they do not know the specific dangers at each location. The monsters try to hide their association with the Matrons of Malice. Characters who succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can realize that the iara are not altogether forthright.

The iara keep three charmed creatures at their cave, torturing them with words and enjoying their suffering. The three charmed individuals are crouching half-submerged in the water at the feet of the rocks on which the the iara sit. The three unfortunate captives are a **satyr** named Hendor, a scout named Tooknys (use the **scout** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template) and a shy foxkin trader named Turnbull (use the **expert** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template), who is the leader of the trading party. The three victims all look up to their imaginary lovers with tears of joy in their eyes. When saved, the captives thank the characters. All three wish to return to the Refuge (location 41.), know the secret passage through its thorny wall, and accompany the characters if they go that way. Otherwise, they leave on their own.

Turnbull

"Thanks, and eternally beneficial trades for the future to you all! I am Turnbull, and my associates are Hendor and Tooknys. Might I enquire about your travels and business in this cursed land? We have wandered far on my trading routes under King Dasmag and know many-a-hidden path."

Turnbull speaking in a soft voice with the occasional feral growl.

23. Nest of Gilded Eggs

Background

The lower slopes of the Mountains of Rust and the Twisted Forest below are the hunting grounds of a giant owl named Ateroxx, awakened as a wizard, who flies stealthily and majestically above the mountains.

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Matheas Logahn, the eccentric feyrealm-born half-elf guide, was unlucky to be spotted by the magic-wielding owl during his wanderings. Ateroxx subdued the guide and pilfered three gilded eggs from Matheas Logan's pack before returning to its nest.

Environment

Ateroxx's nest rests on a ledge 400 feet above a valley floor of the Mountains of Rust. It is composed of dry tree trunks and foliage and is large enough to be seen from afar.

Scene

If characters traverse the cliffs below the ledge or if they venture out of the Bogs of Rot to the foothills of the Mountains of Rust, **Ateroxx** will swoop down and harass them with spells.

Ateroxx (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **giant owl** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Ateroxx has an Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma score of 14 and can speak, read, and write Sylvan.
- It is *chaotic neutral*.
- It has AC 15 (mage armor).
- ***Spellcasting.*** Ateroxx is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following wizard spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, hold person*
  - 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*
  - 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*
  - 5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Treasure

The delicious-looking gilded eggs from Matheas Logahn's bag of beans are of a golden hue. Any creature that eats an egg must make a **DC 20 Constitution** saving throw. On a successful save, the creature permanently increases its lowest ability score by 1, randomly choosing among equally low scores. On a failed save, the creature takes 35 (10d6) force damage from an internal explosion.

24. Thousand Breaths

Background

Splinter set up a unique torture for Nethki, a feyrealm-born druid whom the Matrons of Malice slew, then reincarnated into a body stitched up by Alsandr Murchadh at the Toy Factory from reptilian body parts, even flying lizard wings. Nethki was reborn in this new form with memories and druidic skills intact. Splinter had a device crafted just for him by Zarondoxiss, the bone devil. If anyone approaches the dais of bone, the brazier fashioned into it burns with black smoke, obscuring the area, and summoning gas mephits that begin to spew their choking breath weapons at Nethki and the intruders before vanishing before they would kill anyone. Nethki has gotten used to the tortures and has not been broken. The druid has managed to survive by using his spells to charm animals to bring him food and water.

Environment

As the characters wander through the Bogs of Rot, they find a strange creature that seems to be stitched together from feyrealm-born human parts and different reptiles, lying on a torture device - a dais made out of bones at the top of a mound. Before the creature, built into the dais, stands a single brazier constructed from skulls.

Torture Device. The magical torture devices of Zarondoxiss, the bone devil, are crafted from the bones, cartilage, and ligaments of various fey and feyrealm-born creatures. If the device has no victims on it, a non-fiend creature that comes within 60 feet of a device must make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom** saving throw or feel a desire to approach and apply itself into the device. The effect is similar to the sympathy effect of an *antipathy/sympathy* spell, made permanent. Each device has AC 15, 89 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage. If a device is destroyed, its compulsion effect ends.

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NETHKI

"Stop right there! Do not approach me or try to help! It will only lead to your demise. It's best if you leave me to my fate and avoid Splinter's cursed devices."

Nethki calling out to the characters when he notices their approach.

Scene

If the characters approach the dais to within 30 feet, the brazier suddenly lights up, spewing forth an unnaturally large amount of thick and heavy smoke that immediately covers an area with a radius of 60 feet, making it heavily obscured. The brazier summons ten **gas mephits** that start to use their poisonous breath ability and attack all creatures in the area.

Gas Mephit. Use the **dust mephit** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Death Burst.*** When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of suffocating poison. Each creature within 5 feet of it must then succeed on a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw or start to suffocate as it runs out of breath.
- ***Poisonous Breath (Recharge 6).*** The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of poisonous gas. Each creature in that area must succeed on a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

If all creatures within the area of the smoke are reduced to under 10 hit points, all the mephits disperse into thin air amidst screams.

Nethki (use the **druid** monster entry with the **fey-realm-born** monster template) has been unable to resist the compulsion effect of the torture device. If characters remove his body, the compulsion effect of the device activates on one of them. On a failed save, the character feels a desire to approach and lie on the dais. Immediately, a new batch of gas mephits is summoned.

If Nethki is rescued, he will stretch and stand tall, then humbly bow to the characters, thanking them for his rescue. Nethki is reserved but friendly and explains that he was a grove tender at the Orchards with Elentaria before falling victim to Splinter's machinations. The druid is familiar with the location and general backgrounds of several places: Orchards, Tolggy's Grove, Tipper's Tree, Hallowroot, Awakened Library, Skull of the Fey Dragon, Toy Factory, Panacea Lilacs, and Pool of Starlight. Nethki will wish to return to the Orchards and Elentaria in haste.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for rescuing Nethki.

25. Displays of Torture

Background

The Bogs of Rot still bear the legacy of Splinter's mad love of torture and the abhorrent artistic tendencies of the fiendish hag. It had gruesome torture devices created for unfortunate victims, crafted from the bones of slain victims by the bone devil Zarondoxiss. One creature who has managed to survive is Grimclaw, a crafty troll from the Hungry Downs, who is alive but in eternal anguish from hunger and the tortures of spikes.

Environment

Several torture devices are dispersed and prominently displayed in the Bogs of Rot. Each is crafted from

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bones and tendons, and all contain the remains of an unfortunate victim who has perished in the device. Devices include a web of barbed tendons and bone shards attached to the branches of a tree and entangling the corpse of a satyr, who has been ripped apart as the tree grew, or a contraption made from cartilage above a small pool that dips the upside-down skeleton of a dwarf under the water for a minute before raising it out. One of the devices - a bed of needle-sharp thorns constructed from the horns of fey creatures - has a living victim lying on top, a large creature with green skin.

Scene

If characters remove a living or dead body from a torture device, its compulsion effect activates (see the **Torture Device** entry in the Thousand Breaths, location 24.). Each device resets to its original state, allowing the mind-controlled victim to strap itself into the device before the tortures begin.

The creature lying on the bed of horns is Grimclaw, a **troll** who has fallen victim to the device and has been unable to resist its effects. Grimclaw is emancipated and in constant pain from being impaled on the horn spikes. It will beg for its life if characters approach, muttering in Giant to be freed. If the characters remove Grimclaw from the platform, the compulsion effect ends on Grimclaw, but the device reactivates, forcing a random creature within the area to impale itself on the spikes that deal 5 (2d4) piercing damage per round as long as the creature remains on top of them. Grimclaw will take the opportunity to flee into the bog and return to the Dark Below through the Torn Passage. If interrogated, Grimclaw can share some locations with the characters, including the Torn Passage, Sporedark, Crystals of Sadness, and Tangible Darkness.

GRIMCLAW

"Grimclaw leave, go to dark caves. He not eat you. He not enemy."

Grimclaw speaking in Giant before it tries to retreat into the bogs.

26. Abandoned Halls

Background

Reclusive giant-kin once inhabited this vast cavern in the Dark Below millennia ago until the demonic hordes of Faeryl Myrryn quelled their numbers. The cavern is long abandoned, its inhabitants drained by the vampiric hezrou demon, Gal'bauz, who lairs at the Shrine of Faeryl Myrryn (location 33.) in the Dark Below.

Environment

The putrid waters of the Bogs of Rot have seeped into the cavern over the years, covering everything with a layer of mud. At the center of the village of stone huts lies an open plaza with a pool at its center where blood sacrifices were made to the Blood Queen. The village lies long abandoned, the pool empty with just a thin layer of caked blood under the layer of mud at its bottom. The corpses of long desiccated and pale giant-kin lie within the stone huts.

Scene

Upon closer inspection, the characters can discover large bite marks on the necks of the corpses. A char-

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acter who makes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Religion)** skill check can diagnose the cause of death as blood loss from a vampire's bite and that the fangs belong to a large creature.

27. Halls of Art

Background

Splinter bound the bone devil Zarondoxiss to service and to fashion a wide variety of torture devices on which to display the hag's unfortunate victims. Zarondoxiss has transformed King Dasmag's Halls of Art, to where it has been bound, defacing and corrupting the once beautiful sculptures, paintings, and tapestries. The devil finds pleasure in crafting elaborate instruments and implements of torture from bones but has been irritated of late, as the constant stream of raw materials has stopped since the imprisonment of Splinter by the Inheritors of the Unbegotten.

Environment

The once glorious two-story building of the Halls of Art rises out of the fog covering the Bogs of Rot. Many of the green stained-glass windows of the structure have broken, and the building seems abandoned. Around the halls, large bones harvested from various large creatures native to the plane are stuck into the ground, and the corpses of different fey and feyrealm-born creatures are impaled upon them.

Inside the halls, all the beautiful pieces of art on display have been destroyed or defaced with the bones Zarondoxiss harvested from victims provided by Splinter. In addition, many of the installations have been converted to grisly scenes of torture, displaying various torture devices with the remains of their victims.

Scene

Zarondoxiss, the **bone devil,** is currently putting the finishing touches on a device on the second floor of the halls - a throne of bone on which the tsantsas of fey hang by the dozen, screaming profanities in Sylvan and biting any victim who sits in the throne. When the characters enter the circular chamber that is 120 feet in diameter, the torture device activates (see the **Torture Device** entry in the Thousand Breaths, location 24.). Once a creature sits on the throne, the tsantsas deal 12 (5d4) piercing damage every round.

If any character succumbs to the device, Zarondoxiss steps aside and observes its newest creation in operation. If all characters resist the compulsion or attack the devil, Zarondoxiss becomes enraged and flies into melee, telepathically cursing the characters and claiming them as new victims for its tortures. With nothing to lose and eager for its service to end, Zarondoxiss fights to the death, welcoming the return to Hell and its rebirth.

If the characters converse with Zarondoxiss, the bone devil requests fresh bodies and victims for its "art." In exchange, it can reveal a crucial piece of information - the location of the portal to Demonbane Isle in Hell, found in the fungoid caverns called Sporedark in the Dark Below. The bone devil is also familiar with the torture devices in the Bogs of Rot and The Torn Passage, which leads to the Dark Below from the surface of the Bleak Mire.

"It's been ages since Splinter has replenished my stock of raw materials. Behold my exquisite pieces and know my name as their artist - Zaradooxiss of the Sixth. Are you to be bring me bones for crafting or living bodies for sweet tortures? Or do you offer me one from your ranks? Speak now or allow Zaradooxiss to decide which specimens will be suitable."

Zaradooxiss engaging the characters telepathically while it observes them.

28. Singing Stones

Background

The Singing Stones were a fey wonder during King Dasmag's time when the druids of the Seven Flow-

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ers bound several willing air elementals into them to sing eternally through the stones.

Environment

The sounds of the wind can be heard from afar over the rolling bogs, seeming to form rhythms and melodies. The whistling song leads to a collection of huge standing stones that cast long shadows over the mossy ground. A myriad of holes puncture the stones, and the wind coursing through them makes an eerie whistling sound as if a multitude of creatures were softly singing in tune.

Scene

Three **air elementals** are bound into the central stones of the circle. They remain within 5 feet of the stones to which they are bound and will only attack if a creature harms the stones or attacks them.

The elementals are singing a song in Auran. Characters can make a successful **DC 16 Intelligence** ability check to decipher the words hidden within the whispers and understand the tune's lyrics. The song is about Dolonriarnodo, the fey chimera, and recounts the unique curse of the beast - the story of a mighty wolf, a fey dragon, and a majestic elk who were cursed by the Matrons of Malice and transformed into a single creature with three heads, bearing all the traits of the creatures of which is was formed. The song is continually interlaced with the word "Dolonriarnodo" and recounts how the curse might be broken in the following passages:

"Dolonriarnodoooooo,
Dolonriarnodooooo...

To part one beast into three again
And lead to its escaping,
It must be struck with its own attacks.
The key to the reshaping.

Daze its eyes with a stunning sight
And trip it to the ground,
To pierce it with a shard of bone,
And watch the curse unbound."

29. Statue of the Wanderer

Background

Matheas Logahn, the eccentric feyrealm-born half-elf guide, was attacked by a group of aberrant drow barbarians in the Bogs of Rot. His first action was to reach into his bag of beans, which inauspiciously only sprung a statue of himself pointing north, towards the direction where he managed to flee and elude Krasnar's band.

Environment

A statue of a cloaked and hooded man with an eyepatch covering his left eye stands in a gulley between two mounds in the bog, pointing north with one of its hands. The statue is incredibly lifelike, with an angry look on its face.

Scene

Characters who search for tracks can succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to notice the signs of a large group of creatures, about a score of individuals that were hastily following a single creature. Both sets of tracks lead north.

30. Barbarian Camp

Background

Krasnar Azennar dispatched a troop of barbarians and grimlocks to the Bog of Rot to secure a component to be used for gaining sovereignty over the Feyrealm domain of the Bleak Mire. The group was sidetracked when it encountered Matheas Logahn, who evaded the band only to summon a beanstalk reaching to the skies. The barbarians are hesitant to climb the stalk and have regrouped a few miles away, thinking of the best way to ascend the stalk and hunt down the feyrealm-born guide.

Environment

The campsite features a central pit with the devoured carcass of a wolf at its bottom, surrounded by mats

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where four figures wearing hides are meditating. On one side of the camp, 20 feet from the pit, a group of distorted humanoid shapes huddle together, some sleeping on the barren ground. The campsite smells of sweat and gore.

Scene

Eight **frenzied mutants** of House Ausstyl and twelve **grimlocks** are making camp on a rocky outcrop at the edge of the Bogs of Rot. Four of the barbarians are on the lookout at the four corners of the camp, 25 feet from its center. Characters must succeed on a **DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to approach without being noticed. If the drow lookouts see the characters, they will sound the alarm, and the meditating or sleeping members of the camp will rise within 1 round and join the foray. During daylight hours, the drow withdraw to areas of shade.

Treasure

One of the barbarians carries an ornate mahogany box labeled "Bogs of Rot" in Elvish, written in drow runes. It contains a bit of moss. The box itself is worth 10 gold pieces.

31. Beanstalk

Background

Matheas Logahn, the eccentric feyrealm-born half-elf guide, planted a bean from his bag of beans and climbed the stalk to escape a band of Krasnar's aberrant barbarians who were hot on his heels. At its top, Matheas found a strange vessel sitting on the swirling clouds, pierced through its belly by the stalk and trapped by the gigantic vine. Three gnomes - the Pipplewind brothers Bronston, Dammeston, and Norriston - fashioned the craft to escape the dire occurrences on the ground and have been successfully, and happily, surviving in the clouds for years on end, until their journey was interrupted by the giant beanstalk. They are highly vexed by being trapped and the arrival of Matheas Logahn, who has commandeered the vessel and is bossing them around. They have not found a way to cut the vines, which regrow at a fantastic pace, so they cannot dislodge the ship. All parties on board the vessel are anxious, and tensions are high.

Environment

A giant beanstalk of immense proportions reaches to the sky, its top hidden by the dark clouds. At its apex and sitting on a cloud rests a contraption that resembles a building - a skyship with multitudes of hissing valves and thumping pipes, made from a unique wood found in the Valley of Bloom called lightwood that is so light it floats. The giant vine runs through the building, piercing its bottom and several pipes that line its outside.

Scene

The climb to the top of the bean is dangerous due to the winds and sleet at high altitudes, and on account of Ateroxx, the giant black owl wizard who hunts the skies around the stalk. The climb to the skyship is over three miles, whence the stalk continues to grow upwards.

Characters must make three **Strength (Athletics)** skill checks to climb the stalk. The DC increases from 10 at the bottom mile, to 15 at the second mile, and 20 at the third mile, due to the heavy winds that get stronger at higher elevations. On a failed skill check, the character falls from the dizzying heights and must make a **DC 10 Dexterity** saving throw to catch a stem or fall onto a gigantic leaf. On each failed saving throw, the character hits the protruding leaves and stems as it falls and takes 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage before a giant leaf breaks its fall. The size of the beanstalk, buds, and leaves allows for characters to rest during the climb.

When characters reach the second mile of the stalk and if they haven't already encountered **Ateroxx** (see Nest of Gilded Eggs, location 23.), the giant owl swoops in and attacks the characters in search of loot. Ateroxx flies away towards its nest in the west when reduced to half its hit points.

When the characters reach the top of the stalk, they find the skyship resting on a cloud with a gaping hole in its side where some of the tendrils of the

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stalk have pierced it. Inside, they encounter Matheas Logahn (use the **scout** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template and an alignment of *chaotic neutral*) and the Pipplewind brothers - Bronston, Dammeston, and Norriston - (use the **expert** monster entry with the **gnome** racial traits) in a frantic discussion. When they see the characters, Matheas takes charge in addressing them, as if the ship belonged to him. The three gnomes are terrified and near panic, constantly being shushed and sidelined by Matheas.

The stalk at its top has AC 15, 150 hit points, and has damage immunity against bludgeoning and piercing damage, poison, and psychic damage, as well as regeneration of 20 hit points. If characters can sever the stalk, the skyship still needs to be repaired. The gnomes have the necessary tools and materials to repair the ship, as well as the schematics. However, the repairs are slow, and all hands are needed. Two characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Intelligence** ability check (no retry) to correctly follow the instructions of the Pipplewind brothers. A *mending* or similar spell results in an automatic success on this check. If either of the two checks fails, the repairs cannot be finished in time, and six **frenzied mutants** of House Ausstyl (see Barbarian Camp, location 30.) arrive at the top of the stalk to storm the skyship and slay everyone within (in case the characters haven't defeated them beforehand). Characters can make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the barbarians through the cloud cover as they climb the stalks 80 feet below the skyship.

"I meant the iron valve on the brass pipe to the right of the pressure gauge! Not the brass valve on the iron pipe on the left! We don't want the entire ship to blow now, would we? I have never seen such bumblers in all my life."

Bronston Pippelwind shouting at the characters in perturbation.

Matheas Loghan

"What you gnomes need is a captain who tells it like it is! What you don't need is all this technical rubbish. Just get the damned thing to work, and let's be off in all haste. Those tentacled drow were close behind, they looked as menacing as you can imagine, and they will surely be deaf to your pitiful excuses!"

Matheas Loghan urging the Pipplewind brothers to repair the ship.

Treasure

Matheas Logan wears a pair of *gloves of swimming and climbing* and has a *bag of beans* with 4 beans remaining.

Experience

Awar the party 1,100 experience points if they manage to free the skyship.

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Tipper's Tree

1 tile = 5 feet

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32. Tipper's Tree

Background

Tipper's tree is a landmark in the Bleak Mire but impossibly hard to find because the tree is indistinguishable from a regular tree and since it slowly moves around in the forest. Tipper, the shapeshifting treant riddlebard, makes his home among the topmost branches of an immense sycamore in the Twisted Forest, in the unusually thick foliage. Tipper is usually found in his bathtub, soaking in a pool of mineral-rich water, covered by bubbles. The treant is a lover of riddles and jokes and is prone to laughter, which is sometimes made contagious by its bardic abilities. Father Lestor is currently Tipper's guest, sharing the invigorating tub with the birchman. The cleric met Tipper after fleeing from the Awakened Library and won a game of wits against him, for which the birchman aids the priest and offers him a haven from Krasnar's aberrant forces.

Environment

Tipper's tree is an ancient and immense sycamore that is 150 feet tall. The tree features several wooden platforms and various decorations spread amongst its branches at various levels.

1. The Trunk

Background

Tipper's tree is constantly animated and keeps intruders away, slapping or grabbing them and throwing them to the ground. Tipper has also placed a *glyph of warding* on the bottom of the trunk.

Environment

The trunk of the tree has a diameter of 30 feet. Its bark is rough, its branches gnarled, and its foliage sparse.

Scene

Tipper's tree as an animated tree using the treant's animate trees ability. It requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to climb the trunk and branches. However, if any creature who is not invited onto the tree touches the trunk, a *glyph of warding* spell glyph activates with the *hideous laughter* spell. The glyph requires a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to be found, and creatures must succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom** saving throw to resist the *hideous laughter* spell.

If characters try to fly or levitate into the foliage, the tree's branches slam them when they are within reach.

Tipper's Tree. Use the **treant** monster entry's *Animate Trees* ability with the following modification:

- ***Slam.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 17). The target is restrained until this grapple ends, and Tipper's tree can't use its slam on another target. In the next round, Tipper's tree can use its action to throw a creature restrained by its branches to the ground, dealing damage normally and causing falling damage appropriate to the heigh, with the creature landing prone at the foot of the tree.

2. Jesters' Ledge

Background

Tipper has befriended a group of fey constructs that are composed of chestnuts, enjoying the slapstick humor of the tiny creatures. Tipper has given them a home on the lower branches of its tree, where they prepare to take part in performances.

Environment

50 feet from the ground, huge plush pillows of dazzling colors rest on the branches of the tree, with all manner of juggling tools like batons and rings, as well as clown costumes of tiny size strewn around. Several colorful songbirds sit on the outlying branches.

Scene

Eight fey constructs made of chestnuts (use the **homunculus** monster template with a Charisma score of 16, Acrobatics +4, and Performance + 5) are rehearsing a show, juggling rings while doing somersaults. When

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characters climb to their level, the tiny jesters assemble and begin a performance, trying to impress the newcomers. The jesters will jump to bar the way of any character who doesn't view the entirety of their performance, which lasts 5 minutes. If attacked, the tiny creatures try to flee to the tree's higher branches.

3. Riddle of Clouds

Background

Tipper has placed a second *glyph of warding* spell connected to a riddle at the entrance to a small hollow in the tree's trunk.

Environment

60 feet from the ground, there is an opening in the trunk, leading to a hollow within, where a full tea service is laid out on a small table. The words of a riddle are formed from vines around the opening on the trunk in Sylvan:

"My body is vast
and I travel high and wide.
My life ends
when my sorrows
turn to tears.
What am I?"

The riddle carved into the trunk around the hollow.

A nest of larks is perched on a branch while the songbirds fly around in agitation at any intrusion, protecting their eggs.

Scene

If a character steps through the opening without answering the riddle - "cloud" - the *glyph of warding* spell glyph activates with a *suggestion* spell. The glyph requires a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to be found, and all creatures that see the glyph must succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom** saving throw to resist the *suggestion* spell that has the command "Climb down from the tree and go far away from here."

A message is formed from vines on the trunk inside the hollow in Sylvan:

"Welcome to my friend the tree,
And won't you enjoy a cup of tea?
Jokes abound, and chuckles may
drive your worries far away!"

Words of welcome on the trunk within the hollow.

The tea in the pot is steaming and ready for consumption. It is a special blend of "Chuckleweed" that causes a burst of optimism and positivity in whoever drinks a cup. Characters who drink from the tea must make a successful **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw or become affected by the cheerful effect of the drink. On a failed save, characters can't refrain from smiling and chuckling, viewing everything as humorous, and gaining advantage on Wisdom saving throws for 10 minutes.

Treasure

The teapot is magical, keeping any liquid stored inside pleasantly warm. The full tea service is made of fine porcelain painted to resemble wood, worth 150 gold pieces in total. Four doses of Chuckleweed tea are stored inside a jar of the tea set.

4. Practice Stage

Background

Tipper uses this platform to practice its jokes and riddles, using the magical *practice mirror* to enhance the performance.

Environment

75 feet from the ground, a wooden platform that is 20 feet in diameter sits on two branches. The two sides of the platform are fashioned from planks, forming a stage. Four medium-sized mirrors hang on iron chains from higher branches, out of reach and all facing the stage area of the platform. The mirrors reflect the stage, and one of them shows crowds of spectators behind the image of the stage and anyone standing on it.

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Treasure

One of the mirrors is a *practice mirror*.

5. Riddle of Stones

Background

Tipper has placed a third *glyph of warding* spell connected to a riddle on the tree's trunk.

Environment

120 feet from the ground, gigantic acorns and pines, each the size of a medium creature, adorn the branches. Each is painted in a different color, with glossy and reflective paint that sparkles in the light. A riddle is formed from vines around the trunk under the overhanging decorations in Sylvan:

"That which gives life
molds my face.
If I am broken
I do not bleed.
Those who die
will lay their heads before me.
What am I?"

The riddle on the trunk of the tree.

Scene

If a character climbs above the vines of the text without answering the riddle - "stone" - the *glyph of warding* spell glyph activates with a *calm emotions* spell. The glyph requires a successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to be found, and creatures must succeed on a **DC 16 Charisma** saving throw to resist the *calm emotions* spell that forces creatures to be incapable of being hostile to Tipper.

6. Treetop Bath

Background

Tipper spends most of its time here, soaking in a bubble bath filled with mineral salts, high above the treetops. Tipper's current guest is Father Lestor, who is hiding from Krasnar's forces with the shapeshifting treant riddlebard.

Environment

130 feet from the ground, at the pinnacle of the tree, sits a large metal bathtub that can accommodate four Medium creatures. Next to it, a bedroll is laid out with a tarp covering the sleeping area.

Scene

Tipper and Father Lestor (use the **priest** monster entry) are sitting in the bathtub, which is filled with warm water the color of blackish mud, with a rubber toy dragon and various herbs floating on its top amidst caramel-colored bubbles. The pair is in good cheer, entertaining each other with riddles and jokes. When the characters climb to the branches by the bathtub, Tipper greets them, trusting the challenge of the climb and his magical protections to weed out unwelcome visitors.

Tipper is most adamant that the characters jump into the tub and experience the nourishing concoction he has created from mud and herbs. The riddlebard will immediately offer to hold an improvised performance while the characters watch from the tub. Tipper, although jovial and friendly, is incredibly vain and also insecure. If characters don't laugh at its jokes, which are actually pretty funny, Tipper will not refrain from casting *hideous laughter* to force laughs. The riddlebard will not leave his tree but can accompany the characters on it as long as they stay in the Twisted Forest or the Forest of Gloom.

Tipper (CR 10, 5,900 XP). Use the **treant** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Tipper is Medium size.
- He is *chaotic neutral*.
- He has 90 hit points.
- His Strength score is 19, Constitution score is 17, and Charisma score is 18.
- His skills are Deception 8, Performance 12, Persuasion 12
- ***Slam.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage

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- ***Shapechanger.*** Tipper can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.
- ***Spellcasting.*** Tipper is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Tipper has the following bard spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, minor illusion, prestidigitation*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *color spray, hideous laughter, sleep*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *calm emotions, enthrall, silence, suggestion*
  - 3rd level (2 slots): *glyph of warding*

"Haha, more unrooted folk to share our bath. You have climbed my tree at the most opportune time. Some refreshing bubbles and nutrients before my grand performance! I am Tipper, this is my friend the Tree, and my guest Father Lestor."

Tipper welcoming the characters to a share a bath, inviting them to his performance, and introducing his friends.

Father Lestor will jump out of the tub and don his robes at the characters' arrival. He tries to shift the conversation to a more serious tone, which is a challenging task due to Tipper's constant prattle and hilarities. The cleric of knowledge will recognize the characters from Master Eydan's dream and explain that he has been patiently waiting for them after abandoning the Awakened Library in fear of Krasnar and Malzdreziret. Father Lestor can relate the complete history of the Feyrealm domain that he researched in the Awakened Library and can recount the events of the fateful day when King Waldrann slew his son. He admits that before being exiled to the Bleak Mire by the furious king and fleeing into the swamps, he managed to remove Krasnar's

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princely signet ring, which he still has in his possession. He mentions that Krasnar is probably searching for his ring, which can be used in scrying on the fallen knight. Father Lestor sacrificed his courage to the Hagtree, so he does not want to dare to travel across the Bleak Mire, especially as Krasnar hunts him.

Father Lestor

"We have seen each other in our dreams, but we finally can meet in person. You see, I have known that Waldrann's act of filicide will have dire repercussions. You should have serious concerns if you have braved the Bleak Mire. Let us pray, lest we fall into the clutches of Prince Krasnar the Fallen and the Scaled Impostor that is Malzdreziret. The Wise One will guide your path and lend insight to plan your next move."

Father Lestor greeting the characters and calling for reflection before strategizing.

Father Lestor can relate everything Master Eydan has already told the characters about the fated journey of King Waldrann Azennar and his company. The priest of the Wise One shares his knowledge about the capture of Tyke and Splinter, two of the Matrons of Malice, by House Ausstyl, whose location at Quellar Ausstyl (location 56.) he readily reveals. The pair are also most knowledgeable about the Bleak Mire and familiar with all locations in the Blightwoods, Twisted Forest, Forest of Gloom, Hungry Downs, and Burning Woods. In addition, they know the lore of several locations, including Panacea Lilacs and Pool of Starlight. Most importantly, both can describe the ritual needed to take sovereignty over the Feyrealm domain currently known as the Bleak Mire in the Hall of the Sovereign. Additionally, Tipper is familiar with King Dasmag's favorite song, the *Merry Hunt of the Horned Hero,* and comments on each piece of information with hilarious witticisms.

Treasure

Krasnar Azennar's princely signet ring is solid gold, with a large red beryl gem that has the Azennar crest engraved on its surface. The ring is worth 200 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for finding Father Lestor and recovering Krasnar's signet ring.

33a. Shrine of Faeryl Myrryn

Background

The shrine was once used to worship Faeryl Myrryn during the reign of the drow vampire, where frequent blood sacrifices were made to honor her insatiable appetites.

Environment

The walls of an ancient withered stone shrine have been blackened by age and are overgrown with brambles. The stone structure has also almost completely sunk into the wet earth, and only its ceiling is exposed under the underbrush.

In the middle of the single hall of the space is a shallow tiled well that is 10 feet across, at its center a needle-sharp metallic spike on which a humanoid

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skeleton with hooves and horns - a satyr - is impaled. The decorations of the shrine can barely be discerned, but the few remaining frescos show Faeryl Myrryn leading armies or vampiric demons and wallowing in blood. The shrine is dedicated to Orcus, whose sign of a demonic skull with vampire fangs is engraved on all four walls.

Scene

The building is desecrated ground and unhallowed, with a unique effect in the area. Any creature that is not a fiend of undead who starts its turn in the shrine must make a successful **DC 16 Charisma** saving throw or begin to bleed, losing 1d4 hit points every round at the end of its turn until it remains in the shrine.

At the side of the well is a secret latch behind a tile that can be removed. Characters who actively search the shrine can make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the tile. The latch opens a secret door at the bottom of the well, opening to a narrow and steep passage that leads to the Dark Below under the shrine.

33b. Shrine of Faeryl Myrryn (Dark Below)

Background

Few remnants remain of the Bloodgarden of Faeryl Myrryn, the drow vampire conjurer, and her patron Orcus. One of them is an ancient shrine in the Dark Below dedicated to these demonic entities and tended by Gal'bauz, the vampiric hezrou. The demon has remained in the Bleak Mire for ages, stalking the Dark Below and sacrificing victims to its dark masters while waiting for the return of the Bloodgarden.

Environment

The passages from the shrine to Faeryl Myrryn and Orcus on the Bleak Mire descend for a mile before opening into a small but high-ceilinged cave with a wall of cascading water on its opposite side. Four wide passages open from the cave, leading into further depths in different directions. The cave is 40 feet across, and its ceiling reaches a height of 70 feet. Bones and guano cover its floor.

Behind the veil of water is another cave, just 30 feet in diameter, housing an ancient shrine. Like the shrine on the surface of the Bleak Mire, the cave walls are decorated in fading images of blood sacrifice, raging demonic armies destroying fey, dark skies covered by a cloud of bats, and Faeryl Myrryn banishing Xantharos, the colossal fey dragon. The shallow well and spike at the chamber's center are caked with layers of blood, with multiple bodies strewn around the well. The cave reeks with an otherworldly stench.

Scene

The outer chamber is guarded by two **giant vampiric bats** that swoop down from the cover of darkness on the ceiling of the cave as the characters enter the outer cave.

Giant Vampiric Bats. Use the **vampire spawn** monster entry with the following modifications:

- A **giant vampiric bat** has a speed of 10 ft., and fly 60 ft.
- It has blindsight 60 ft.
- It cannot speak or understand languages.

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- ***Echolocation.*** The giant vampiric bat can't use its blindsight while deafened.
- ***Keen Hearing.*** The giant vampiric bat has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

At the sounds of combat, the vampiric demon Gal'bauz steps out from behind the cover of the cascade, slightly wincing as the running water washes over its large and bloated body. It bares its fangs, each the size of a sword, and growls telepathically before activating its *Horror Nimbus* ability and flying into melee. If reduced to under 60 hit points, Gal'bauz will use *teleport* to retreat. Unless it is slain, the demon will stalk and harass the characters for as long as it takes to kill every last one of them.

DOLONRIARNODO

Gal'bauz (CR 9, 5,000 XP). Use the **hezrou** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Gal'bauz has an additional damage resistance to necrotic.
- It is an undead type creature.
- It has an additional saving throw of Dexterity +6.
- It has all the traits of a **vampire spawn** (*Regeneration, Spider Climb, and Vampire Weaknesses*).
  - ***Claws.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.
  - ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Gal'bauz, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Gal'bauz regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

"Offeriiiiings to the Blooood Queeeeen!"

Gal'bauz roaring in Abyssal.

34. DOLONRIARNODO

Background

There is a single dominant lifeform in the Twisted Forest, Dolonriarnodo, the fey chimera. The fell magic of the hags amalgamated the souls and bodies of three creatures - a stag, a dire wolf, and a faerie dragon - into one. Dolonriarnodo is a true predator who hunts the woods and surrounding marshlands.

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Environment

Dolonriarnodo lars in the tops of the trees that stand gnarled and choked in Twisted Forest, high above the brambles of the underbrush.

Scene

As the characters enter the Twisted Forest and make their way through the wall of brambles that cover the forest floor, they will soon draw the attention of **Dolonriarnodo,** the fey chimera. The monster's favorite tactics include diving down from heights to confuse prey with its stunning breath weapon, dragging them to the ground with its wolf jaws, and then goring them with its antlers. Dolonriarnodo's curse can be lifted, and the beast would split into its three separate forms if one mimics the monster's attacks by causing it to be stunned, tripping it to the ground, and injuring it with a weapon made of bone. If this is undertaken or if the curse is lifted with the use of a *remove curse* spell, Dolonriarnodo separates into its three forms, all three beasts bow their heads to the ground in gratitude before leaping into the thick of the woods.

Dolonriarnodo. Use the **chimera** monster entry with the following modifications:

- A creature hit by Dolonriarnodo's bite attack must make a **DC 15 Strength** saving throw. On a failed save, the target creature is knocked prone.
- ***Impale.*** If Dolonriarnodo hits a target that is prone with its horn attack, the target takes an extra 13 (2d12) piercing damage.
- ***Stunning Breath (Recharge 5–6).*** The dragon head exhales a dazzling cloud of sparkles in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or become stunned for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a successful save. This action replaces the *Fire Breath* ability of the chimera.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they lift the curse from Dolonriarnodo.

35. Witchcave

Background

Blister, the lone hag whom Krasnar Azennar and his drow allies have not imprisoned, keeps a hidden hideout in the Bleak Mire in a cave system behind the Lake of Tar at the foot of the Mountains of Rust. Tar elementals known as tarlings inhabit the lake and prey on all travelers to its shores. Inside the cave, the hag is surrounded by spriggan minions, who come and go on forays of surveillance to the south, avoiding the lakeside. The hag is more than happy if the characters bring the *crown of Aglarion* to it and will try to force them to rescue its sisters from the clutches of House Ausstyl if it can.

1. The Lake of Tar

Background

Tarlings inhabit the Lake of Tar, which bubbles and spews forth noxious gases.

Environment

The Lake of Tar is an unforgiving body of scorchingly hot and slowly bubbling tar at the foot of the Mountains of Rust. The shores of the lake are devoid of most vegetation, except for shriveled plants and a few gnarled and blackened trees. Noxious gases form clouds of pungent vapors over and around the lake.

There is a secret entrance to the caves - a hole in the oxidized shards of metallic rock, hidden by a thorny bush. Characters can make a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the cave behind the cover or a **DC 14 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to track the spriggans to the caves if actively searching for tracks. The hole opens to a cramped passage that is narrow even for small creatures.

Scene

As characters approach the shores of the Lake of Tar, they must avoid the noxious gases that sometimes shift with the winds. Characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to

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avoid the dangerous areas. On a failed save, a cloud of noxious gas roils over the characters, with the effect of a *stinking cloud* spell with a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw. The three **tarlings** in the lake hunt anyone that wanders near the shore and will wait for an opportune moment to strike when characters are inside the cloud. The tarlings will try to whelm the characters and pull them into the hot lake. If submerged in the lake, a creature takes 6d10 fire damage each round.

Tarling. Use the **water elemental** monster template with the following modifications:

- The tarling has damage vulnerability to cold.
- It has damage immunity to fire.
- It has tremorsense 60 ft.
- It speaks Terran instead of Aquan.
- Its *Slam* and *Whelm* actions deal an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage.
- The target of the tarling's *Whelm* action is unable to breathe, even if they can breathe water.

2. Snafflewhopp Camp

Background

Only a small band of the Snafflewhopp spriggan tribe is present in the Witchcave. Most of their numbers hide on the other side of the Bleak Mire in the Snafflewhopps' warrens, and several other bands have been dispatched on surveillance missions by Blister to spy on the Chasm find fey survivors.

Environment

The cramped passage leads to a large antechamber that is 50 feet wide, where Blister's spriggan minions have made camp and where they guard the treasures of their tribe. The treasures are stored in chests on the sides of the cave. A stack of trophies, most from fungoids and fey creatures, lines another side of the cave. A wider passage leads further into the caves on the opposite side of the chamber.

Scene

Eight **spriggan mercenaries** are camping in the antechamber, viciously guarding their treasures that are piled along the wall of the cave in chests. The spriggans will grow to large size and use pack tactics to swarm the characters. They will call for a truce if half their numbers are slain, and one of them will scramble into the back passage to alert Blister. The spriggans will still try to intimidate characters by proclaiming Blister's powers and will slyly use delaying tactics until the hag arrives on the scene.

"Wait until the Immortal Witch arrives! She will soon join us, and you can quiver at her power! I saw her cleft in two by the Scaled Impostor, and she magically returned from death after a week's time! She walks the Mire and the Planes! Her curses are infinite! What can your little band offer her other than your lives?"

The spriggans boasting of Blister's might to the characters.

If alerted to intruders, **Blister** and the **dryad witches** will arrive in the Snafflewopp's cave within 2 rounds from area 3.

If Blister is slain and any spriggans remain, they will surrender to the characters, but at the first chance they get, they will try to escape and regroup with their tribe in the warrens in the southern Blightwoods. The spriggans will not let anyone into their

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secrets but can be made to talk with a successful **DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation)** skill check. The spriggans know of the Snafflewhopp's main warrens at the other side of the Bleak Mire, the Torn Passage that leads to the Dark Below, and the portal to Hell that Blister uses to transport creatures from Demonbane Isle in Hell to the village of the fungoids named Sporedark, where the spriggans have been on a recent raid to keep the fungoids in line and the portal secured. The spriggans are also familiar with all locations in the Twisted Forest and the Hungry Downs, except for Tipper's Tree. They have also gotten reports of the cortex pods around the Chasm, as well as Bwael Phindar, but they have not dared to approach the strange brains on tentacled stems or the Gibbering Fort.

Treasure

The spriggans' hoard consists of 75 various gemstones stored in a small wooden chest, each worth 5 gold pieces, three mithral rods 10 inches in length that are enough to craft a medium armor or three light weapons in another chest, the statue of a pit fiend carved from the purest black jet stone worth 650 gold pieces, and the head of a satyr that has been lavishly decorated with gold strands for hair and blue topaz stones for eyes worth 100 gold pieces apiece. Additionally, there are three doses of inactive **psyshrooms** in a third chest, loot from the raid on the fungoid lair of Sporedark (see area 3 of the Sporedark, location 64.).

3. Blister's Hideout

Background

On the rare occasion when Blister is not on Demonbane Isle in Hell, it uses this hideaway to oversee its schemes in the Bleak Mire, orchestrated through the few Snafflewhopp spriggans who remain under its command. The hag's position on the Bleak Mire is precarious. However, it has no fear from anyone with its phylactery safe in Hell and her *Coven Magic* special trait active while on the Bleak Mire. It plans to rescue its sisters from Quellar Ausstyl and uses whatever means it can to achieve this goal.

Environment

The inner chamber is used by Blister to cook up vile brews in a large cauldron that bubbles with a foul-smelling liquid over the pool of tar that fills half the cave. The brew glows with a sickly yellow light and swirls with energies. A branding iron with the sign of the hag coven lies on the ground next to the cauldron. Other cooking equipment is set up on a rickety table - a pan for rendering fat, a reboiler that drips a bluish liquid into a vial, and a large mortar lined with a sticky reddish substance. Grisly components form a pile on the sides of the cave in front of a shelf - body parts of various creatures, some preserved and others rotting. Liquids of various colors in small jars line the rack, as well as a large amphora filled with fat, and all manner of fetishes.

Branding Iron of the Hag Queens

Scene

Blister, the **midnight hag,** and two **dryad witches** are busy cooking up a vile soul soup in a makeshift cauldron that broils with enslaved souls within, as well as poisonous elixirs and potions. The hag is open to recruiting agents who can aid in liberating its captured sisters but will first try to force visitors to eat from its soup, which smells awful and looks exceptionally disgusting. The soup causes an evil soul to inhabit those who imbibe the vile fluids.

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If encountered in its cave, Blister will cackle with joy that the characters came to it, bearing the *crown of Aglarion*. Then, it will try to force characters to drink from its vile soul soup and give up the crown using compulsion spells.

BLISTER

In general, Blister will attempt to incapacitate characters and force them under its will rather than kill them outright. It will see if it can use the characters as tools under its command to rescue its sisters, but if this tactic is unsuccessful, it will resort to more deadly spells. The hag will fight to the death, as it is practically immortal due to its *midnight hag phylactery*. It will not disclose its secrets unless magically compelled to do so.

"Hahahahaaa, what aspiring dimwits you are!!! I knew I wouldn't have to lift a claw and the Crown would be returned to me.... Bring it here and I won't suck out your souls. I might even leave you alive to suffer endlessly and in my service!"

Blister cackling with delight at seeing the characters.

Soul Soup. This mixture of bile, tears, blood, urine, and phlegm is filled with fetishes and organs that float in the vile liquid. The soup also contains the bound souls of evil individuals. If any creature drinks from the soul soup, they must succeed on a **DC 19 Constitution** saving throw or become possessed by a soul within the soup, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The soul controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. It uses the possessed target's statistics but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. Possessed creatures are subject to the commands of the Matrons of Malice. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points or the spirit is forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the soul vanishes into nothingness. The target is immune to the soul soup for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

If Blister is killed, its black spirit can be seen as it flies out of its corpse, and her body shrivels away into dust.

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The spirit wafts into the air before escaping the plane itself in a vortex of sulfuric fire. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check to realize that the soul of the hag was sucked through the fabric of the plane itself to Hell as if drawn in by an item, akin to the mechanics of a lich's phylactery.

Treasure

The branding iron is a *branding iron of the Hag Queens* with 3 charges.

36. Trail of Acorns

Background

A trail of acorns marks the direction where the Single Sister - a two-headed centaur filly - fled from the Forest of Gloom and a band of dryad witches into the open and towards the Mountains of Rust. The dryad witches have been sidetracked from the mission of finding the Refuge for Blister and have decided to chase the two-headed centaur filly instead.

Environment

The ground becomes rockier in the area where the brambles of the Twisted Forest meet the wet ground of the Forest of Gloom and the rust-colored slopes of the Mountains of Rust.

Scene

It takes a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the sporadically placed acorns start at the edge of the forest and a **DC 10 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to track them to the northeast, accompanied by the hoofprints of a four-legged creature.

Four **dryad witches** are trying to follow the Single Sister by tracking the acorns, but they haven't yet found the trail. The dryads will accost the characters and attempt to charm them to discover their secrets and apprehend them for Blister. They know the location of the Witchcave (location 35.) and its secret entrance but will not reveal this information unless magically compelled. They are also wary of Dolonriarnodo the fey chimera and avoid this area of the Twisted Forest.

37. Jagged Maw

Background

This maze of shards serves as the hiding place of the Single Sister, a young two-headed centaur filly who has been separated from her family in the Refuge and chased out of the forest by a spriggan raiding party. She has now gotten lost and is hesitant to leave her hideout, to brave the Bleak Mire, and return to her family.

Environment

The swamps give way to metallic terrain at the foothills of the Mountains of Rust, dotted with huge shards of corroding metal, rugged crags, and pillars that point like gnarled claws towards the skies. The area is bleak and desolate, with sparse vegetation and pools of stagnant water among the crags. The stone outcroppings become thick in an area with a diameter of 900 feet, forming a natural maze.

Scene

The **Single Sister** has become trapped in a maze of jagged metal shards of stone and cannot escape the area. Each creature who enters the area must make a successful **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw for every 30 feet of movement in the maze, or suffer 7 (3d4) points of slashing damage from the sharp stones. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to track the Single Sister to her den in the maze that is 300 feet from the entrance. On a failed check, the party becomes lost (see page 112 of the Dungeon Master's Guide).

The Single Sister has attempted to escape the maze many times but has always been forced back by the shards. Her hide is covered in small scratched wounds, and the poor creature is in a pitiful state. The centaur filly sustains herself on rainwater and a patch of mushrooms she found in a small den that is clear of the jagged stones. When characters enter the den, the Single Sister hides in a corner, facing the rocks, glancing out at the characters with frightened faces and near tears, and noticeably shaking from fear. Characters who speak Sylvan can attempt to

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calm the Single Sister by making a successful **DC 11 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check, made with disadvantage if they don't speak Sylvan or Elvish and use pantomime instead.

If calmed, the Single Sister explains her situation amidst sobs, relating her separation from her family in the Refuge at the center of the Forest of Gloom, her escape from a band of bloodthirsty spriggans, and finally getting stuck in the Jagged Maw. The centaur cries for her parents, who are hiding in the Refuge, and begs the characters to take her home. She knows the location of the Refuge (location 41.) and is familiar with all of its inhabitants as well as the location of the secret passage that leads inside.

Single Sister. Use the **centaur** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The Single Sister is Medium size, and her speed is 40 ft.
- She is *chaotic good*.
- She has 19 hit points.
- She has a Strength score of 14.
- She has a single hoof attack.
- ***Hooves.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

"Please take us home, pleeease! Our parents and Uncle Gemhaz must be ever so worried. We hope they are all safe. But there are treacherous spriggans lurking about and even dark elves from the Dark Below! We're sorry we didn't listen and went wandering. We're soooo sorry!"

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for rescuing the Single Sister from the Jagged Maw.

SINGLE SISTER

The Single Sister pleading with the characters to take her home.

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38. Blue Light

Background

A blue flame that hovers in the air is the only remnant of Wee Cobalt, a bluecap fey, whose pipe was stolen by the ettin Sputtle and Croak and who is now trapped in a pocket plane as a result. If transferred to a lamp or torch, the blue light guides the bearer towards the direction of its pipe, which has become the ettin's favorite keepsake.

Environment

The utter darkness of the Dark Below is pierced by a blue flame that twinkles and hovers in the center of a small niche in the wall of a passage. Upon closer inspection, the light does not emit warmth but seems to respond to sounds by twinking. It does not move from its place if disturbed.

Scene

The light can be transferred to a non-magical light source, like a torch or lantern, that starts burning with a blue flame once lit. The light seems to burn brighter and lead to a single direction towards the east as if guiding the bearer. The blue light source and the transferred light cannot be extinguished, even by magical means, but can be covered to block its illumination.

39. Sputtle and Croak

Background

Sputtle and Croak, the venerable ettin, has retired from the surface world of the Bleak Mire to the Dark Below after the Matrons of Malice took over, preferring the seclusion of underground caves to the dangers on the surface. The ettin met Wee Cobalt on its journey and took the bluecap's pipe, thus trapping the fey creature in a pocket dimension.

Environment

Sputtle and Croak inhabits a dry cave deep under the Mountains of Rust. It subsists on giant cave spiders and lizards it hunts in the nearby caverns. The remains of these meals are strewn around the entrance of the cave. The ettin sleeps on a ledge it covered by a rotting mat of lizard hides with pieces of fat tissue and ligaments that still dangle from them. A giant two-headed form sits against the cave wall, smoking a tiny pipe and reminiscing with itself in the Giant tongue about better days and finer feasts. Its large battleaxe and morningstar lie next to it on the ground.

Scene

Sputtle and Croak (use the **ettin** monster entry) sits against the wall of the cave and smokes a tiny pipe topped with a covering clap resembling a cap, decorated in the fey style. When characters enter its cave, the ettin drops the pipe, rises from the ground, groaning and swearing in Giant as its old bones creak from the effort. It raises its large weapons and descends upon the characters, happy to finally be able to feast on humanoid flesh.

"I eat dem live! No! We cook them in lizard's blood, we make soup! No! I want dem juicy fresh! Nooo! Soup! Nooo! Fresh!"

Sputtle and Croak arguing about how to prepare the characters.

If the pipe is lit with the blue light, Wee Cobalt the **bluecap** returns to the Bleak Mire and can guide its summoner through the underground passages of the Dark Below in exchange for the pipe's return and payment of 1 silver per day. Wee Cobalt knows all locations in the Dark Below, will willingly accompany and assist the characters for regular payment but will not venture to the surface.

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Wee Cobalt

"Thanks be to ye, f'r mine own rescue and return. I shalt be yer guide if 't be true I receive mine own fair pay of one silver piece every day. And ye'll has't none bett'r in these dark passages than I, Wee Cobalt"

Wee Cobalt offering its services to the characters.

40. Hollowroot

Background

When the Dark Star ruled over Aglarion, and eternal darkness covered the realm, the members of the Seven Flowers returned to their base of operations to the Feyrealm, under the roots of an immense tree surrounded by a ring of ever-blooming oaks that served as a gateway into the central tree. These chambers formed from the sanctified roots they dubbed the Hollowroot, which hid them from all forms of scrying and divinations employed by Faeryl Myrryn and her demonic allies. During the inquisitions of the Fists of the Sun under the King-Priest Rodnar the All-seeing, the remaining gnome druids in Aglarion, now numbering just a few initiates, finally abandoned their glades and circles altogether and returned once again to the Feyrealm. That is, until the Matrons of Malice arrived in the fey domain and overthrew King Dasmag. The hags never found the secret underground hideout but have burnt the ever-blooming oaks around the Hollowroot to ashes, which has caused Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut within to get trapped under the giant oak, as the sole remaining representative of the ancient order. The venerable archdruid is content to live out the rest of his days and become one with the majestic tree above but can impart great wisdom and lessons from the past if players can contact him. Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut has a good sense of what's transpiring in the Bleak Mire through his druidic magic but can only communicate with the outside through plants as he has been locked in the Hollowroot. This limited form of communication through the tree above the Hollowroot has not been efficient in contacting creatures on the surface, other than Bhoulgnim the dryad, who understands plants. However, the druid keeps his identity hidden from Bhoulgnim, who believes it speaks to the tree itself.

Environment

A majestic oak in full bloom stands at the edge of the Forest of Gloom, the Stormy Marshes, and the foothills of the Mountains of Rust, towering 90 feet above the wet ground. The burnt stumps of six oaks

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surround the tree. The tree's leaves wave in the wind, seemingly speaking in rustles.

The Hollowroot under the tree is a space that is apart from the plane's fabric, rooted in a remnant from the Primal Bloom. It can only be accessed through the circle of trees above. The space is well-protected by magic with layers of permanent *forbiddance, antilife shell,* and *nondetection* spells.

Scene

If any character uses *detect magic,* they see a faint inactive and lingering conjuration aura around the tree and the six burned stumps. Using the *identify* spell reveals that the six trees can activate a *tree stride* spell on the central oak that leads to a hollow within the roots of the tree. However, the six trees must be mature and in bloom for the spell to work.

Bhoulgnim (use the **dryad** monster entry) hides in the upper branches of the Hollowroot tree, conversing with **Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut** through the tree, thinking that it is speaking with the tree itself. Bhoulgnim is a humanoid figure who is entirely composed of plants, with bark-like skin, lithe branches for appendages, and partially covered in leaves, buds, and flowers. The dryad usually welcomes strangers and loves to tell esoteric stories of plants in a self-satisfied manner. Characters must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice Bhoulgnim amidst the foliage. The dryad will try to gauge the character's intentions before revealing its position. If it is noticed, it will approach the characters and introduce itself, especially to characters with fey ancestry like elves or gnomes. It can easily escape using tree stride, and it will not hesitate to put characters under its fey charm if needed. If the characters can gain Bhoulgnim's trust, it will relate that it found the oak, which speaks to it about events on the Bleak Mire in a most wise and omniscient manner, seeing the realm through the eyes of beasts and roots of plants. The dryad is more than willing to translate the tree's words, but embellishes them and adds its own anecdotes. Characters can attempt a **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check with disadvantage to realize that the knowledge possessed by the tree and answers given don't align with what a mere tree would know, as if someone was speaking through the tree.

Bhoulgnim

"I can speak with the tree for you and translate its wise words. It speaks of the olden days, sometimes in way too much detail I might add, but I will do my best to spice them a bit for you. It does have many questions though, which is a bother for sure. Would you like to hear the one about a friend of the Seven Flowers, a maiden named Sarath and her shining light?"

Bhoulgnim offering to translate for the tree.

Characters who cast the *speak with plants* spell can directly communicate with the tree and Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut, however, the archdruid will try to pretend to be the tree. If such a character converses with the tree, they can catch the archdruid in his pretense and notice that there are two entities present with a successful **DC 17 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check. If caught, the archdruid comes clean, introduces himself, and relates the sad history of his order and its role on both the Material Plane and the Fey-realm (see the History and Factions of the Bleak Mire in the chapter introduction).

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ARCHDRUID BUMDRI FIZZLENUT

"I must admit, I tend to hoard the last memories of my circle, as the sole Seven Flower who remains. One must take great care these days in avoiding the dangers of the dark forces that have corrupted the realm until it can be restored to a more benevolent sovereign than the accursed hags. I am Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut, and I know how this can be achieved."

Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut when the characters notice his deception.

In general, Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut tries to discover what's happening in the realm above, questioning the characters on their origins and motives. The archdruid has accepted his fate as the last Seven Flower and has resigned himself to living out his years trapped in the Hollowroot. Nonetheless, the archdruid is still concerned for the realm and its fey inhabitants. He will aid the characters with his knowledge of important locations and survivors of the hags' exterminations if characters gain his trust. The druid is familiar with the inhabitants and locations of the Forest of Gloom, Stormy Marshes, Burning Woods, Bloodrime Forest, and Blightwoods. However he only knows their state before the Matrons of Malice corrupted them. He is also familiar with the Pool of Rainbows and its function, including the command phrase "Colors of the Rainbow.", as well as Tipper and its tree, and the secret entrance to the Refuge. Most importantly, Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut knows the ritual needed to take sovereignty of the realm at the Hall of the Sovereign beneath the Lake of Bile.

Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut (12 CR, 8,400 XP). Use the **druid** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut has 93 hit points.
- He has an alignment of *neutral good.*
- He is Small size and his speed is 25 ft.
- He has darkvision 60 ft.
- His Intelligence score is 16, Wisdom score is 19, and Charisma score is 13.
- He has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
- His skills are Medicine +13, Nature +12, Perception +8.
- He has the **feyrealm-born** monster template traits.
- ***Spellcasting.*** Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut has the following druid spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, guidance, resistance, shillelagh*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, cure wounds, goodberry, speak with animals*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, locate animals or plants, locate object*
  - 3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, plant growth, speak with plants*
  - 4th level (3 slots): *conjure woodland beings, locate creature, stoneshape*
  - 5th level (3 slots): *commune with nature, planar binding, scrying*
  - 6th level (1 slot): *conjure fey, heal*
  - 7th level (1 slot): *mirage arcane, regenerate*
  - 8th level (1 slot): *control weather*
  - 9th level (1 slot): *shapechange*

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Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if the characters converse with Archdruid Bumdri Fizzlenut.

41. The Refuge

Background

A group of ragged refugees led by Gemhaz, the former Hunstmaster of King Dasmag, is one of the two organized groups in the Bleak Mire who actively oppose Krasnar's mad rampage. The elderly satyr has collected a couple of dozen fey survivors from various locations and has led them to a hidden patch of ground under a glade of mangrove trees that have been grown into an impenetrable mass of roots, trunks, and foliage. The group remains hidden through a friendship with the plants and the frequent application of *plant growth* spells. They try to avoid attention, especially those of the raiding aberrant drow and the minions of the Matrons of Malice. Gemhaz has recently lost an eye to Dolonriarnodo, the cursed chimera, before managing to escape into the gloom of the mangrove trees.

Environment

The Refuge is a large area of the mangrove forest that forms an impenetrable dome of intertwining tree trunks and branches that bars passage from the outside. The growth of trees looks ordinary, merely an impassable cluster within the thick mangrove forest. The Refuge is enclosed by the trees, covering an area with a radius of 100 feet. The ground within is dry, unlike the wetlands and waterways surrounding it. The wall around the Refuge is almost impregnable, surrounded and covered by a dome of thorny wood that is 60 feet thick and works as a *wall of thorns* spell. There is a single secret passage through the thorny wall of the Refuge, whose entrance is well-hidden by vines and foliage. It takes a successful **DC 25 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the narrow opening.

Scene

The Refuge is home to an assortment of fey creatures and some notable personas. Notable members of the group are Gemhaz (use the **satyr** monster entry), the former Huntsmaster of King Dasmag, Talathil Basri, an inquisitive feyrealm-born elf druid (use the **druid** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template and a druid spellcasting level of 5) leaning on a white oak staff, and a retired an elven paladin named Elcan (use the **gladiator** monster entry with AC 14 without armor or shield) displaying the holy symbol of the Redeemer, who has fled to the Feyrealm from Baendretarixus, after slaying the dragon. In addition, there are a few members of the group with fighting capacities - twelve elven **scouts** (with the **feyrealm-born** monster template), an elven **spy** (with the **feyrealm-born** monster template), four **sprites,** three **centaurs,** five **satyrs,** a **dryad,** and eight **blink dogs.** The rest of the group are either too young or old to fight.

Two invisible sprite sentries guard the area, hiding in the higher branches of the mangroves using *invisibility*. The sentries will alert Gemhaz and the creatures within to the characters' arrival. The fey creatures gathered inside will assemble to repel intruders but will not engage unless the characters try to force their way through the thorns or attack the plants. In this case, the force of fey will try to repel them. The four sprites will stalk the characters and harass them from afar, the eight blink dogs will teleport to the characters' flanks and attack from all directions, and the dryad will use tree stride and try to entangle the characters with spells or charm them. At the same time, the remaining combat-capable inhabitants of the Refuge will emerge from the secret passage and try to encircle the characters.

If the characters enter the Refuge through the secret passage, they will find the host of fey creatures inside, ready for battle. Gemhaz will step forward and demand an explanation for their arrival. If the characters are accompanied by Matyko, the Single Sister, Oderon, Feirefiz, or Commander Pricklethrust, the Huntsmaster will immediately welcome the visitors to the Refuge, offering shelter, meager fare, and conversation. The satyr will relate the fate of King Dasmag at the hands of the Matrons of Malice and his resistance to the vile forces of the Bleak Mire. Gemhaz will reminisce about the court of the satyr lord and on the wolf hunts that he organized for the King as Hunstmaster.

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During the conversation, Gemhaz sings the *Merry Hunt of the Horned Hero,* accompanied by his pipes, which he plays with a lamenting tone. He mentions that he visited the late King's court, and when he sang the song, the King's voice joined in from the afterlife, and his ghost appeared. However, the ghost of the King was in a rage, demanded justice and vengeance with a contorted expression, and commanded Gemhaz to seek its killers. Gemhaz fled from his King's wrath and has been collecting survivors, according to his King's wishes.

Gemhaz

"It was before the Scaled Impostor took my King's Court that I returned to the place of my liege's demise. In loving remembrance I sang the Merry Hunt of the Horned Hero as an homage to my lord, but I failed to calm his wrath, which chilled me to the bone. It seems I wield my bow better than my pipes."

Gemhaz explaining his visit to the ruined court of King Dasmag's.

Gemhaz and the fey know a great deal about the Bleak Mire and the surrounding areas. They are familiar with all locations in the Forest of Gloom, Twisted Forest, Hungry Downs, Stormy Marshes, and the Blightwoods, except for the Witchcave, Trail of Acorns, or the Jagged Maw. Gemhaz has sent out a formidable scouting party, the Swooping Needles, led by Commander Pricklethrust, however, they have not returned (see Webs of the Ettercaps, location 43.). Gemhaz is also worried about Oderon, the commander of King Dasmag's renowned centaur cavalry, who went mad after the Matrons of Malice murdered his love, Cillomene. Also, the Single Sister, a two-headed centaur filly, is missing from the camp, whose parents and the rest of the fey are distraught as a result (see Jagged Maw, location 37.). If any of these individuals are rescued, the fey will be overjoyed and shower the characters with praise and gifts - flowers, handcrafted charms, kisses, caresses, and hugs.

Elcan

All notable NPCs will stay in the Refuge and lend support to the characters from there. Gemhaz's primary motivation is saving as many fey creatures from the clutches of the hags or the drow of House Ausstyl, and he will not risk the group's safety for heroic errands.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points for bringing the Single Sister home and reuniting her with her parents.

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TALATHIL BASRI

42. POOL OF RAINBOWS

Background

This once beautiful pool was also corrupted by arrival Matrons of Malice. It once was the favorite bathing pool of King Dasmag.

Environment

At the edge of the Forest of Gloom and the Hungry Downs lies a small pool of fetid, yellowish, and cloudy water that smells of sulfur. The pool has a diameter of 50 feet. On the northeastern shore, the foundations and abutments of a bridge begin from the pool's edge, only to break off after several steps.

Scene

The bridgehead is actually magical in nature and can be used to summon a rainbow bridge if one stands on the steps and speaks the command phrase, "Colors of the Rainbow.". Characters who cast the *detect magic* spell can see an active magical aura of the conjuration school. The command phrase can be learned via the casting of an *identify, legend lore,* or similar spell. However, first the water under rhe bridgehead needs to be cleared by using any magic that can control, replace, or purify the putrid waters (spells such as *control water, create food and water, create or destroy water, purify food and drink, sleet storm,* items like a *decanter of endless water,* or monsters like a water elemental). When the rainbow bridge is activated, it transfers any creature to a similar bridgehead at the Tainted Waters (location 10.) on the Western shore of the Lake of Blood. The bridge fades after one minute.

43. WEBS OF THE ETTERCAPS

Background

Most denizens of Bleak Mire give the Burning Woods a wide berth because savage ettercaps have been spread over the area by the Matrons of Malice. The ettercaps hunt for all manner of flying prey, especially fey, like sprites, whom they entrap with webbed traps and store in cocoons for later feedings. Two of the prisoners in the cocoons are still alive - Feirefiz, the flamboyant sprite courtier of King Dasmag's former court, and Commander Pricklethrust, who led King Dasmag's sprite squadrons, the Swooping Needles.

Environment

Thick webs cover this part of the Forest of Gloom, from the wetlands below to the tops of the thick mangrove forest. Raindrops from the almost permanent rainfall make the webs easy to see but hard to light on fire. The cocoons on the branches of the gnarled trees hold creatures of different sizes and stages of decomposition, some of them still weakly struggling.

Scene

Eight **ettercaps** are spread out in an area with a radius of 100 feet that is filled with their webs. The monstrosities have retained the coccooned bodies of the still struggling Feirefiz (use the **sprite** monster entry) and **Commander Pricklethrust** in the center of their network of webs as bait. The ettercap tribe waits in hiding for the characters to enter their webbing to rescue the struggling creatures from the cocoons. If the characters enter the webbing, they move closer and start to spit their webs in turns. They only enter melee to attack restrained creatures.

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A creature in contact with the webbing must make a **DC 11 Strength** ability check at the start of its turn or become restrained, sticking to the web. The wet webbing is considered difficult terrain, and it is immune to fire damage.

Feirefiz will be eternally grateful for his rescue and gives thanks to the characters in a long and courteous sentence.

Feirefiz

"Most honorable and benevolent saviors! You have arrived at the most fortuitous time and vanquished the monstrosities that planned to feed on our humble selves. Allow me to introduce the highly esteemed Commander Pricklethrust, the commander of the Swooping Needles, the Defeater of Gorgulan the Bloodfrenzied Demon, friend and sworn ally of his liege, the late King Dasmag."

Feirefiz thanking the characters and introducing the sprite general.

When freed, Commander Pricklethrust shows pride but thanks the characters for their deed. He hides his sorrow when he tells the tale of his sprite unit that was turned into gruesome ghouls by the Matrons of Malice.

"The hags cursed them with undeath, and they fed on each other. I was forced to retreat, as nothing could be done for them at that time. I dare anyone to call me a coward! I swear on the memory of my King Dasmag that the hags will yet feel the sting of my needles."

Commander Pricklethrust explaining the fate of the Swooping Needles in a taciturn manner.

Commander Pricklethrust

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The two fey are eternally grateful for their rescue and wish to return to the Refuge as soon as possible, through the secret passage that leads inside the copse of mangrove trees. They can tell the command phrase for the Pool of Rainbows (location 42.), "Colors of the Rainbow", and inform the characters about every location related to King Dasmag, but they are not aware of their current states.

Treasure

One of the skeletal bodies within a cocoon is that of a dark-robed human, wearing a silver necklace with a pendant that looks like a fish scale with the image of a kraken grappling a trident, worth 250 gold pieces. Another body, a hobgoblin, has a *+1 spear* still grasped in his boney hands.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they save Feirefiz and Commander Pricklethrust.

44. Thunderhoot

Background

Giant crocodiles inhabit the waterways below the trees of the Forest of Gloom, but the true master of the woods who dominates the dry ground is Thunderhoot, a magical golden owlbear.

Environment

The thick batches of overhanging mangrove trees cast long shadows onto the waterways of the Forest of Gloom. Moisture drips from above, and the silence of the marsh is broken only by the occasional distant croaking or splashing sound.

Scene

The waterways, which regularly need to be traversed to travel the Forest of Gloom, are the domain of three **giant crocodiles.** The beasts will lurk underwater and pounce on any creature traveling the waterways, or approaching too near to the water's edge.

Thunderhoot hunts on the dry areas of the forest and will attack all intruders on its domain. The owlbear's feathers glitter with a golden sheen as it emerges from behind the cover of the trees.

Thunderhoot (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **owlbear** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Thunderhoot has AC 17.
- It has 114 hit points.
- It has damage resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.
- ***Magic Resistance.*** Thunderhoot has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- ***Magic Weapons.*** Thunderhoot 's attacks are magical.

Treasure

If Thunderhoot is slain, its feathers can be plucked. They are pure gold, weigh 100 pounds in total, and are worth 2,400 gold pieces.

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45. Awakened Library

Background

The hall inside is the domain of the four Tomelords, sentient books that serve as fonts of wisdom and forgotten lore about various topics. The four librarians are the Historian, the Tomelord of History, the Abbot, the Tomelord of Religion, the Oakbound, the Tomelord of Nature, and the Sage, the Tomelord of Arcana. They were advisors to King Dasmag, who respected their advice but rarely relied on it, especially in his last decades of debauchery. The Tomelords are devoted enemies of the Matrons of Malice, who have so far refrained from destroying the intelligent constructs because of their knowledge, on which the hags might choose to rely in the future.

Environment

A solitary, one-story columned building rises on a small hill surrounded by the waters of the Stormy Marshes, decorated with engraved pages of an uncountable number of books. A closed iron double gate depicts a vast library with flying books - the Awakened Library. The gate is defaced by ghoulish drawings and symbols done in blood.

Alshondyrr Jaev'resz is a drow wizard who left her house to seek entry into the Awakened Library where she expects to benefit from the infinite knowledge it holds. Alshondyrr Jaev'resz has seen the symbol of nightmare and chose to stay away from the door, pondering on her next step. She is not related to the drow of House Ausstyl and will ally herself against them if needed.

Inside, the library is an enormous hall filled with tall shelves that form rows of walls. They are filled with an almost unimaginable number of books that come in an amazing variety of sizes and forms.

Scene

The Matrons of Malice wove a symbol of nightmare on the gate, causing all those who glimpse their drawings to suffer terrible living nightmares. A creature who comes within 30 feet of the gate is subjected to a *weird* spell.

Alshondyrr Jaev'resz

Alshondyrr Jaev'resz (use the **mage** monster entry with an alignment of *neutral* and the traits of the **drow** monster entry) approaches the characters and tells them that she wants to get inside. She is nervous about the social situation and seemingly blunt when presenting her case. The drow mage helps with her spells to get inside but does not answer questions unrelated to her demand, which she explains in an audacious manner. Alshondyrr Jaev'resz walks off if rejected or enters the library if allowed to, but in either case, she will not seek the company of the characters again, engrossed in her own motivations for lore.

"Greetings. I want in."

Alshondyrr Jaev'resz presenting herself in the most succinct fashion.

The Tomelords are thankful for the removal of the symbol of nightmare from the gates of the Awakened Library. They provide all their help to the characters and are motivated to see the Matrons of Malice and the drow of House Ausstyl fall.

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The Sage

The Abbot

The Historian

The Oakbound

"You have proved to value the freedom of knowledge. We are at your service to vanquish any doubt and to provide the answers you seek."

The Tomelords welcoming the characters.

The well organized and labeled library contains books on various topics related to the area of expertise of the Tomelords (use the **flying sword** monster entry with an Intelligence ability score of 20 and a respective skill of +10), spellbooks, and special lecture stones that emit voice recordings of famous loremasters. The Awakened Library grants the following benefits:

- A creature who spends one hour researching a topic related to Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion can make the respective Intelligence skill check with advantage or research any magic item's functionality as if it had cast *identify* spell on the item.
- A creature who spends one day researching any topic can gain an answer to the question as if it has cast the *commune* spell.
- A creature who spends one week researching a person, place, or object can gain information about it as if it had cast the *legend lore* spell.
- The library contains the detailed descriptions of all spells for all classes, allowing those who learn spells to add them to their spellbook. The spells in the library are not considered scrolls.

A character who spends one week researching how to remove the curse from the *crown of Aglarion* learns the requirements of the ritual as described in The Cleansing Ritual section of the chapter. However, the *legend lore* spell does not provide information on the consequences of the ritual, including the rejuvenation of Krasnar Azennar as the Lich-Knight.

The Tomelords can answer specific questions about every location and creature in the Bleak Mire.

46. Skull of the Fey Dragon

Background

The entire area is actually just the top of the colossal skull of Xolenthas, the colossal fey dragon, who was slain by Faeryl Myrryn eons ago. Her immense body has slowly sunk beneath the ground into the reed-covered marshland, her flesh rotting and leaving only bones over the centuries, with only the top of her skull rising to the surface. It is possible to descend to the upper reaches of the Dark Below through the dragon's empty eye sockets and along its immense and hollow spine.

Morifade, a necromancer of the highest order who is obsessed with dragons, has made it his mission to raise the skeleton of Xolenthas using a series of *wish* spells. The archmage has been casting his spell for years now, and he was only recently able to achieve some minor resonance in the bones of the legendary

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fey dragon. Morifade possesses a *wishing bell,* an item that negates the failure check of casting a *wish* spell due to stress, so he only needs time to complete this daring task.

Environment

A rise twenty miles across breaks the flat waters of the Stormy Marshes, and two horns protrude from its center, rising for miles towards the dark skies. The layer of bone is covered in thick moss that is slippery with the heavy rains in the area and is considered difficult terrain. Two gaping holes can be found on the mound, eight hundred feet above the ground and measuring two miles across. Inside the left eye socket of the dragon's skeleton, the terrain is smooth and extremely steep in some places. At its bottom, there is a faintly shimmering rectangle that is 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall, glowing in the darkness and hovering in the air. Passages of bone lead to the occipital bone of the skeleton, whence one can reach the Dark Below by traveling along the spine.

Scene

Morifade (use the **archmage** monster entry with a Strength score of 3, his 9th and 7th level spells used up, and in possession of a *wishing bell*) camps at the bottom of the dragon's skull cavity in a lavish building conjured by a *magnificent mansion* spell. The archmage is resting between uses of special *wish* spells that are a serious drain on his strength. Morifade will not tolerate any interference that would jeopardize his plans and wishes to be left alone in his weakened and precarious state.

When characters approach the shimmering entry to the magnificent mansion, Morifade emerges through the entrance. The wizard tries to strike an imposing pose, raising his draconic claws, but moves slowly and seems to be shaking from weakness. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 19 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check to realize that Morifade is under the stress of casting a *wish* spell that does not duplicate another spell. The archmage will interact with the characters for as short a time as possible before retiring into his invisible mansion. He is gruff and extremely terse. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to notice that Morifade wants them to depart as soon as possible and has a secret to which he is fanatically devoted.

Morifade

"Is there any among you who is able to cast the wish spell? If not, you best be on your way and not meddle with me. For I am Morifade and I do not tolerate meddling. I will not offer you anything, nor do I make demands on you. The passage to the Dark Below starts at the spine of the great Xolenthas, through the occipital bone, yonder. So begone and leave me be!"

Morifade addressing the characters before stepping back into his magnificent mansion.

47. The Raging Doll

Background

A horrible creation of flesh bound together from various body parts - the legs of hill giants, the body of a centaur, the head of a satyr, the arms of a troll, and the wings of a hippogriff - is on an endless rampage in the Stormy Marshes. This is a flesh golem that was created for Tyke and stitched together by Alsandr

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Murchadh in the Toy Factory, and set loose on the Bleak Mire to wreak havoc. The golem went berserk at the border of the Hungry Downs and the Stormy Marshes, destroying everything in its path.

Environment

A path of destruction dotted by broken trees and dead creatures, leads from the Hungry Downs into the Stormy Marshes. At the end of this path stands a giant deformed creature that rages in an inarticulate voice.

Scene

The **Raging Doll** attacks anything it sees, be it an object or a creature.

Raging Doll (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **flesh golem** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The Raging Doll is a Huge creature.
- It has 186 hit points.
- It has a Strength ability score of 25.
- ***Slam.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 23 (3d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

48. The Wingless Hippogriffs

Background

A flock of hippogriffs once made their nests on the thickets at the edge of the Forest of Gloom, until Tyke found the animals and coveted their wings for her gruesome dolls. She killed off every female member of the flock and left the males alive and wingless. Without being able to reproduce, only a couple dozen elderly hippogriffs remain, who are extremely violent and territorial in their bitterness.

Environment

Large brown and white feathers cover the ground in this area. A heap of branches and logs ahead looks like a makeshift nest, or rather, a nest that once was built with great care but has since suffered significant damage.

Scene

The characters can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to notice that they have ventured into the territory of some hippogriffs that walk instead of flying.

Eight **hippogriffs** with their wings torn off shamble forward from the shades as they spot the characters, holding their heads high in a threatening position, moving the stumps of their once magnificent wings in reflex. If the characters draws closer, the hippogriffs attack in unison.

49. The Legless Giants

Background

The members of the tribe of feyrealm-born hill giants, the Burlybatch, who once made the Hungry Downs their homes, were favorite victims of Tyke, who harvested the giants' legs to use them in creating horrible zombie dolls for her play. Her legless victims were left alive and in constant terror as Tyke forced the giants to procreate and offer the legs of their younglings to her and her Toymaker, Alsandr Murchadh, as material for her newest creations from flesh.

Environment

A handful of huge huts made out of hewn stone stand in this region, each of them the home to a crippled giant that crawls or sits in front of it. The area is littered with equipment made of crude stone and wood and half-eaten animal carcasses.

Scene

The five legless hill giants who make up the **Burlybatch hill giant** tribe growl and moan at the sight of intruders. They greet any unwanted visitors with a volley of throwing rocks and smash anything that comes near them. They look weathered and hopeless in their endless suffering imposed on them by the powerful midnight hag.

Burlybatch Hill Giant (CR 4, 1,100 XP). Use the **hill giant** monster entry with the following modifications:

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- The Burlybatch hill giant uses its hands to move with a speed of 10 feet.
- It makes melee and ranged attack rolls with a disadvantage.

The giants can be cured only with a *regenerate* or similar spell that grows back severed limbs. If the characters manage to regrow the severed limbs of the hill giants, they become friendly for a short time but revert to being bullying and aggressive very soon, quickly forgetting who helped them.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they manage to heal all of the hill giants.

50. The Toy Factory

Background

Tyke took over King Dasmag's workshops, a collection of stone buildings to the south of the Stormy Marshes. The midnight hag killed all of the crafty gnomes and dwarves who worked there and used a curse of *geas* on Alsandr Murchadh, the feyrealm-born dwarven chief artisan, to command him to fashion gruesome dolls from the mutilated body parts of the inhabitants of the Feyrealm - satyrs, centaurs, hill giants, hippogriffs, and all manner of feyrealm-born creatures - so she might turn them into part-toy, part-zombie guests for her grisly tea parties. Alsandr Murchadh has also been branded with the *branding iron of the Hag Queens* so that the hags can keep tabs on him. Alsandr is ceaselessly working on fabricating new dolls that fill the workshop as he refurbishes the stock of corpses at his disposal. Alsandr also goes foraging for fresh corpses deposited nearby at the grave of the centaur Cillomene by Oderon, the mad centaur hunter.

Environment

Several small stone houses with bright green roofs stand near the shores of the Lake of Tears as colorful spots in front of the raging clouds of the Everstorm. Only one of the houses has smoke rising from its chimney and light in its gently curving windows.

A gruesome sight welcomes those who step inside the building, which now looks more like a butchery than a workshop of wood and metal in the times of King Dasmag. A blood-covered dwarf in a worn apron stands behind a workbench, sewing body parts together with practiced movements.

Alsandr Murchadh

Scene

Alsandr Murchadh (use the **expert** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template) is shocked to meet the characters and immediately apologizes for what he is doing. He says that he was cursed with a spell that opens deep and life-threatening wounds on his body if he does not comply with the commands of Tyke, one of the Matrons of Malice. He also recounts his braning by the hags. He tells his story and begs the characters to remove the deadly curse from him.

"Please understand! The hag cursed me. I had no other choice but to follow her awful command. She made me do it! Please save me, I beg you!"

Alsandr Murchadh making excuses and begging the characters.

He can inform the characters in great detail about such locations as the Raging Doll, Cillomene's Grave,

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Crumbling Archways, the Mad Centaur, Legless Giants, Wingless Hippogriffs, and regions such as the Lake of Tears, the Everstorm, and the Stormy Marshes.

Whether he is saved or not, Alsandr Murchadh gifts the character with an *implement of construct control* that has 3 charges left, a magic device he has been hiding for years. He does so to make up for his deeds and to help the characters overcome the Raging Doll and the Matrons of Malice.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they can remove the *geas* spell from Alsandr Murchadh.

51. The Mad Centaur

Background

Oderon, the centaur hunter, went mad when his love Cillomene was slain by Tyke. The former commander of King Dasmag's cavalry force is now suffering from permanent hallucinations in his insanity, seeing prey in any creature it comes across on his permanent hunt. He roams the areas surrounding the Lake of Tears, offering the bodies of his victims to his dead love Cillomene at a menhir where she was buried. Alsandr Murchadh often carries away the corpses to the Toy Factory to be used as raw material for Tyke's horrific dolls.

Environment

The flames of the Burning Woods can be clearly seen on the other side of the Burrows of the Black Worm. On this side of the enormous riverbed-like formation, the hills of the Hungry Downs are less treacherous, and a thin layer of bushes cover the rocks.

Scene

Oderon is a seasoned hunter who once led King Dasmag's cavalry in times of old. In his madness, he attacks the characters without any questions. He shoots them from three-quarters cover, improving his AC to 21 and his Dexterity saving throw to +7, and charges with his pike only if the characters approach him to initiate melee combat.

ODERON

Oderon (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **centaur** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Oderon has AC 16 (chain mail).
- He has 75 hit points.
- ***Longbow.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.
- ***Precise Shot.*** Oderon ignores bonuses granted by covers except for total cover.

"These will be worthy trophies for you my princess."

Oderon's crazed mumbling to himself.

A *greater restoration* or similar higher level spell can cure Oderon's indefinite madness. He immediately realizes what he has done and joins up with the other fey at the Refuge to make up for his sins. He knows the secret entrance to the hidden hideout.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if the characters cure Oderon's madness.

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52. Cillomene's Grave

Background

Cillomene, the centaur oracle was slain by Tyke and her body buried at the foot of a standing stone near the Toy Factory by her grieving mate, Oderon.

Environment

The stone is decorated with equine motifs, a relief of a sun that is opening as an eye, and a more recent engraving that reads: "My Love Cillomene, Every kill is dedicated to You." Several fresh corpses of fey, fey-realm-born, and aberrant drow creatures lie rotting at the foot of the menhir.

Scene

The bodies are victims of Oderon that have been deposited here by the mad hunter. Odeon regularly shows up at the location.

53. The Crumbling Archways

Background

The Matrons of Malice placed an enchantment on the arches, and those who pass through feel a strong compulsion to dive into the dark pit. Kaelor Griefspear, a dwarven trophy hunter who has ventured into the Feyrealm many years ago to hunt fey for sale in Aglarion, has seen the horrific effects of the enchanted archways and the well. The dwarf stays at the location while planning his hunt for Oderon, the mad centaur in the Hungry Downs.

Environment

A single well stands on a small island close to the shore of the Lake of Tears, surrounded by the ruins of stone archways that seem to continuously crumble and reform as one views them from up close. The well is exactly the same in design as the Bottomless Well (Onadbyr location 113.). A small boat rests on the shore of the island.

Scene

Kaelor Griefspear's (use the **veteran** monster entry with an alignment of *chaotic neutral*) camp is a simple tent and a fire pit outside the circle of crumbling arches. The seasoned trophy hunter confronts the characters as soon as they approach the site, and if none of them are fey creatures, he warns them about the dangers of the arches. He recounts that he saw a satyr who entered and suffered a gruesome fate. The dwarf is slightly crazed and obsessed with hunting fey creatures, proudly showing off his trophies like the horns of a satyr, the head of a sprite, or spriggan ears linked on a chain he wears around his neck. He is unwilling to leave the location, unless on a hunt for Oderon. He is familiar with the Hagtree, Winter Court, Hunting Grounds, Toy Factory, Cillomene's Grave, Mad Centaur, Raging Doll, Wingless Hippogriffs, Legless Giants, Milk Pool, Everstorm Vortex, the Black Worm, and Nightmare Spiders locations.

Kaelor Griefspear

"Listen, I tell you! The Hag Queens cursed these arches. Don't go further into the isle if you know what's good for you. But enough of that, do you have any trophies of your own? I have a target that I've been dancing with for some time now - a mad centaur hunter

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in the hills nearby. A worthy prey and trophy indeed! And one we can take down together. Yes, yes, let us hunt! Are you with me?"

Kaelor Griefspear calling the characters to a hunt.

A creature that passes through the archways must make a **DC 19 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is compelled to jump into the well, which is actually a passage to the Bottomless Well in Onadbyr, on the Material Plane. A character can make a second **DC 19 Wisdom** saving throw at the edge of the well when facing the deadly depths to end the compulsion effect on a successful save. Those who jump fall for a whole year in the dark if they cannot stop their descent, without food or water, before reaching the other end of the interplanar tunnel. Without a way to nourish themselves during the fall, these creatures are doomed to die.

54. The Everstorm Vortex

Background

The Everstorm Vortex is a rift in space created by the Matrons of Malice, connecting Aglarion to the Everstorm, spreading over to the lands of the Material Plane through the rift. The Vortex was created to exist until the Midnight Curse is in effect.

Environment

A gigantic vortex roils 500 feet above the ground at the edge of the Everstorm, drawing the storm itself into its center, where the waters disappear as if sucked into a gigantic drain.

Scene

A creature who ventures into the Everstorm suffers the effects of the weather conditions described in the Everstorm region's description and Appendix A: The Mignight Curse.

55. Milk Pool

Background

There is a strange pond of milky fluids now turned sour and putrid next to a glade of elm trees. The milk once flowed from the udders of seven legendary milk cows, bred for King Dasmag for their potent honey-flavored milk. However, the magical animals have been diseased by an incurable curse weaved by the Matrons of Malice. Gopat, the half-humanoid bull of the herd, guards the cows, tasked with a riddle for which it might find the solution to lift the curse. Gopat has also been branded with the *branding iron of the Hag Queens* on its rump so that the hags can keep tabs on its suffering. The cows' milk stops from flowing until Gopat finds the answer to the riddle posed to him by the hag coven. Two feyrealm-born children named Emmy and Hanxur, who bear the countenance of a fox and a lynx, have been pestering Gopat for months, trying to guess the answers to the riddle. The pair also enjoys playing tricks on Gopat using their innate spellcasting abilities, and the bull is growing extremely annoyed at the situation.

Environment

A pool of white liquid only a couple of hundred feet across expands in a shallow basin on the rocky ground. Seven huge, saggy-skinned, weak cows stand around it under some elm trees. A large, winged bull with the head of a bearded human stands within the white pool, watching the herd with a worried and frustrated expression on its face.

Scene

The sickly cows are guarded by **Gopat,** a winged centaur with the body of a bull, tasked to herd the cows. It is worried for its herd and is ceaselessly trying to solve the riddle posed to it by the hags, whose solution would break the cursed disease inflicted on the magical milk cows.

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Gopat. Use the **centaur** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Gopat has a fly speed of 40 feet.
- ***Gore.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 17 (2d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Gopat is quite frustrated already, and it is hard to communicate with it. A character who wants to help it must first succeed on a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. On a successful check, Gopat takes a deep breath, and instead of sending them away, tells the characters the exact wording of the riddle, which is as follows:

"There are three identical triplet Merchant Kings standing in front of you. The Kind, The Liar, and the Brash in some order. The Kind always speaks truthfully, The Liar always speaks falsely, but whether the Brash speaks truthfully or falsely is always random. You must determine the identities of each Merchant King by asking three yes-or-no questions, and each question must be posed to exactly one King. The Merchant Kings understand Common, but will answer all questions in their own archaic language. In this unknown language, the words for "yes" and "no" are "wa" and "ra," in some order, but no one knows which word means which. What are the three questions to ask the Merchant Kings to be able to identify them?"

The riddle as told by Gopat.

As the characters approach the Milk Pool, fox-girl Emmy (use the **commoner** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template and the *Keen Hearing and Smell* and *Pack Tactics* abilities) and lynx-girl Hanxur (use the **commoner** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template and the *Keen Smell* and *Pounce* abilities) hide nearby, cast *invisibility,* and follow the characters in stealth to the pool. The girls are great tricksters and have been quite bored with the riddle of late, which they attempt to quickly answer just to anger Gopat, before they retreat by casting *misty step* and hiding. If they see the characters attempting to solve the riddle, they will appear and offer to take part, although with wrong questions just to tease Gopat.

EMMY

"There is no way you will solve it! It can't be solved. We've been trying with Hanxur for months! And Gopat is so mean sometimes. He doesn't even want to play, just the same riddle over and over and over and over again.... Let's play something else!"

Emmy complaining to the characters about the riddle.

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Hanxur

"No Emmy, we will find the answers! But you're right. Some other game would be much more fun! Hihi, I still have some tricks old Gopat hasn't seen yet!"

Hanxur rubbing her paws and trying to hide her giddiness behind a devilish smile.

The centaur bull welcomes all help but becomes quite stressed if the characters can't help him find the answer to the riddle within a short time. After nine wrong questions are asked, Gopat first warns the characters to leave, then flies into a rage, and attacks if they don't retreat.

"This is no game to cheer, or to test your wits. You find this amusing? Are you like these pesky girls that keep testing my patience? I am full of wrong answers, I don't need more."

Gopat warning the characters about staying on point and giving only the right answer.

The questions to answer the riddle are:

- To the King in the middle: If I were to ask you if the Merchant King on the left is the Brash, would you say *wa*?
- To the King who is not the Brash: If I were to ask you if you are the Liar, would you say *wa*?
- To the King who is not the Brash: If I were to ask you if the Merchant King in the middle is the Brash, would you say *wa*?

A character who succeeds on a **DC 24 Intelligence** ability check can find the right answer to the riddle. On the third such failed ability check every day or nine wrong questions asked, Gopat, driven by his frustration, attacks the character who asks the last wrong question or fails the third ability check.

When the three right questions are asked, the cows moo vigorously, their honey-milk starts to flow again, and the pond clears to hold fresh honey-milk. Until then, the milk in the pool is sour and putrid, the cows remain weak, and Gopat gets more and more frustrated over the years that pass as the suffering its herd endures.

Honey-milk. Drinking a mouthful of the fresh honey-milk of the magic cows causes the creature to become invigorated as if targeted by an *aid* spell that affects the imbiber for three days. The honey-milk can be potted and taken away, but it gets sour and ceases to grant its magic effect after three days have passed.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if the characters can answer the riddle correctly and save Gopat and its herd.

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56. Quellar Ausstyl

Background

Quellar Ausstyl, the ancestral home of the Ausstyl drow clan has been alive with horrors since the return of the aberration-infused drow from their self-imposed exile in otherworldly realms. Archdruid Welwyn Ausstyl and the Inheritors of the Unbegotten seek to overtake the Bleak Mire by defeating the Matrons of Malice and preparing a ritual to offer the entirety of the Feyrealm domain to the Farrealm masters of their cult. To achieve this, the druids have summoned an Elder Cortex that reaches its tendrils into the aberrant ground created by Bwael Phindar, the Magnificent Beast, the colossal gibbering mouther fort of the above-ground forces of the aberrant drow led by Krasnar Azennar. The tendrils have sprouted cortex pods on the surface of the aberrant ground around the Chasm, imbued with different druidic spells as protections.

The druids rarely leave their palace in the inner section of the house but are aware of the events taking place on the surface and on other planes of existence through their servants and Qerrai Xalo, their umbral stalker assassin.

See section Drow of House Ausstyl under Factions and section Ascendance of Quellar Ausstyl under History for more information about the drow house and its historical background.

Environment

The fortress of the drow of House Ausstyl can be approached only by finding a single entry tunnel that leads to the bank of the crevasse that separates it from the rest of the Dark Below.

The outer section of Quellar Ausstyl, a large abyss and a series of caves, serves as a defensive line that houses the drow's grimlock slaves and troops of savage drow barbarians. Passages lead from the caves to the Arms of the Unnamable, a disease infested labyrinth that slows the progress of invading forces, ending in guard stations guarded by tentacled masters, warrior monks of the house.

The inner section is a huge cave filled with the Lake of All-Consuming Hunger. At the center of the dark lake stands a drow fort formed out of two immense stalagmites. The fort features narrow corridors and confined spaces that are frustratingly claustrophobic for even those used to underground living conditions. The living areas are not decorated, and they mostly focus on fulfilling their bare minimum required functionalities.

All areas in Quellar Ausstyl are naturally dark, neglected, and smell damp. Caves and rooms are usually 10 feet high if not specified otherwise.

Doors. Doors open inwards and are made of thick blocks of stone that have been fitted with iron hinges and handles. They are usually unlocked but feature masterfully crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The doors have AC 17, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Unhallowed Ground. Quellar Ausstyl is under the permanent effects of a *hallow* spell, blocking celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead from entering the area. Also, any creature charmed, frightened, or possessed by such a creature is no longer charmed, frightened, or possessed upon entering the area.

1. Crevasse of Filth

Background

This natural formation serves as the first line of defense for the aberrant drow and the house slaves. Welvynn Ausstyl, the patron of the drow house casts a *wall of stone* spell to create a bridge when the druids wish to unleash their abominations onto the world outside or leave their home.

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The grimlocks and barbarians use the eastern side of the crevasse to dump their excrement and waste. This keeps the inner caves relatively less smelly, allowing the blind grimlocks to more easily sniff out intruders.

Environment

A 20-foot wide and 80-foot deep crevasse cuts the tunnel in half, both of its ends disappearing into the darkness. The bottom of the pit is covered with excrement and waste on the eastern side, where the tunnel continues. The air is damp and smells extremely awful.

Scene

Anyone standing on the western side of the crevasse is discovered by the grimlocks only if they cross over to the edge of the eastern tunnel by area 2. The barbarians can spot intruders from a longer distance, but they only come to the crevasse once a day. A creature who comes into contact with the huge pile of waste on the bottom of the crevasse has a chance of contracting the disease **sewer plague.**

Treasure

The equipment of the three elven prisoners in area 3 was thrown into the filth at the bottom of the crevasse, including Ashe Dragos's *+1 plate mail,* and Aglar Telcontar's *+1 longsword,* breastplate, and canister of *powder of true form* with three pinches of magic dust.

2. Grimlock Slave Quarters

Background

The drow have been breeding a tribe of primitive grimlocks as their slaves for multiple purposes, most importantly as meat shields for times of war or an invasion against their lair. The grimlocks have lived and died here for many generations. They are terrified of the drow barbarians, and cower in horror when they encounter their druidic noble masters. The latter bring them magical *goodberries* for feed to prevent them from eating each other or their younglings. They sometimes play their primitive percussion instruments in an eyrie, monotone way to entertain themselves.

Powder of True Form

Environment

Several large stone domes built of roughly hewn stone blocks stand in this cave with a ceiling filled with stalactites hanging from a height of 30 feet. The interiors of the domes are bare with no special features and only a few primitive tools made out of bones and stone. The middle section of the cave features a few percussion instruments and a firepit, which is rarely used. Crude carvings cover most of the cave walls.

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Scene

A total of twenty-three **grimlocks** live in the cave with a dozen additional noncombatant younglings. They ferociously attack intruders, alerting the drow frenzied mutants in the nearby caves (area 3) and their leader, Xarzax Ausstyl (area 4).

3. Lair of the Frenzied Mutants

Background

A handful of frenzied male and female mutants of House Ausstyl live in this cave. They are vicious and feral to the point that the grimlocks avoid them entirely. The savage drow are fed daily by their druidic masters with the same *goodberries* offered the grimlock slaves. The barbarians spend their days fighting each other, mating, eating, or training their physique, and occasionally attacking the grimlocks for fun with their bare hands, often killing some and leaving others almost mortally wounded. The frenzied mutants fear and loathe Xarzax Ausstyl, but will do his bidding with utter loyalty.

Environment

This smaller cave smells of sweat and blood. It is furnished with simple fur bedrolls by the walls and a low stone block that serves as a table in the middle.

Three feyrealm-born elves are chained to the wall of the cave. Their neglected, filthy, broken bodies bear the sign of the barbarians' rage.

Scene

Ten **frenzied mutants** occupy this room. If alerted, they attack on sight and fight to the death. Xarzax Ausstyl joins the fray from area 4 after 2 rounds, mounted on his otyugh steed.

The three feyrealm-born elf slaves are Ashe Dragos, a loyal sellsword who is a bit cocky (use the **knight** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template and an alignment of *lawful neutral*), **Algar Tylcantar,** a know-it-all blade-mage, and Azura Slasher (use the **bandit captain** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template and an alignment of *neutral evil*), a marauder who led a band of fey-realm-born orcs - the Slashers. The three have been the prisoners of the savage drow for months and have have no equipment on their persons.

Ashe Dragos

"You had strength in numbers, whereas I, Ashe Dragos singlehandedly slew four of these barbarous drow before they overwhelmed me. I must return to the Refuge and Gemhaz's employ, but first lend me armor and sword, let us rescue my friend Olathynren if it's not too late, and rid this place of the foul drow forevermore!"

Ashe Dragos offering his sword to the characters to cleanse Quellar Ausstyl.

The prisoners are stable at 0 hit points and regain consciousness after a long rest. If healed, the elves act in different ways. Azura Slasher will wish to flee at once, an opinion that Algar Tylcantar shares. The

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two start to fashion a rope across the Crevasse of Filth if the characters don't provide a means to cross. Secretly, Azura Slasher wishes to reunite with the orc band and use Algar Tylcantar's spells to aid the travels across the Bleak Mire. Ashe Dragos, on the other hand is concerned with the fate of his friend Olathynren Elointh, who was taken into the drow's lair when they were captured. He hopes Olathynren is alive and will not leave until his friend is secure. If given equipment and healing for his wounds, he will accompany the characters into Quellar Ausstyl.

Ashe Dragos can also inform the characters about the Refuge and about Gemhaz, the Huntsmaster who has gathered the surviving fey creatures. He is also familiar with all locations within the Twisted Forest, Hungry Down, Forest of Gloom, Stormy Mashes, and Valley of Bloom. He wants to return to the Refuge to aid his fellow fey as soon as possible. He is grateful and happy to accompany the characters on their way to the Refuge and can show them the secret entrance to the hidden hideout.

The Azura Slasher

Algar Tylcantar

Algar Tylcantar (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **scout** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Algar Tylcantar has 32 hit points.
- He is *chaotic good*.
- He an Intelligence score of 15.
- He has the **feyrealm-born** monster template.
- ***Spellcasting.*** Algar Tylcantar is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Algar Tylcantar has the following wizard spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, ray of frost, true strike*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, magic missile, shield*
  - 2nd level (2 slots): *enlarge*, scorching ray*

*Algar Tylcantar casts these spells on itself before combat.

Treasure

One of the drow barbarians has hidden a small ruby worth 50 gold pieces in the mouth of a bear pelt on which it slept.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they save the prisoners.

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4. Xarzax Ausstyl's Cave

Background

Xarzax Ausstyl was born a noble drow but Welvynn Ausstyl did not see hope for his progression as an initiate of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. The archdruid expelled the noble child and threw him in the midsts of the savage frenzied mutants. Over the past century, Xarzax became the mightiest of the savages, trying to prove his worth to his patron and the druids of the cosmic horrors.

Environment

This cave looks more like a den of a monster than the actual living space of a person. A thick layer of leftovers, bones, pieces of clothes and armor, weapons, and mundane waste covers the floor. The air smells of trash and rotten organic materials.

Xarzax Ausstyl

"How dare you step foot on the sacred ground of House Ausstyl! You will die for your insolence and Elgg-Hor will feast on your flesh! Rip them to shreds!"

Xarzax Ausstyl telepathically addressing the characters before raging and issuing the command to attack.

Scene

This is the private lair of **Xarzax Ausstyl** and his **otyugh** steed, Elgg-Hor, who spend their days in this area when not released by the druids to raid outside with his savages and grimlocks. Xarzax Ausstyl mounts his otyugh and attacks intruders on sight, fanatically protecting the tunnels to area 5.

5. Arms of the Unnamable

Background

This ancient labyrinth of tubular tunnels is intended to keep unwanted visitors out of the inner section of Quellar Ausstyl. The deadly disease that lingers within was cultivated by the first ancient drow of the noble house. The safe passage is only known to the monks and druids of the house.

Environment

The narrow, 5 feet diameter tubular stone tunnels are decorated with ancient runes carved into the ground, walls, and ceiling.

Scene

The runes are written in Dark Speech and threaten intruders about continuing on their path, prophesizing their demise and eventual consummation by unimaginable horrors. Some of the runes speak of the greatness of elder beings that existed before time. Following only these runes is the only safe route through the maze of disease-ridden tunnels. Any creature who steps off the safe path has a chance of contracting *mind rot*.

Mind Rot. A creature who comes in contact with the mind rot disease must make a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw or become infected as its mind immediately decays. The infected creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks, and becomes vulnerable to psychic damage. At the end of each of the infected creature's turns, it must make a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw. After failing two of these saving throws, the creature becomes paralyzed. After

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failing three of these saving throws, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points and dies. After succeeding on three of these saving throws, the creature recovers from the disease.

6. MONK SENTINELS

Background

This area serves more as a possible last alert for the nobles of the inner sections than an actual guardpost that could withhold intruders.

Environment

The center of this room features a large weapon rack with various monk weapons. The statues in the corners depict gruesome tentacled aberrations that stare at the onlooker with countless emotionless eyes, each with multiple irises. The two side rooms are used as simple meditation chambers with two dirty bedrolls and a stone pot filled with dirt and some strange-smelling incense sticks in each.

Scene

There are always eight **tentacled masters** stationed at this guard post. Four of the drow monks are always meditating in their rooms while the other four are actively guarding the area. Each tentacled master carries a signal conch horn that they blow if they want to alert their druidic noble masters. In such a case, one of the druids casts a *hallucinatory terrain* spell on the lake to make its shore appear 10 feet further into the lake from its original location (see areas 7 and 8).

Treasure

The weapons rack holds two spears, two short swords, two quarterstaves, and two handaxes, all of them considered to be magical for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction or immunity to nonmagical weapons as long as they are underground. When taken above ground, the weapons permanently lose their magical properties.

7. SLIPWAY

Background

The monks and druids use the boats stored on the top of this slipway to traverse the Lake of All-Consuming Hunger.

Environment

Two small rowing boats rest on the sides of a slope that gently descends towards the dark water.

Scene

The boats can accommodate up to three creatures of Medium size. As an action, one creature can row the boat to give it a speed of 15 feet.

8. THE LAKE OF ALL-CONSUMING HUNGER

Background

A body of poisonous water fills this enormous cave that is the home of a gargantuan chuul summoned thousands of years ago by the ancestors of the current druids.

Environment

Two gigantic stalagmites rise from the dark, cold water that ripples with strange shapes. Numerous stalagmites rise from the water, and many more stalactites hang from the 50 feet high ceiling above.

Scene

If any of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten has cast a *hallucinatory terrain* spell (**DC 16**) on the shores of the lake, it requires a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid falling into the water when stepping on the illusory ground that does not support any weight.

The lake's cold water is highly poisonous due to the saliva of the chuul that lives in it. Any creature in contact with the water must make a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw every round. On a failed save, the creature becomes poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned

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creature is paralyzed. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. A paralyzed creature in water can't swim and may drown.

The lake is the territory of a huge **psychic chuul** that serves the Inheritors of the Unbegotten and the tentacled masters. The chuul does not attack drow or aberration type creatures but will slay any other creature that enters the area. The chuul observes creatures from the lake's depths and uses its *telekinesis* spell to drag creatures into the water and towards itself. If discovered, it rises to attack from a different direction after using its *misty step* spell.

Psychic Chuul (CR 8, 3,900 XP). Use the **chuul** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The psychic chuul's size is Huge.
- It has 152 hit points.
- It has a Strength ability score of 23.
- ***Pincer.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 20 (4d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 16) if it is a Huge or smaller creature and the chuul doesn't have two other creatures grappled.
- Its tentacle's poison saving throw is DC 14.
- ***Psychic Assault (Recharge 5-6).*** Each creature in a 60-foot cone must make a **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw. A creature takes 36 (8d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that has failed its saving throw also makes all attack rolls, ability checks and saving throws with disadvantage for 1 minute.
- ***Innate Spellcasting.*** The psychic chuul's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11). The psychic chuul can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
  - 3/day each: *misty step, telekinesis*

Treasure

The bottom of the lake at its northeastern section hides the ancient, blackened skeletal remains of three drow spies of House Myrryn from hundreds of years ago. The psychic chuul killed these spies, but it did not bother squeezing after them to consume them. Their rotten remains hold a House Myrryn symbol carved into a blood-red garnet worth 150 gold pieces, six gold bars worth 200 gold pieces each, a silver necklace with a large diamond worth 650 gold pieces, two *potions of superior healing,* an *elven chain,* a *+2 longsword,* and a *ring of x-ray vision.*

9. TORTURE CELLS

Background

The aberration-venerating drow hold and torture their prisoners in these cells. The current inhabitant of one of these cells is Olathynren Elointh, a fey-realm-born elf, companion to Ashe Dragos - one of the three prisoners held by the frenzied mutants in area 3. The Inheritors of the Unbegotten keep the already crippled and mutilated elf alive to pry information out of him regarding the remaining fey and their former lord, King Dasmag.

Environment

These cramped cells can hold one prisoner each who can be fastened to the walls by massive chains. The wall opposite the cell door is covered by small blades. A rotatable wheel is positioned next to the cell doors. The cell in the middle holds the brutally tortured body of a middle-aged elf whose legs, arms, ears, and tongue has been removed. The cell smells of blood and decay.

Scene

The rotation wheel next to the door moves the chains and the chained victim along with it from left to right, depending on the direction the wheel is rotated. The blades on the wall deal 9 (2d8) slashing damage to a chained creature when the wheel is rotated in any direction.

Olathynren Elointh (use the **veteran** monster entry with a movement speed of 0 and 3 maximum hit points) is a broken creature, currently stable at 0 hit points. After the pain he suffered and the terror he witnessed, the elven warrior is barely more than a breathing organism that is unable to speak, move, or

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sustain himself. He cannot remember that once he was a member of King Dasmag's court. The characters can restore his severely degraded mental state by casting a *greater restoration* or similar higher level spell.

Olathynren Elointh's physical state can be restored only with a *regenerate* or similar higher level spell. If healed, the elven veteran is grateful and vows to aid the characters in whatever danger they face, along with his friend Ashe Dragos if he's present. Olathynren Elointh has no knowledge of the dealings of House Ausstyl. Still, he is familiar with all locations within the Twisted Forest, Hungry Down, Forest of Gloom, Stormy Mashes, and the Valley of Bloom. He knows the location of the secret passage into the Refuge.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they restore Olathynren Elointh.

10. Vault of the Inconceivable

Background

The Inheritors of the Unbegotten conduct their flesh-warping, aberration-infusing rituals in this room, which also serves as a ceremonial sacrificial chamber. The unholy surgical workshop also features personal cabins where the druids can withdraw to meditate through self-inflicted pain.

Environment

The workbenches and the operating tools on them are covered with dried blood and organic fluids from countless victims. Severed body parts, limbs, tentacles, and unrecognizable appendages lie carefully laid out on most of them. One particular operating table holds several organs, eyes, tongues, and brains in jars of liquid, while the other has the dissected body of a female drow lying on it with two dark figures leaning over it.

The bookshelves inside the room and on the corridor leading to it are filled with manuscripts written in drow Elvish or Deep Speech.

The small private booths hold only red candles and small, thin barbed whips. Drops of blackish blood cover the ground in each.

Scene

Two female **Inheritors of the Unbegotten,** Wal'qtar, and Ruavein Ausstyl are working on the body of a frenzied mutant. They attack the characters on sight with emotionless expressions. A third male **Inheritor of the Unbegotten,** Zauraez Ausstyl, is in deep meditation in the southernmost booth. The drow druid will not hear any commotion from the outside and will not exit the booth for hours. He has 20 hit points left after the self-inflicted tortures he is performing on himself. If the door to the booth is opened, he attacks mercilessly and fights to the death.

Most of the books, written in drow Elvish or Deep Speech, cover topics about the Farrealm, mythical, philosophical, and religious texts and epic poems about time, space, strange locations, and aberrant races or entities that exist beyond the stars.

Treasure

One of the books is a magical tome entitled the *Pnakotic Manuscripts of Yith*.

Pnakotic Manuscripts of Yith (Very Rare Magic Item). This ancient tome is handwritten in Deep Speech. It contains a lengthy, irrational, and mostly incoherent description of a world that exists outside the known universe and a race of highly praised aberrant creatures that inhabit it. A creature who can understand Deep Speech and spends 48 hours over a period of 6 days or fewer studying the manuscript's contents has its Wisdom score increased by 2, as well as its maximum for that score. The manuscript then loses its magic, but regains it after a century. The creature who studies the *Pnakotic Manuscripts of Yith* must also succeed on a **DC 21 Wisdom** saving throw or become afflicted with indefinite madness and gain the following character flaw: "I am convinced that we live in a world of illusion and nothing is real. Our world is only the dream of incomprehensible entities who watch us constantly."

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11. Chapel of the Unattainable

Background

This unholy chapel is dedicated to the otherworldly entities venerated by the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. The druids gather here once daily to perform their mass prayers and petitions offered to divine Farrealm entities. The area is empty at all other times.

Environment

A thin layer of purple smoke lingers in this cave, emanating from the four large stone urns that are fashioned to resemble the jagged maws of some unnatural beasts. The incense placed deep in the mouth of these grotesque containers fills the area with a bittersweet aroma that irritates the throat. Small cushions are laid out on the ground in front of the huge statue of an indistinct tentacled multi-eyed creature with several smaller urns at its base, filled with severed body parts and blood.

Scene

The chapel is considered a lightly obscured area. Welvynn Ausstyl enchanted the effigy of the tentacled entity with an *antipathy* spell to keep out any unwanted visitors. A creature who is not a tentacled master or an Inheritor of the Unbegotten that sees the statue must make a **DC 18 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes frightened and feels an intense urge to escape the visage of the idol. While frightened, the creature must use its movement to leave the area. If the creature moves more than 60 feet from the statue and can't see it, the creature is no longer frightened, but the creature becomes frightened again if it regains sight of the area or moves within 60 feet of the statue.

Two **tentacled masters** guard this area at all times, awaiting the orders of their druidic masters or preparing the chapel for the daily ceremonies.

Treasure

The eyes that cover the tentacles of the statue are inlaid with nineteen small purple sapphires, each worth 75 gold pieces. They can be removed with the right tool or a pointed weapon.

12. Quarters of the Inheritors

Background

The austere living quarters of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten lack all traces of comfort. The druids return to these areas to meditate during their long rests.

Environment

A simple bedroll, a stone bowl filled with water, and a few candles are the only features of these private cells. They are confined and claustrophobic places.

Scene

The southernmost room is currently inhabited by Fenraezz Ausstyl, a male **Inheritor of the Unbegotten** who has finished meditating and recites prayers

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in silence. The drow jumps to his feet and attacks if he detects intruders or if he hears the sounds of combat from outside.

Treasure

Each room holds the private treasure of the aberration-venerating druid that lives there, consisting of a few gemstones worth 250 gold pieces.

13. SHRINE OF THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Background

This private shrine of Welvynn Ausstyl, the patron and archdruid of House Ausstyl, is also where Voolroon, the aboleth sage resides. The archdruid consults the aboleth on many topics and considers the powerful aberration as a herald of the otherworldly beings he venerates.

Environment

A large stone bath dominates the southern section of this tiny room. The pool is filled with some red, slimy liquid. The easter wall is covered by a single ancient polished stone tablet that depicts strange runes scattered among eyes, vicious maws, and tentacles. Candles, smokesticks, severed body parts, and some organs lie in front of the tablet.

A robed drow with a fanged and tentacled orifice for a mouth and eyes hanging on appendages faces a huge fishlike creature that is half-submerged in the pool. Numerous eyes open on the robe of the archmage as the characters enter the room.

Scene

Welvynn Ausstyl, the archdruid of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, consults his advisor, the **aboleth** Voolroon, in a silent telepathic conversation as the characters enter. Both attack intruders on sight, telepathically assailing the characters.

WELVYNN AUSSTYL

"What folly you must have even to attempt to understand what is incomprehensible. Voolroon will agree. One must see the void and hear its call to gain glimpses into untold powers over the planes. And you are not worthy of being inheritors of this knowledge. And so you shall die."

Welvynn Ausstyl telepathically assailing the characters' minds in an unnatural and gurgling tone.

The rune-covered unholy stone tablet is a secret door to a small niche, which serves as the vault of the archdruid and House Ausstyl. It can be discovered with a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check if a character actively searches the tablet.

Treasure

The vault holds a bag of 361 gems of various colors and types, worth 3,610 gold pieces in total. A small chest holds three vials of *potions of superior healing,* two *potions of heroism,* an *elemental gem* that summons a chuul instead of an elemental, two *scrolls of reincarnate* that bestow the *aberrant* monster template on their targets, and a ceremonial *+3 adamantine sickle.*

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14. Archdruid's Quarters

Background

The private quarters of the archdruid are a bit more comfortably furnished than the private rooms in the rest of House Ausstyl. The archdruid of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten does not abide anyone to enter his private quarters at any time.

Welvynn Ausstyl uses a *stone shape* spell on the ceiling to create a passage to area 15 when needed.

Environment

A king-size stone bed occupies the western part of this room. The skin of a giant bluish-green lizard is laid out on the ground in front of it. A stone bookshelf holds a few dozen books, bound in organic materials of questionable origins. The southern table holds parchments, a vial of ink, more books, and a wide selection of spell components. On the east wall, a large basin filled with what looks like ground meat mixed with earth stores several 4-foot long squirming tentacles with tiny brains on their tips. A door opens to a small stone balcony with enough space for two people.

Scene

The books on the shelf and one the stone desk cover topics about druidic traditions, the Farrealm, aberrations, as well as a complete and detailed history of the Feyrealm domain of the Bleak Mire.

The three tentacles were grown by Welvynn Ausstyl as part of an experiment that predated the planting of the cortex pods around the Chasm. These cortex pod prototypes send out brainwaves in a 10-foot emanation that causes flashes of painful visions of a giant pulsating brain in a dark pool in the minds of those who dare to approach them, and causing 3 (1d6) psychic damage each round that a creature spends in the area. The cortex prototypes have AC 8 and 11 hit points.

The underside of the lizard skin laid out on the floor hides Welvynn Ausstyl's illustrations and notes, done in his own blood, that depict the stages that lead to the grandiose sacrifice of the whole of the Bleak Mire to the otherworldly entities venerated by the drow druids. It depicts three hag skulls under a watery body with a giant tentacled brain inside. The brain is being infused with magic by humanoid figures wearing robes. The tentacles of the brain burrow into the bedrock and grow like vines out of the earth above where they sprout flower-like brains that grow at the top of tentacles. The brains emanate the power they receive and shoot it toward a crack in the sky, opening a rift in space. Giant tentacles are shown, forcing themselves through from beyond the rift and tearing the fabric of space. The few text labels on the skin are written in drow Elvish and have the following meanings:

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- Next to the Hall of the Sovereign: Collect Regional Components, Slay Current Sovereigns
- Next to the Elder Cortex: Thought Eater, Draws Power
- Next to the cortex pods: Empower, Grow
- Next to the planar breach: The Devouring of the Realm

A section of the stone table can be rotated along with a wall section to reveal the small niche, which serves as the vault of the archdruid and House Ausstyl. It can be discovered with a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check if a character actively searches the table.

15. SUMMONING CHAMBER

Background

Welwynn Ausstyl established an enhanced summoning chamber with interdimensional projection capabilities to conjure aberrations from the Farrealm.

The archdruid lured two of the Matrons of Malice into attacking Krasnar's seemingly exposed ranks and captured the unsuspecting hags with an interdimensional strangler he summoned.

The two midnight hags - Tyke and Splinter - cannot escape the powerful paralyzing tentacles of the interdimensional strangler and are under a constant barrage of the aberration's *detect thoughts* ability. Welvynn Ausstyl consults the interdimensional strangler regularly about the new information it pries out of the minds of the midnight hags. The archdruid is most interested in memories and thoughts that reveal secrets about the strengths and weaknesses of the hags, their plans for the Material Plane and the Bleak Mire, and most importantly, about the location of the third member of their coven, Blister.

Welvynn Ausstyl already knows how the Midnight Curse can be broken, but this does not concern him or his plans. The archdruid is impatiently waiting for the interdimensional strangler to uncover Blister's location so he can take over the Feyrealm domain of the Bleak Mire from its current hag masters by formally challenging them for rulership and defeating them all. Unbeknowns to the archdruid, the two captured hags are unaware of the location of their sister.

Environment

A large vibrating magic circle composed of complex runes and geometrical shapes dominates the center of the room with small flickering candles set around it. A giant bag-shaped creature's massive bloated body occupies the middle of the circle, its enormous tentacles disappearing into one tiny dimensional portal and reappearing somewhere else in space from another. Two of these dimensional tentacles tightly entangle the bodies of two humanoid figures that resemble a small and a medium-sized horned wench with monstrous features.

Scene

The two paralized bodies held tight by the tentacles of the **interdimensional strangler** are Tyke and Splinter (use the **midnight hag** monster entry), two of the Matrons of Malice. The midnight hags can't speak or act in any way due to the paralytic hold of the aberration.

The aberration attacks anyone who enters the room except for Welvynn Ausstyl. If the hags are freed, they laugh maliciously and immediately cast a *plane shift* spell to transpose themselves to their home on Demonbane Isle in Hell. If they are somehow prevented from plane shifting, the two hags cackle even louder and attack the characters without any reservation. If Blister is present on the Bleak Mire, the midnight hags can also use their coven magic abilities. If Tyke and Splinter are killed, their black spirits can be seen as they fly out of their corpses and their bodies shrivel away into dust. The spirits waft into the air before escaping the plane itself in a vortex of sulfuric fire as they are transferred to their phylactery at Demonbane Isle. A character who witnesses this event can make a **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check to realise that the souls of the hags were sucked through the fabric of the

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plane itself to Hell as if drawn in by an item, akin to a lich's phylactery.

Casting the *plane shift* spell on the magic circle in the room conjures an aberration of CR 10 or less that remains indefinitely on the Feyrealm.

"How portentous that you would be the agents of our extrication. But don't expect anything in return. We will rule once more and you can serve us faithfully or I will chew out your eyeballs and penetrate your earhole with my claws."

Splinter envisions a horrific future for the characters.

TYKE

"New toys! I want their heads for my dolls. I will have them!"

Tyke cackling and cheering viciously.

SPLINTER

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16. Training Hall of the Tentacled Masters

Background
This is where most of the monks train during their non-meditative periods of the day. Within the bloody circle, the monks fight until one of the contestants falls unconscious.

Environment
This room smells of sweat and blood. Stone training dummies and weapon racks stand by the walls. A large circle is drawn in blood on the floor. Its edges and the numerous blood marks within are smeared from the countless battles that take place here.

Scene
Six **tentacled masters** occupy this room. Two of them are engaged in a fight within the circle of blood and are currently at half their maximum hit points. The other four are watching them from the side. All tentacles masters attack intruders on sight by surrounding their enemies to try to flank them.

The weapon racks hold eight mundane spears, short swords, quarterstaffs, and handaxes.

17. Quarters of the Tentacled Masters

Background
The monks of House Ausstyl spend their silent meditative hours in this chamber.

Environment
Several simple bedrolls are laid out in this otherwise unadorned room with small stone bowls next to each, some of them filled with water.

Scene
The only interesting feature of this bare room is a collection of small runes etched in blood on the floor under one of the bedrolls.

"Blessed by the void."

Drow Elvish Runes written in blood under a bedroll.

18. Window to the Incomprehensible Beyond

Background
The ancient enchantment in this area is now maintained by the archdruids of House Ausstyl after lying dormant during the exile of the drow house to the Farrealm. A phantasm created by a *mirage arcane* spell evokes a scenery of the Farrealm in which the monks and druids can meditate, and establish contact and communication with their unfathomable aberrant masters. Welvynn Ausstyl casts the *mirage arcane* spell in this room every ten days. The aberrant drow of House Ausstyl are immune to the maddening effects of the room, as they are already fully infused with this madness.

Environment
The stairway from below leads into a large metal cage that is surrounded by an otherworldly scene that expands in every direction over the horizon. Creatures with unexplainable anatomies float in mid-air above a terrain dotted by partly organic and partly natural gigantic structures and populated by creatures that wriggle and gibber endlessly. Enormous tentacles reach into the cage through its bars, countless huge eyes watch those inside, and a solid cacophony of incomprehensible voices fills the air, which smells like pungent water and fetid puss.

Scene
The *mirage arcane* spell turns the walls of the cage into the tangible illusion of the cage, which can be grasped, even climbed, but can not be exited into

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the horrific landscape beyond the confines of the area. The illusory tentacles move slowly and pose no threat but touch the characters and even try to slowly entangle them. If attacked and chopped off, they fall to the ground with a burst of oily black blood.

A creature who sees the Farrealm landscape must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's sanity quickly fades as the realization of the magnitude of these powerful otherworldly beings shatters the sense of reality along with the mental stability of the creature. The creature becomes afflicted with indefinite madness and gains a new character flaw: "I am convinced that every creature is insignificant compared to the entities beyond our reality, and their agents are destined to bring an end to the world. Everything is irrelevant in the light of these facts, and resistance is futile." On a successful saving throw, the creature can brace itself against the Farrealm and its inhabitants and realize that they would be able to fully comprehend them by spending more time examining and experiencing their details.

A creature who spends a long rest meditating in the room must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw every hour. On a failed saving throw, the creature's Wisdom score is reduced by 2 (1d4) points as it succumbs to this madness effect. The target dies if this reduces its Wisdom to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If the creature survives 8 consecutive hours within the area, it gains the **boon of madness**.

Boon of Madness. You can comprehend the nature and intention of the aberrant beings that inhabit the Farrealm beyond reality and sanity. You are not easily shaken by anything that terrifies others or unhinges their psyche. You become immune to madness and gain an advantage on saving throws made to avoid becoming charmed or frightened.

57. The Black Worm

Background

The Black Worm, a primorial dew-worm of gargantuan size, spends most of its time under the Burning Woods, in the tunnels it bores in the Dark Below. However, it occasionally rises to the surface to hunt.

Environment

The area where the Burrows of the Black Worm crosses the Burning Woods.

Scene

The silence of the Burning Woods is at first disturbed by a low rumbling, which grows in intensity as the ground starts to tremble. The ground suddenly starts to rise into a small hill, uprooting the trees, until the gargantuan maw of the **Black Worm** erupts from underneath, throwing great clumps of earth in all directions and opening a tunnel to the deeper reaches of the Dark Below.

Black Worm (CR 16, 15,000 XP). Use the **purple worm** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The Black Worm has 741 hit points.
- Its space is 90 ft.
- It leaves a 30-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.
- It has a single bite attack.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 53 (9d8 + 9) piercing damage. If the target is a Huge or smaller creature, it must succeed on a **DC 19 Dexterity** saving throw or be swallowed by the worm. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the worm, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the worm's turns. If the worm takes 45 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the worm must succeed on a **DC 21 Constitution** saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 15 feet of the worm. If the worm dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

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58. NIGHTMARE SPIDERS

Background

The northern part of the Burning Woods is infested with colonies of nightmare spiders that hunt anything that enters their territory.

Environment

A network of webs covers the maple forest from ground to canopy, seemingly untouched by the strange flames flickering on the trees.

Scene

The webs are especially dangerous as they cause any who get tangled in them to fall asleep until it's too late and the giant vermin cocoon them. When they enter the area, characters must succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) skill** check to notice the almost invisible webbing. A character who fails this check and touches the web of the nightmare spiders must succeed on a **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw or fall asleep. A sleeping creature is unconscious for 8 hours or until the sleeper takes damage, or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake. Each sleeping creature attracts four **nightmare spiders** that can softly cocoon them in one minute while the victim is asleep. The cocooned creature is grappled and restrained and makes the saving throw against the sleep effect of the web with a disadvantage when it awakens due to any of the listed circumstances that end the sleep effect. The nightmare spiders attack a cocooned creature with their bites.

Nightmare Spider. Use the **giant wolf spider monster** entry with the following modifications:

- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target must make a **DC 11 Wisdom** saving throw or take 22 (4d10) psychic damage on a failed save.

59. LIFEFLOW HONEY

Background

This part of the Burning Woods is inhabited by a swarm of giant wasps that make their hives among the hollowed-out trunks of the largest trees in the woods. The only creature that finds recluse in this part of the forest is Robur, the catfolk druid with a wolf companion named Ebony. Robur has made peace with the giant bees and camps nearby.

Environment

The giant tree trunks in the Burning Woods buzz with the noise of giant wasps that circle the opening of their lair.

Scene

The **swarm of giant wasps** is highly territorial, guarding this segment of the woods and attacking all intruders that come closer than 200 feet to their territory.

Swarm of Giant Wasps (CR 2, XP 450). Use the **swarm of insects** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The swarm of giant wasps is a Huge swarm of Medium beasts.
- It has a fly speed of 50 feet.
- It has a Strength ability score of 12.
- It has 110 hit points.
- ***Sting.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., multiple targets in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 13 (3d6 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

The meager honey the giant wasps produce from the fields of Panacea Lilacs is dark purple. Consuming one pound of honey can cure and purify the body from any disease. The giant wasps' nest contains ten doses of the curative honey (a total of 10 pounds)

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that needs to be collected into some sort of container before it can be carried away.

Robur (use the **druid** monster entry) is trying to devise a plan to save his catfolk ally, Geeza Gobell, from the vile influence of the Matrons of Malice. He will arrive at the scene after the characters, and if they have killed the insects, he sadly purveys the carnage and walks away. However, if the characters have befriended the wasps or obtained honey without destroying the swarm, he shows his respect for the characters and introduces himself in a feisty manner. He recounts that his friend Geeza Gobell relocated to the Panacea Lilacs field to benefit from their healing powers, but unfortunately the flowers' smell irritates Robur and results in an allergic reaction.

ROBUR

"I can't rescue Geeza myself, you see. The Panacea Flower murders my nose, and I am totally useless when the sneezing starts. It is not a pretty sound. Thankfully we escaped the drow, but got separated in the fields of flowers. Unnatural drow they were, with bone shards claws."

Robur explaning his predicament and pointing to his scratches.

60. Panacea Lilacs

Background

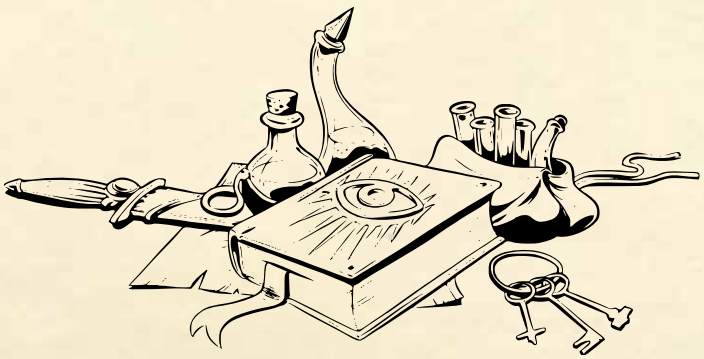
The field of Panacea Lilacs sprawls across many miles on the southern edge of the Burning Woods and has remained intact, even thriving despite the harsh weather conditions and the blight brought on by the rise of the Matrons of Malice. A catfolk bard warlock, Geeza Gobell was cursed by the Matrons of Malice with a *geas* spell that forces her to sing their praises or suffer the pain. She has escaped here to survive the effects of the hurtful enchantment, but that meant she had to leave her druid catfolk companion, Robur. Robur is allergic to the smell of the magical lilacs and tries to figure out a way to save Geeza Gobell from the cursed enchantment.

Environment

The five-foot tall purple flowers sway in the wind and create a forlorn site in the bleakness of the Mire.

Scene

The magical flowers start to heal a creature's wounds at a rate of 1 hit point per hour if the creature has spent at least a day in the fields. In the center of the area is a shoddy encampment, whence intense, virtuosic, and powerful tunes can be heard - the sounds of a hurdy-gurdy, played by Geeza Gobell (use the **minstrel of the college** monster entry with the additional spellcasting ability of the **witchservant cultist**), the catfolk bard-warlock of fey lord from another fey domain. Geeza Gobell continuously suffers from refusing to sing the praises of the Matrons of Malice in a painfully sad tone.



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GEEZA GOBELL

"I, , Geeza Gobell, refuse to sing odes to the Matrons, those cursed fiends without souls.... They can rot in hell for all I care.... I will suffer their curse, but will survive, for I have outwitted them after all!"

Geeza Gobell proudly proclaiming free will despite the viles of the hags.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can notice that Geeza Gobell is under some sort of compulsion that she is suppressing and wincing as a result of pain. She explains her situation over several brief stops and asks the characters to remove the enchantment or to come up with an idea to free her from its effects.

Geeza Gobell immediately tries to reunite with her druid companion, Robur, if the characters free her from the spell. The two catfolk will not accompany the characters out of fear of the aberrant drow but will aid them in any other way, including providing information about the regions and locations in the Dazzling Wastes, Valley of Bloom, and the Burning Woods.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if the characters are able to free Geeza Gobell from the *geas* spell.

61. Pit of Jealousy

Background

A hoard of zombies was created by the Matrons of Malice from victims of the Winter Court. They were first weakened by fell magic to imbue them with a weakening touch, then commanded as undead to fight each other over the illusory treasures that the hags conjured using the *programmed illusion* spell.

Environment

A 100-foot wide pit mars the damp ground of the valley between the Burning Woods and the Winter Forest. The sounds of moaning and fighting can be heard even before one approaches the edge of the pit, where a gruesome sight unfolds. Hundreds of zombies are clawing at each other, seemingly fighting over gemstones and other treasures that glitter in the mud under their feet.

Scene

If any creature approaches the edge of the pit, the illusory gemstones continue to appear for 5 minutes before being dormant for another 10 minutes. Anyone who vies the image can determine the illusion with a successful **DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check. If anyone enters the pit, the **unit of zombies** overwhelms them, trying to get at their belongings and their flesh.

62. Skincrawler Vines

Background

While most of the flowering plants in the Valley of Bloom are benign, a dangerous variety of skincrawler vines also grows in the marshy valley. Anyone whose exposed skin touches its large overhanging flowers succumbs to the transformative attributes of the plant and turns into shambling mounds. The valley is now home to a number of shambling mounds who can further spread the affliction and grow their numbers from the unwary who enter the valley.

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Environment

Sickly green flowers cover the swampy landscape between the Burning Woods and the Chasm, waving in the strong winds of the valley. Lightwoods float in the air above the flower cover, collecting rainwater on immense curved leaves. The valley seems devoid of wildlife.

Scene

A character who succeeds on a **DC 16 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check can spot and identify the skincrawler vines. A medium or larger creature that comes into contact with the vines must make a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or contract the disease - **skincrawler**.

Skincrawler. While infected with this disease, the target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 10 (3d6) every 24 hours. If the disease reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target instantly transforms into a shambling mound. At first, the victim's skin itches and sprouts small buds. It then slowly hardens and becomes woodlike, while the victim is painfully transformed into a plant-creature with more vines and branches growing out of its deforming body. Infected creatures can repeat the saving throw against the disease every day, ending the infection and the transofmration.

The characters encounter 1d4 **shambling mounds** each day that they spend in the Valley of the Bloom. Such shambling mounds spread the skincrawler disease with each hit of their slam attacks and every round they engulf a target.

63. The Torn Passage

Background

The Burrows of the Black Worm have collapsed into a wide chasm by the effects of the earthquakes caused by the Earth Cortex Pod, creating a 30-foot wide and 120-foot deep crevasse that tears the Burrows in half. Deeper passages can be seen below that begin at the sides of the crevasse, descending even further underground. This location is one of the few places where one may gain entry to the labyrinth of tunnels and caves that is the Dark Below. However, the slopes of the crevasse are wet and slippery, and the earth has been loosened by the frequent earthquakes, making the climb a challenging endeavor.

Environment

A system of deeply cracked rock and earth expands in a range of miles in this area. The vegetation of the surface has collapsed into these enormous, hundred feet deep crevasses that lead deep underground.

Scene

A character who descends on the steep rock walls and ventures deep into these enormous fissures can find several passageways leading into the Dark Below. Climbing the rocks to descend to the safer tunnels requires a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check made with disadvantage. On a failed skill check, the character is unable to descend and risks falling 2d6 x 10 feet, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage per 10 feet fallen unless it succeeds on a **DC 20 Dexterity** saving throw. On a successful save, the character grabs hold of an outcropping and does not fall.

64. Sporedark

Background

The Sporedark is a cave system over an underground stream claimed by fungoids, semi-intelligent and warlike plant creatures that inhabit the humid caves of the Dark Below. This colony of savage, cannibalistic mushroom creatures hunts the caverns below the Feyrealm domain of the Bleak Mire for slaves that they can capture with their spores and use as organic fertilizer to grow more of their own kind for food and reinforcements. The fungoids eat those of their tribe that grow smaller and weaker than their average specimens. The tribe also manufactures poisons and large blowpipes to deliver a variety of spores that they generate themselves or harvest from other non-intelligent fungi they cultivate.

This particular tribe was co-opted by the Matrons of Malice, who bid them be the guardians of their portal

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SPOREDARK

1 TILE = 5 FEET

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to Hell. The fungoids venerate the devils that they see emerging from the portal and consider the midnight hag coven as a conduit to their fiendish masters. Therefore, they feverishly protect the portal and do everything to prevent intruders from discovering it.

The Matrons of Malice use the portal to call forth allied or contracted devils from their home plane, Hell. They don't pay much heed to the fungoids who live here, only keeping them for harvests of the poisons and spores undertaken by spriggan bands in their name.

Environment

The air in these damp caverns is heavily contaminated by a fine dust of **basidiospores,** which appear as tiny particles swirling in the air. These spores quickly settle on the body of those who enter, creating an itching sensation in the eyes and nose and a bitter taste in the mouth of those who are subjected to them.

The caves in the cave system are 20 feet high and are naturally illuminated by fluorescent mold and fungi that cover the walls and ground, making all areas dimly lit.

The small bodies of water in the cave are all part of the same slow stream that flows through this section of the Deep Below. It is 10 feet deep clear water that is safe to drink.

Basidiospores. This fine dust causes irritating rashes and coughing when inhaled or in contact with skin. A creature in contact with basidiospores must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw every minute spent in contact with the substance. On a failed save, the creature suffers a -1 modifier to all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the spores are washed off entirely. Creatures immune to disease or becoming poisoned are immune to the effects of basidiospores.

1. Living Wall

Background

This 15-foot tall mound of fungi growing on carcasses is a form of defense for the colony of fungoids against intruding monsters from the Dark Below. The dead bodies of creatures thrown on the pile are animated by the necrotic fungi that grow on them. These animated hands, claws, and fangs attack anyone who tries to climb the pile but will not react to the fungoids.

Environment

A pile of colorful fungi and decaying monstrous and humanoid body parts rises in the cave ahead, forming a wall. The layers of bodies and the brownish mushroom that grow over them slowly pulsate and move with many appendages.

Scene

Two **shriekers** grow on the **wall of necrotic fungi** that alert the entire tribe if activated by approaching creatures. Climbing the wall requires a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Wall of Necrotic Fungi (CR 2, 450 XP). These non-intelligent brown fungi grow on the carcasses of other creatures, which they animate to protect themselves. The wall has AC 12 and 60 hit points, it has damage immunity against poison and psychic damage. The wall of necrotic fungi attacks any creature in contact with the wall at the start of their turn. The wall of necrotic fungi has the following statistics:

- ***Multiattack.*** The wall of necrotic fungi makes three claw attacks.
- ***Claw.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained. A creature grappled by the wall of necrotic fungi must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw at the end of their turn or become engulfed. An engulfed creature is restrained, blinded, and at risk of suffocating.

Treasure

A thick gold ring worth 150 gold pieces shines on a relatively fresh humanoid hand extruding from the wall.

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2. FUNGAL CLUSTERS

Background

Huge bulging mushrooms serve as the living quarters of the fungoid tribe, which were grown around the **Admission Gate**. The ancient portal to Hell is used exclusively by the Matrons of Malice to open passage to their devilish contractors and allies. The fungoids consider the portal a holy place and the *hellish sacrificial dagger* at its center a relic. Each time the hags require it, the tribe gathers to sacrifice one of their members to open the portal.

Environment

The colorfully illuminated cave hosts a few hollowed-out blocks of giant puffball mushrooms that grew to a height of 10 feet. A red, pulsating magic circle with square runes dominates the ground of the cave, with an intricately carved dagger placed in its center.

The Admission Gate. This ancient two-way portal to Hell can only be activated once per hour by performing a special ritual and sacrificing the life of an intelligent being within the circle. When activated, the Admission Gate functions as a *gate* spell. It can be used up to three times before it is rendered useless for a full year. The gate can summon a devil or allow passage to Hell. Passing through the Admission Gate to Hell requires no additional rituals besides the initial sacrifice. The portal leads to Demonbane Isle, home of the Matrons of Malice. The summoning ritual involves a specific rhyme in Infernal that acts as a command word and a living sacrifice of a creature with an Intelligence score of 6 or more. The sacrifice must be performed within the circle with a *hellish sacrificial dagger,* a specific magical weapon forged in Hell. Upon the completion of the ritual, the Admission Gate summons a specific devil named during the ritual or a bearded devil. The devil is unsummoned and banished back to Hell when the requested task is performed or when the devil dies in the Bleak Mire. The Admission Gate grants the effects of a *nondetection* spell on the summoned devil, which lasts until the devil is unsummoned. The Admission Gate's features and functioning can be revealed only by a *legend lore* spell.

Scene

The dagger in the center of the Admission Gate is a *hellish sacrificial dagger*. The huts and the cave are occupied by ten **fungoids** who will attack the characters on sight but will never step on the area covered by the Admission Gate.

The hollowed-out mushrooms hold the remains of other fungoids whom the members of the tribe have partially eaten.

3. HAG THRONE

Background

This throne is reserved for the Matrons of Malice in the hope that the hags would decide to stay and rule over the tribe permanently. None of the midnight hags ever sat on it. The fungoid tribe comes to venerate the throne in times of great need.

FUNGOID

Environment

A 10-foot tall throne grown out of colorful luminescent mushrooms stands in the middle of this cave.

Scene

The throne is grown out of a psychic-sensitive magical mushroom called **psyshroom** that

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translates the thoughts of those with whom it is in contact. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hands)** skill check can remove up to four psyshrooms from the throne that will wither and become unusable after one week.

Psyshroom. As an action, a creature who touches the psyshroom can make it emit a spore cloud of violet floating dust in a sphere with a 30-foot radius that allows the creature to translate its thoughts through the spores and communicate telepathically with any intelligent creature within the area of the spore cloud, which disperses after three rounds.

A creature with an Intelligence ability score of 3 or higher that ingests the psyshroom must make a **DC 13 Constitution** save or contract the disease - **psyshroom**. A creature diseased by the psyshroom becomes incapacitated after three days as the fungus grows in its brain tissue. It can take actions only by following commands given to it through a psyshroom. The psyshroom's infestation of the brain can be removed by any spell or effect that removes a disease. A creature immune to disease is also immune to the effects of the pshyshroom.

4. WORKSHOP

Background

The fungoids create their spore blowers and distill the special fungal spores they use to blow on their targets in this crude manufactory. They assimilate these spores into their bodies in this room to be able to blow them later through their spore blowers. The lower-level cave section is a base for fungoid guards.

Environment

A workbench made of a hard fungus stands in the northern part of the cave. It is covered with primitive tools made out of chipped stone and raw materials that resemble long tubes in the process of being hollowed out. Elsewhere in the cave, different types of harvested mushrooms lie on the floor next to dried mushroom caps that hold colorful dust.

A 10-foot rock wall descends into a lower section of the cave, where a crudely constructed wall of spears blocks the passage from a cave tunnel ahead.

Scene

Three **fungoids** are busy preparing new ammunition of spore dust from fresh mushrooms. The spore dust can't be utilized in any way, only producing its effect if in reaction with the body of a fungoid. The savage mushroom creatures attack the characters on sight.

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Three other **fungoids** guard the lower cave section. They climb up from below to join the fight.

5. BEAST PEN

Background

The fungoids cultivate a rare kind of mind-control mushroom, called psyshroom, on the body of a dead bulette that has been overgrown by the fungus that eventually killed it. The fungoids have dominated another huge beast through the use of the psyshroom - a battle snail, which is diseased by the psyshroom.

Environment

The rotting remains of a bulette lie at the southern end of the cave. Strange thin yellow strands of fungi grow from its body. A giant snail with a tough metallic shell stands in the middle of the room, acting as if it was unaware of its surroundings. The same yellow mushroom grows from the top of its head.

Scene

The **battle snail** in the room is diseased by the psyshroom growing from its body. It is not active and reacts only to commands given through the psyshroom. The characters or any other creature that touches the psyshroom on its head can also control it.

6. GROWTH MEDIUM

Background

The fungoids grow their own species on this huge mound of organic material and fungi, which they feed with prey killed during hunts. The fungoids come to this cave individually or in groups to feed and select smaller buds of growing fungoids to consume that seem to be stunted in growth. Those not picked for consumption grow over months to become full-fledged fungoids who join the tribe.

Environment

An awful-smelling, rotting mound of flesh and fungi towers in this cave. The partially recognizable body parts in the mound are from beasts, monsters, fey creatures, and humanoids alike. Six small fungoids grow from this pile, ranging from the size of a hand to that of a human child. They are more or less partially attached to the fertile compost via thin fungal strands.

Scene

Six **fungoids** feed on the remains of some other undeveloped fungoids still attached to the mound of rotting flesh and mushrooms. They attack the characters on sight.

64b. DEMONBANE ISLE

Background

Rising from a seemingly infinite infernal sea of lava in Hell is Demonbane Isle, a monument to the eternal battle between the legions of Hell and the chaotic hordes of the Abyss, and the lair of the Matrons of Malice - Spike, Blister, and Tyke. The structure on top of a black basalt outcropping was fashioned eons ago in the likeness of a balor's skull from the bones of slaughtered demons and has been bestowed to the coven of midnight hags by the lava sea's pit fiend overlord, Ba'aldannorr. The coven has been harvesting and trading souls for millennia. They are able to bind the harvested souls kept in soul bags into various forms of items, like weapons, soul gems, magical items, and even phylacteries. Various devils and planar travellers visit Demonbane Isle from time to time to exchange valuable magic items, precious metals, and gems for these custom-made soul-infused items. Such bargains are hard to accomplish with the Matrons of Malice and are always made worse by their unexpected or exorbitant demands that will surely make the customer suffer greatly for whatever they desire.

The Matrons of Malice regard this place as their home, and they regroup at Demonbane Isle whenever needed. The hag coven stores their most valuable possessions in this structure of demonic bone, which they have secured with the most powerful defenses.

Environment

The air around the building is blazing from the heat

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of the sea of lava that surrounds it. The Admission Gate faces the mouth of a giant skull made out of bones fused together perfectly. Within the mouth is the only entrance inside, a large gate fashioned out of dark metal. The areas inside the building are hot but at a bearable temperature and are extremely dirty, messy, and have a foul smell.

Doors and Double Doors. The massive blocks of dark metal that make up the doors were all enchanted by the midnight hag coven. They have AC 20, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 15, they have damage resistance against bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing damage, and damage immunity against fire, poison, and psychic damage. They open only to the Matrons of Malice and can only be forced open with a successful **DC 30 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Private Sanctum. Demonbane Isle is under the permanent effect of a *private sanctum* spell, blocking planar travel, teleportation, and divination spells to anyone but the Matrons of Malice.

Sea of Lava. The sea of lava surrounding Demonbane Isle is the domain of the demon hunter pit fiend, Ba'aldannorr, who allowed the hags to create a permanent base at Demonbane Isle. It is considered difficult terrain. A creature that touches or reaches into the lava takes 22 (4d10) fire damage, and a

BATTLE SNAIL

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Demonbane Isle

1 tile = 5 feet

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creature at least half-submerged in the lava takes 99 (18d10) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. Completely submerged creatures are subject to suffocation.

1. Portal Landing

Background

This landing area is used only by visitors of Demonbane Isle because the Matrons of Malice use their *plane shift* spell to arrive directly inside the building. This area is prone to encounters with creatures from the sea of lava or flying denizens of Hell. The hags use the magical gibbets on the landing to hold prisoners they wish to torture or store for some time.

One of the prisoners in a gibbet is an Avatar of the Efficient Mater, the deity of the god of Competence inhabiting the body of a once-prodigious Onadbyrian human bard named Deenus Longshorts and pretending to be the bard. The avatar found and crossed the fey crossroads to the Feyrealm in the days of King Dasmag. The satyr King became fond of the skills of the one-man-band entertainer and granted him a place in his court, asking the bard to play regularly during his almost unceasing festivities. The Matrons of Malice captured Deenus and kept him to extract vital information about King Dasmag and his revelries before launching their campaign to weaken and defeat him. Mysteriously, they could not glean any information from the immortal being, and they did not realize its divine nature. In frustration, they have imprisoned him. Deenus Longshorts has been waiting for someone skilled enough to "rescue" him.

Environment

The Admission Gate is within a large stone archway opposite a broad stairway leading up to the mouth of the giant bone structure that hosts a massive metal gate without any hinges or keyholes. A long chain with a metal ball attached to its end hangs on the right side of the gate. Two rusty, ancient metallic posts hold two cages on both sides of the landing. In one of them is the skeletal remains of a winged humanoid, in the other, a seemingly intact humanoid with various musical instruments attached to him.

The main gate has the same statistics as all other doors in the Demonbane Isle, however, it has 120 hit points.

Scene

The air on the landing is extremely hot due to the lava sea surrounding it. A creature on the landing must make a **DC 10 Constitution** saving throw every minute or gain one level of exhaustion from the heat. Creatures immune to fire are immune to the effects of this heat.

The Admission Gate is connected to several portals within the multiverse. A visitor can return to the one from where they arrived by crossing the archway at any time. In the case of the characters, the portal leads back to Sporedark on the Bleak Mire.

Pulling the chain at the gate plays a short, out-of-tune melody that can be heard in a 300 feet radius outside the building. The awful tune causes all listeners to be struck by nerve-racking pain in their ears. A creature within the area of effect must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains one level of exhaustion.

The rusty gibbets are magical and keep those they enclose from reaching terminal (level 6) exhaustion. The figure in the right side gibbet is Deenus Longshorts (use the **minstrel of the college** monster entry), who still has a few of his musical instruments. The musician is extremely worn out and has five levels of exhaustion. Almost incapable of standing and speech, he pleads with the characters to save him from his captivity, playing some of his tunes in an enervated, almost pathetic way to showcase his friendliness and seem as non-threatening as possible. The gibbet can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 20 Dexterity** ability check, or can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The rusty gibbets have AC 19, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison, and psychic

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damage. Deenus Longshorts will be eternally grateful if freed and joins the characters on their journey if they accept him. The one-man-band bard is familiar with King Dasmag's favorite song and can play it and sing it all by himself. If Deenus Longhosrt were to die, he would disappear in an unexplained way, only to resurface again at an unexpected place and time, with wild tales of his heroic deeds.

DEENUS LONGSHORTS

"Heroooes! Nevergonnagiveup. Saaaving! Nevergonnagiveup. The Daaay! Nevergonnagiveupppa."

Deenus Longshorts performing his newly composed happy song.

When the characters start meddling with the gibbets or attempt to open or damage the front gates, Elyssa, the **erinyes** devil formed out of Krasnar Azennar's mother, the same devil that slew King Waldrann Azennar, swoops out of the skies to attack them with her longbow from a distance of 100 feet. Elyssa engages in melee combat only if necessary.

Treasure

The erinyes wields a *nine lives stealer longsword* with 2 charges remaining and carries the ebony hair comb of Queen Elyssa, which is inlaid with small diamonds and black pearls and is worth 575 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they save Deenus Longshorts.

2. SCALE OF SOULS

Background

The Matrons of Malice meet their customers in this area to hear their demands and bargain prices. The magical balance scale, known as the Scale of Souls, is used by the Matrons of Malice to identify and profile captured souls. The three soul gems on the desk hold the souls of knowledgeable creatures that serve as the hags' private advisors to consult on negotiations if needed. The room is also occupied by Broomstaff, a soul-bound object created by the hag coven. The charmed soul of a lazy noblewoman named Hanraska was bound into a magical staff and then fashioned into a broom by fastening slender branches to one of its ends.

Environment

This large room has a giant bronze balance scale in its center. A few small cabinets by the wall hold various books, ledgers, and three colorful crystals that shed light into the room.

Scene

The soul-bound magic staff, **Broomstaff** as the hags call it, is tasked with keeping the room relatively clean of dirt, debris, or unwanted visitors, which it hates to perform out of laziness but does grudgingly nevertheless to please its masters. Broomstaff waits to see what the characters are up to before attacking, during which it uses all of its charges if needed.

"Why do I have to do this! You could have just shown yourselves out, or killed yourselves. What do I care? Now I have to clean you out myself. How I hate this!"

Broomstaff grudging out loud at the characters in Infernal.

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Broomstaff (CR 2, 450 XP). Use the **flying sword** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Broomstaff has 32 hit points.
- It has AC 17 and a damage threshold of 5.
- It can speak Infernal.
- It deals bludgeoning damage.
- It functions as a *staff of striking* with 10 charges.

The Matrons of Malice have bound the souls of three identical triplet merchant kings into three fist-sized crystals named the **Soul Gems of the Merchant Kings.** The kings, known as the Liar, the Kind, and the Brash, ruled a distant land on the Material Plane eons ago and were famous for their unbeatable negotiation and bargaining skills.

Soul Gems of the Merchant Kings. Consulting any one of the soul gems telepathically for one minute after a failed Deception, Persuasion, or Intimidation skill check allows the creature to reroll the failed skill check by using its Deception, Persuasion or Intimidation skill to accomplish the same, previously intended outcome. In addition, if all three soul gems have heard the conversation that resulted in the failed skill check, they grant better advice, and the creature gains advantage when rerolling the failed skill check.

Each of the small sacks resting on the Scale of Souls contains the soul fragment of creatures of different alignments. The scale becomes balanced when a creature or soul bag is placed on one of the trays, and the sack with a matching alignment is placed on the other.

3. Soul Bag Workshop

Background

The Matrons of Malice create their soul bags in this gruesome workshop. The hags bring unfortunate victims to this room to flay them alive before turning their skin into soul bags. The hags store less worthy or only partially extracted souls in special soul-worms that are native to Hell.

Environment

Blood covers almost every inch of this room. A large wooden table with manacles attached to it stands in one of the corners. The skinned body of a human lies on it, its wounds still fresh. Next to it stands another table with various sewing equipment and half-finished bags made out of the flayed skin of humanoids. A large pile of dead, flayed bodies occupies the southern corner of the room, opposite a pool of sickly greenish liquid. Within this liquid, a couple of worms wriggle, each the size of a large dog with the face of a humanoid staring blankly at its surroundings.

Scene

The soul worms can't communicate and have an Intelligence ability score of 0. They are essentially objects for the purposes of *soul binding*. The characters can recognize the face of a familiar character from Onadbyr or the rest of the Kingdom of Aglarion in a few of the worms.

If Freall is with the characters, she recognizes her father's face, Elayros on one of the worms. She demands the characters to help recover him, but unfortunately, it can only be banished for the rest for eternity (see the **midnight hag** monster entry for more on Soul Binding). Freall breaks down in tears when she learns this and turns morose and introverted from this moment. She has lost her cause and will eventually either leave the characters at some point or turn on them in her madness. If Sam "Weaver" Ebonhilt is with the characters, he will become enraged at not finding his parents like Freall. If Frumby is with the characters, he comforts either or both of them and slowly starts to convince them to serve his personal agenda. At some point, the characters can make a successful **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to recognize that Frumby is manipulative and his goal is not necessarily to calm the heartbroken pair.

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4. SUMMONING CHAMBER

Background

The permanent summoning circle is used by the Matrons of Malice to conjure creatures to do their bidding. Tyke frequently amuses its sisters by summoning a group of dretches and forcing them to dress up in children's costumes and sing as a choir.

Environment

A magic circle that glows with red light occupies the center of the room with a conductor's rostrum made out of wood standing in front of it. Small, child-size, green ugly creatures stand in three rows behind each other, waiting patiently. A cauldron filled with blood sits next to a bookshelf with old tomes. South of the magic circle stands a stone pedestal with a stone urn on top. Children's clothes and toys litter the room.

Scene

The creatures within the summoning circle are nine **dretches** dressed up in children's clothing. A disgusting, awful-smelling green gas emanates from the dretches and lingers in the room's air, making the area lightly obscured. Any creature that starts its turn in the area must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both, and can't take reactions.

The dretches can't leave the circle and remain absolutely still until someone steps on the conductor's rostrum, at which point they start to sing a dreadful song in Abyssal. The creature on the rostrum can conduct them, but it can't really make a difference in the quality of their singing.

The summoning circle allows spellcasters to cast conjuration spells that summon creatures as if they were effectively cast using spell slots at two spell levels higher.

5. GRAND FOYER OF THE COVEN

Background

This area is where the Matrons of Malice meet to consult each other on their vile plans, to boast, and congratulate themselves for each success they make, or to bicker and argue over an issue or failure. The hag coven also uses this area to perform magical rituals and to create special hag items in their small laboratory. Mundrak, their favorite magical soul-bound cauldron, acts both as a means of transportation, a pet, and a bodyguard of the hag coven.

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Environment

The air in this room is hot and dry. A giant well with five equally long, 4-foot tall sides occupies the center of this room. The well's walls are of the same dark stone as the ground of Demonbane Isle. It is carved with intricate fretwork that depicts devils and hags. The lava from outside the isle is visible some 15 feet below, within the well. A small laboratory takes up most of an old wooden cabinet next to the northern wall. It is filled with jars and containers of various sizes, materials, shapes, and ominous-looking components. One of the few smaller desks holds an open book written by hand. A dark-bladed sickle rests on the floor in front of the cabinet.

Scene

The well of lava connects to the sea of lava that surrounds Demonbane Isle. The laboratory consists of tools and small containers that hold the strangest and most vile components harvested by the hag coven, like virgin's rendered fat, tears of a murderer, the feather of a deva, or a child's heart.

The open book is the autobiography of the Matrons of Malice, which all three hags write together as a showcase of their exploits. The book contains the following information:

- The history of the Matrons of Malice up to the present day.
- A description of the Midnight Curse as a grandiose scheme they fabricated to spread suffering and misery all over the kingdom of Aglarion and the creatures that live in it.
- The book also contains detailed information about the ritual that removes the curse (see section The Cleansing Ritual) but it does not include details about Krasnar Azennar's rejuvenation as the Lich-Knight, and only mentions it as the "wicked surprise".

A small greyish brown spotted egg encased in a thick glass cube the size of an apple stands on one of the shelves behind some other mundane materials, strange trinkets, and components. This ordinary-looking trinket is the phylactery of the Matrons of Malice. The glass container radiates magic, has AC 13 and 5 hit points, and it is immune to psychic and poison damage. The Matrons of Malice lose their ability to rejuvenate if the phylactery is destroyed.

Mundrak, the soul-bound magic cauldron, is always present in this room if not taken for a ride by the Matrons of Malice. The cauldron will start by splashing its victims with the boiling **soul soup** that was prepared in it by the Matrons of Malice (see area 3 of the Witchcave, location 35.). Mundrak can cover a 10-by-10 foot area adjacent to it with the boiling soul soup to deal 21 (6d6) fire damage to any creature in the area. A creature caught by the splash can make a **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throw to halve the damage. The soul-bound cauldron then follows with melee attacks, sometimes trying to grapple victims, scoop them up, and drop them into the well of lava.

Mundrak (CR 2, 450 XP). This wondrous magic item has the soul of a subservient goblin named Mundrak bound into it. Use the **animated armor** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Mundrak can magically fly at a speed of 40 feet.
- It has 66 hit points.
- It has AC 19, a damage threshold of 10, and damage immunity to fire.

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- ***Enlarge.*** As an action, Mundrak can magically increase its size to Large to double, or to Huge to triple its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks. It makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If Mundrak lacks the room to become Large or Huge, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available. Mundrak can become medium-sized again at any time.
- ***False Appearance.*** While Mundrak remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal cauldron.

If any of the Matrons of Malice (use the **midnight hag** monster entry) are present at Demonbane Isle, they will be present in this room. If all three hags are here, they can use their *Coven Magic* special trait. The hags will use their most powerful abilities and spells to defeat the characters. When any of them dies, its body bursts into tiny sparkling ethereal motes, which move to the egg on the cabinet as its souls is transferred to its phylacteries.

Treasure

The dark-bladed sickle lying in front of the cabinet is a *+2 sickle of venom* (it has the magical properties of a *dagger of venom* and the weapon properties of a sickle).

6. Splinter's Torture Chamber

Background

Splinter's private chamber is fashioned for torture. The midnight hag is a sadomasochist who enjoys inflicting pain but also loves to be on the receiving end of the torture device, especially if it creates a slowly but constantly intensifying sensation of agony.

Environment

Numerous pieces of bloody torture equipment, like drills, small saws, scalpels, and scissors are on display in this room on a table opposite the door. A large rack covered in blood stands by the northern wall, and many chains hang from the boney ceiling above the small room's southern section.

Scene

Kaloshka, Splinter's **chain devil** torture master, occupies the room. The chain devil is not obliged to do anything specific but assist in tortures if Splinter commands. It will not attack the characters or make any effort to aid the hags or Mundrak in a fight outside Splinter's torture chamber. Despite its dedication and binding to Splinter, Kaloshka will gladly torture anyone if asked to perform such services.

Treasure

Among the implements of the table lies King Dasmag's *gloves of the satyr king*.

7. Blister's Tattoo Parlor

Background

Blister withdraws to this room if it wants to spend time alone and enjoy one of its favorite activities, tattooing, and feasting. It believes that the fatter it gets, the more space will become available for tattooing its body with intricate symbols of arcane power.

Environment

The room features a large bathtub made of stone and filled with a greasy liquid that smells like vomit. Next to it stands a table filled with various foodstuff like cakes, roasted body parts and organs, soups of eyeballs and teeth, strange-looking fruits, and unidentifiable beverages. The shelves on the walls hold tattooing equipment, needles, and inks of various sources, along with scrolls that show illustrated tattoos that also describe the methodology of spell tattooing (see Appendix F: Feats for more information).

Scene

The bath is filled by a fiendish **water elemental** with Blister's vomit mixed into its body. The revolting elemental will not attack anyone who enters the room but will try to kill anyone in contact with its body other than Blister. A creature in contact with the fiendish water elemental must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw or attract **filth fever** disease.

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The table is a *table of cornucopia,* a magic item traded by the hag coven for some souls. It magically provides a grand meal's worth of food and drink to anyone who speaks the command word. When Blister visits its room, it consumes everything on the table in a revolting fashion. It then vomits it back into the bathtub, where it takes massaging baths with the fiendish water elemental.

8. Tyke's Court of Dolls

Background

This is Tyke's playground where the malformed midnight hag plays with its stitched dolls and preens in front of its magic mirror in its dresses.

Environment

A large mirror stands opposite the door, showing the most comely image of those standing in front of it. Further into the room stands a low round table with several cups and a teapot. It is surrounded by small chairs that each have a different doll sitting on them. All the dolls look scary, and the largest one is the most grisly one, with the body of a plush bear and a zombified woman's head. A couple of large brushes, combs, hairpins, and the parts of a makeup kit lie scattered on the floor.

Scene

The gruesome tea party is always attended by three invisible **mumus** who live in Tyke's room. The mumus will not leave the room but they will attack anyone other than the Matrons of Malice who enters the room.

The zombie-headed bear plushie, Lady Putzentush, can repeat and respond in an agreeable fashion to any question if the phrase "Don't you agree, Lady Putzentush?" is added to the question. The mumus whisper the command phrase into the ears of the zombie's head to scare intruders before attacking them with their special abilities.

"Yes... They should be scared to death... I agree. Most definitely. Scared to death..."

Lady Putzentush agreeing and nodding slowly.

The magic mirror reflects the image of anyone who stands in front of it, showing them as beautiful. A creature that stands in front of the mirror must make a **DC 13 Charisma** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the mirror. A creature charmed this way is incapacitated and unable to take its eyes off from its reflection in the mirror. The charmed creature can repeat the saving throw every hour to end the effect on a successful save.

65. The Cortex Pods

Background

The Elder Cortex has already sprouted and grown six cortex pods out of the dozen needed to shred the dimensional fabric of reality and open a planar breach that would allow the Farrealm to consume the Feyrealm domain currently known as the Bleak Mire.

During the cultivation, Welvynn Ausstyl and the rest of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten have continuously channeled their spells into the cortex pods, also enabling the Elder Cortex to cast them at will. As a result, if a cortex pod is severed from the brainstem at its end, the Elder Cortex loses the innate spell ability the druids channeled into it.

Environment

Each cortex pod sits on a black tentacled stem that springs from the aberrant ground. On its top at the height of 90 feet, each has a 5-foot wide black flower with a pulsating brain at the center of its petals. The close vicinity of the pods is devoid of all life. The vegetation has died away, and the ground looks strangely soft, wrinkled, and flesh-like around the cortex pods in a radius of a few hundred feet, compared to that a bit further away.

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Scene

Each pod sends out brain waves in a 1,000-foot emanation that causes flashes of painful visions of a giant pulsating brain in a dark pool in the minds of those who dare to approach them, causing 3 (1d6) psychic damage each round to any creature in the area. If they are physically attacked, the cortex pods intensify the power of their psychic assault to deal 10 (3d6) psychic damage at the start of each round.

Each cortex pod has AC 13 and 61 hit points, and they are immune to psychic damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks. If a cortex pod is destroyed, it regrows within a week provided that the Elder Cortex is alive, which can grow only one cortex pod at a time.

Each cortex pod has its own special magical ability that requires a **DC 17** saving throw to resist its effect if the associated spell's description allows a saving throw.

65a. Plague Cortex Pod

Environment

A small island sits on the stream that flows towards the Chasm from the Lake of Blood, its surface thick with brushy vegetation that is diseased and covered with sickly green lichen and moss. The ground is aberrant ground, on both sides of the stream and on the island itself. The corpses of colorful birds of paradise litter the ground around the cortex pod that sprigs from the infested ground at the center of the island. An odor of decay permeates the air.

Scene

If anyone steps onto the island and within 150 feet of the cortex pod, it spews forth a disease every round in an emanation with a 150-foot radius that affects creatures as a *contagion* spell. Decide the type of disease spread by the cortex pod randomly. An **otyugh** that is immune to diseases and psychic damage has been drawn to the island by the carrion, lurking in a pit 40 feet from the cortex pod. It lumbers out of its hole and attacks anyone who comes near.

Severing this cortex pod causes the Elder Cortex to lose its *contagion* innate spellcasting ability until the cortex pod has fully regrown.

65b. Thorn Cortex Pod

Environment

In the path of aberrant ground that makes its way across the southern edge of the Bogs of Rot, the bodies of animals and some humanoid victims lie half-submerged on the wet mossy ground. Their bodies are torn and covered with wounds. Thick shrubs cover the area, so the cortex pod can hardly be seen from afar.

Scene

If anyone approaches within 150 feet of the cortex pod, it activates, covering the entire area with a tangle of brush with needle-sharp thorns in a dome with a radius of 150 feet. The thorny dome works as a *spike growth* spell. The cortex pod can concentrate to upkeep only one such effect at a time.

Severing this cortex pod causes the Elder Cortex to lose its *spike growth* innate spellcasting ability until the cortex pod has fully regrown.

65c. Swarm Cortex Pod

Environment

In a swath of aberrant ground at the tip of the Bogs of Rot, the ground swarms with masses of beetles, and the air is thick with clouds of mosquitoes, even more than usual in the swamps of the Mire. The clouds of bugs conceal the tendrilous cortex pod at the center of the area, which is lightly obscured.

Scene

If anyone comes within 150 feet of it, an effect similar to the *insect plague* spell erupts from the cortex pod, covering the entire area in a dome of swarming blood-beetles in a dome with a radius of 150. The

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cortex pod can concentrate to upkeep only one such effect at a time.

Severing this cortex pod causes the Elder Cortex to lose its *insect plague* innate spellcasting ability until the cortex pod has fully regrown.

65d. Earth Cortex Pod

Background

Cyllek the awakened raven, Blister's spy, flies around the area above the Earth Cortex Pod, the Torn Passage, and the Swarm Cortex Pod, observing the path of Bwael Phindar and the goings of the aberrant servitors of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, as well as any creature that descends to the Dark Below through the Torn Passage. The raven sporadically returns to the Witchcave to report to Blister. Cyllek has also been branded with the *branding iron of the Hag Queens* so that the hags can keep tabs on it. The raven covers its burnt feathers and the hags' brand with a shawl.

Environment

The area at the southwestern edge of the Hungry Downs where the burrows of the Black Worm slice open the landscape, the ground has been ripped apart in a 150-foot wide circle of aberrant ground after Bwael Phindar trampled through the area. Plates of rock splitting and grinding together have formed deep pools of mud, towering heaps of wet earth the size of buildings, protrusions of clay, and deep fissures 100 feet deep, which hide the cortex pod at the center of this area.

Scene

The cortex pod can create an *earthquake* spell in a 150 feet radius to keep trespassers away. The cortex pod can concentrate to upkeep only one such effect at a time.

Severing this cortex pod causes the Elder Cortex to lose its *earthquake* innate spellcasting ability until the cortex pod has fully regrown.

Cyllek

Cyllek (use the **raven** monster entry with an Intelligence score of 10 and the ability to speak Infernal) flies 1,000 feet in the air and seems like a regular raven at this distance. If it notices the characters, it will trail the new targets from a safe distance and eventually try to gather intelligence to report to its master. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice Cyllek as it draws near, hiding among the branches of a tree when the characters stop to rest. If characters spot Cyllek, they see that curiously, the bird bears slightly humanoid facial features and wears a shawl and an amulet. If Cyllek sees that the characters have discovered its presence, it tries to fly away swiftly, back to the Witchcave. If captured, Cyllek will not divulge any of its secrets willingly. However it has a store of information at its disposal. It has observed the Cortex Pods and Bwael Phindar from afar and has seen what effects they can manifest. It knows the way and entrance to the Witchcave (location 35.) and that Blister is hiding there with its spriggan minions and dryad witches. It has repeatedly traveled over the Hungry Downs and the Twisted Forest and is familiar with all locations in these regions, except for Tipper's Tree and the Trail of Acorns.

Treasure

Cyllek wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

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65e. Scorch Cortex Pod

Environment

The once verdant brushland has been mutated and twisted into weird forms and unhealthy hues on the aberrant ground that crosses the hills. In a 150-foot wide area, the plants are dry and brittle, their stems having been washed away by the rains on the scorched ground. The cortex pod is clearly visible at the center of this parched hillside.

Scene

The cortex pod can flash its brain in blinding light and emit a dome of scorching sunlight that works like a *sunbeam* spell that targets every creature within a radius of 150 feet every round until there are living creatures within its proximity. The cortex pod can concentrate to upkeep only one such effect at a time.

Severing this cortex pod causes the Elder Cortex to lose its *sunbeam* innate spellcasting ability until the cortex pod has fully regrown.

65f. Fire Cortex Pod

Environment

The western slopes of the Valley of Bloom have been turned to aberrant ground by the passing of Bwael Phindar, the lovely flowers of plants mutated by foul energies into unnatural shapes. A 150-foot wide area is scorched black with mounds of ashes that once might have been living bodies or trees. The cortex pod can be seen from afar in the center of the area.

Scene

The cortex pod can unleash a deadly inferno in the shape of a dome around itself. The effect is similar to a *fire storm* spell with a radius of 150 feet. The cortex pod can concentrate to upkeep only one such effect at a time.

Severing this cortex pod causes the Elder Cortex to lose its *fire storm* innate spellcasting ability until the cortex pod has fully regrown.

66. Hall of the Sovereign

Background

The location of this huge cave in the Dark Below is known only to a few on the Bleak Mire. It hosts the fabled Hall of the Sovereign, an ancient site of power that holds the means to claim the rulership of this domain of the Feyrealm. Once the criteria are met, the sovereignty of the domain is endowed upon the new ruler. Many seek this location and almost none of those who find it are powerful enough to obtain control over the region currently known as the Bleak

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Mire. Some say that the spirit of the Feyrealm itself is the power that works its mysterious ways in this ancient chamber.

The latest of those who vie to achieve dominance over the realm are the drow of House Ausstyl, but the aberration venerating druids known as the Inheritors of the Unbegotten have an even more ambitious and mad agenda. Once they have taken control over the Feyrealm domain, they plan to sacrifice its entirety to their unnamable Farrealm masters, powers with an incomprehensible drive, one that exists beyond reason, space, and time. The aberrant druids have summoned the Elder Cortex, an entity brought forth from dimensions of the Farrealm, as the vessel of their mad plot.

Outside the main cavern are a few small caves that serve particular purposes and are further manifestations of the Feyrealm domain. One of these chambers is inhabited by the troops of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, who are replenished every few days when their raiding parties bring in new captured creatures for sacrifice.

Environment

The caves and corridors are 20 feet high and naturally dark. The air is humid and heavy with the smell of putrid water.

Errands of the Challenger

Anyone can challenge the sovereign ruler of the Feyrealm domain to contest control over the realm. The current rulers of the realm known as the Bleak Mire are the Matrons of Malice, who usurped the right from King Dasmag as a collective entity of a coven.

The first challenge is that the contestant must find out the tasks required for the ritual. The method is not described anywhere but can be revealed by a *legend lore* or similar spell, or learned from those who know it, like the Tomelords of the Awakened Library, Frumby Goldtooth, Welvynn Ausstyl, or the Matrons of Malice themselves.

The second challenge is to prove that the contestant knows the realm. It involves sixteen mundane components that must be brought to a container from each specific region of the Feyrealm domain. These components can be mundane items or materials like a piece of wood, a pinch of dust, the hair of a creature, or anything that originates from that particular region.

The third challenge is the dethroning of the current ruler of the domain. The contestant must either bring the remains of the current ruler to the Hall of the Sovereign, or the current ruler must truthfully announce the challenger as its successor within the hall.

Once these tasks are completed, the components brought from each region of the domain light up in green flames in the containers and an intense whirlwind erupts in the Hall of the Sovereign. The flames are illusonary and don't emenate heat. They stretch out as if pulled by the wind and detach, whirling in the wind wildly before flowing into the new sovereign ruler of the Feyrealm domain and disappearing. Once the flames have touched the new ruler, the wind suddenly ceases. The challenger can name its new territory and becomes the new sovereign ruler of the Feyrealm domain known as the Bleak Mire.

All intelligent creatures in the Feyrealm domain learn who the new sovereign is and the new name of the domain within one week as the spirit of the Feyrealm magically announces them over the realm in the form of natural phenomena that speak.

The sovereign ruler of the domain can concentrate in the Hall of the Sovereign for an hour to achieve the following effects within the Feyrealm domain for one day:

- Cast *control weather* as the spell.
- Modify the structure and material of the landscape of one region without changing its general layout and type.
- Locate a creature that the sovereign ruler has seen before.
- Set the rules for dimensional, planar travel, and mundane travel through the borders, including opening portals to coexistent planes.

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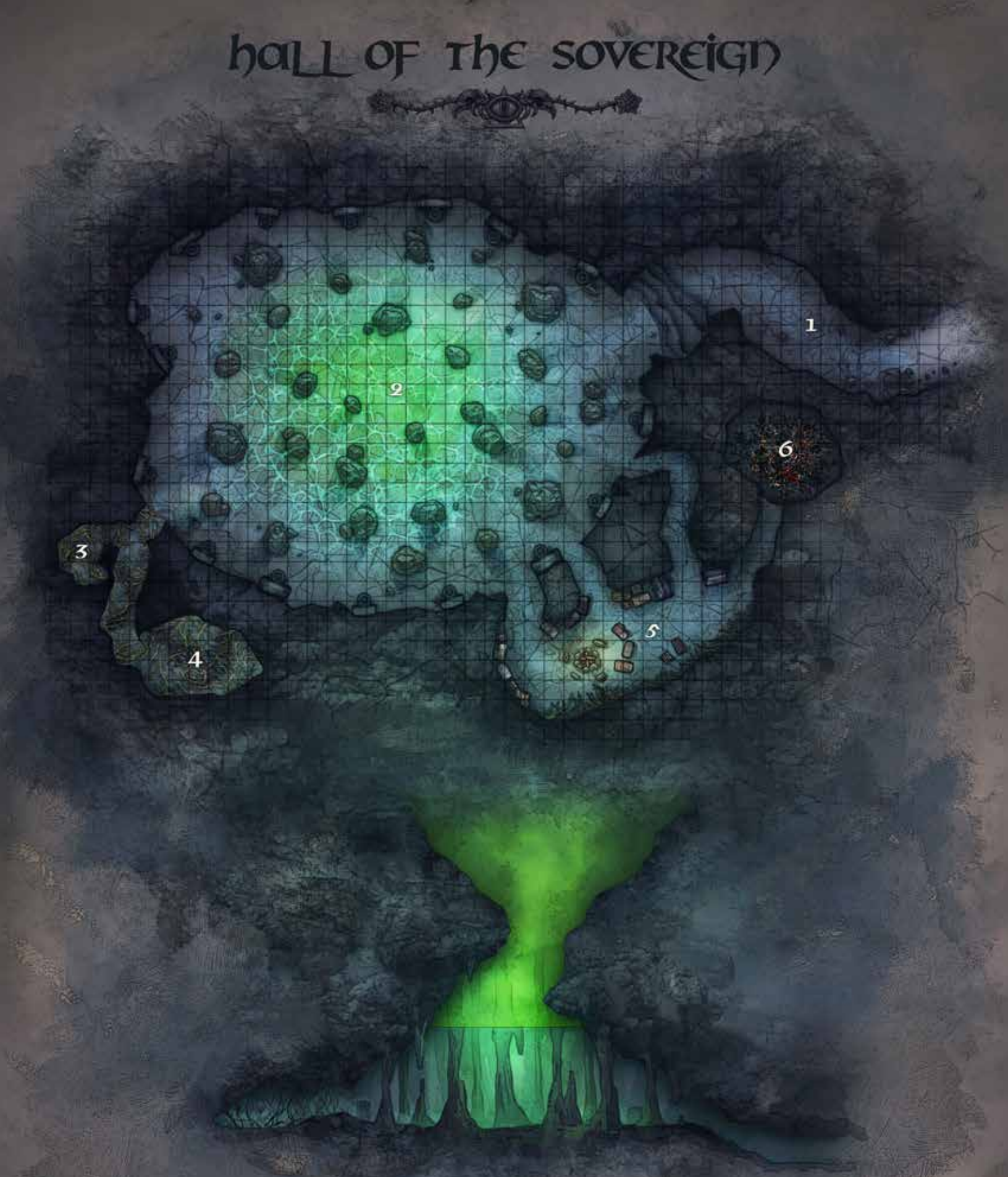
Hall of the Sovereign



1 tile = 10 feet

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Concentrating on any of these effects for an additional day extends the duration of the effect to one week, while concentrating on the effect for one week makes the effect permanent.

1. Steps of the Aspirant

Background

Those who seek to contest the realm's sovereign must enter through this tunnel and climb the enchanted stairs that remove magic effects from those who enter.

Environment

A comfortable flight of stairs leads up to a height of 10 feet from the tunnel. The first step of the stairs is carved with crude runes in an ancient dialect of Sylvan.

"Come as you are. Come as you were."

Sylvan runes on the first stair.

Scene

A group of ten **grimlock** slave guards is stationed at the feet of the stairs in the tunnel. The drow in area 2 are alerted by the sounds of combat in this area and come to aid the fight from the top of the stairs with ranged weapons and spells.

A creature who steps on the stairs is targeted by a powerful dispelling effect that works similar to a *dispel magic* spell, except that it automatically dispels any spell of 5th level or lower. For each spell of 6th level or higher on the target, make a dispel check with a +10 modifier. The DC equals 10 + the spell's level. On a successful check, the spell ends.

2. Hall of the Sovereign

Background

The druids nourish and worship the Elder Cortex and offer it sacrifices of thoughts from victims captured by their vicious frenzied mutants. As a result of the druids' sacrifices and nurturing by their druidic magic, the Elder Cortex has grown vine-like roots that have pierced the bedrock and reached out in different directions, sprouting on the surface in the aberrant ground created by Bwael Phindar. So far, these tentacled roots have blossomed into six cortex pods on the surface.

Filling the containers under the plaquettes with components from regions of the Bleak Mire is currently not the primary goal of the drow. They have already started collecting the regional components, stored in Bwael Phindar (see area 13 of Bwael Phindar), but they first want to make sure that the cortex pods are prepared for the interdimensional sacrifice.

Environment

The body of water that flows into the cave from the Lake of Bile above is blocked from expanding and is suspended in mid air, leaving a 20-foot pocket of air between the ground and the floating water above. Within this murky and foul upside-down lake rests a gigantic pulsating brain with six massive tentacles buried in the wall and many others that reach out from its bulging body.

Great stalagmites protrude from the ground and reach towards the water above, even into the lake itself. A group of alien-looking tentacled creatures moves in the darkness, readying screaming sacrifices to the massive brain that reaches out with its tentacles to lift them high into the water.

Sixteen stone plaquettes with small, empty containers line the walls, each of them inscribed with the image of a region of the Bleak Mire. The etchings show the region's current state and change if the ruler modifies them.

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Scene

Rhulzari Ausstyl (use the **Inheritor of the Unbegotten** monster entry), a young and ambitious cousin of Welvynn Ausstyl, is currently in charge and tasked with nurturing the Elder Cortex with regular feedings of thoughts from intelligent beings captured by the frenzied mutants on the surface, as well as potent spells to feed its powers. The young Inheritor of the Unbegotten commands six **frenzied mutants** and the grimlock slaves stationed in area 1. The drow will fight to the death to protect the **elder cortex,** which also assaults the characters with its innate spells and psychic attacks, while it tries to read their minds and exploit their thoughts with its special traits. It focuses its *Intellect Drain* ability on especially powerful enemies.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 12 Intelligence** ability check realizes that the terrains on the plaquettes are different regions of the Bleak Mire. A character who succeeds on a **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** skill check can identify the following exact regions on the plaquettes:

- Glass Mountain
- Blightwoods
- Fleshbite Swamps
- Russet River and the Lake of Blood
- Bogs of Rot
- Twisted Forest
- Mountains of Rust
- Hungry Downs
- Forest of Gloom
- Stormy Marshes
- The Chasm and the Lake of Bile
- Bloodrime Forest
- Dazzling Wastes
- Valley of Bloom
- Burning Woods
- The Everstorm and the Lake of Tears

3. Guardian of History

Background

The essence of the realm, its collective memory, is guarded by a manifestation of the Feyrealm itself. It keeps everyone but the sovereign ruler of the realm away from area 4. The drow attempted to infiltrate the cave but failed and never tried again, as it bears no direct connection to their plans.

Environment

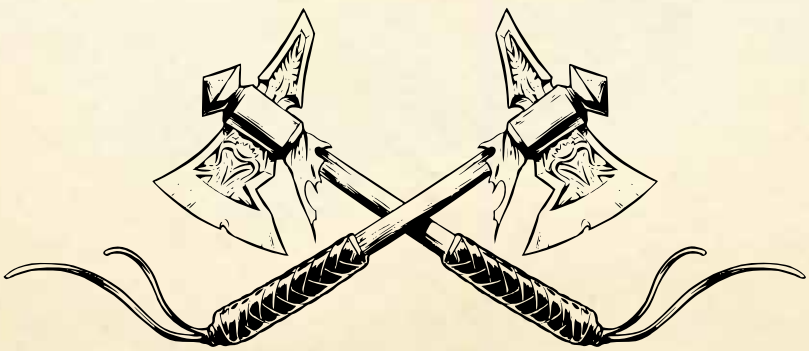
An almost impassable forest of roots entwines this natural cave filled by a thin layer of fog.

Scene

The area is considered difficult terrain and it is lightly obscured. This cave houses a manifestation of the Feyrealm itself, named the Guardian of History. The fey celestial hides between the roots, appearing only briefly, addressing the characters in a menacing tone. It warns any creature other than the sovereign ruler of the realm that it trespasses on forbidden ground. If the trespasser continues onward to its lair in area 4, the guardian of history blocks their exit and attacks ferociously.

"You are treading on forbidden ground. You can leave with your life, or stay and and become one with the realm."

The warning of the Guardian of History.



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The Guardian of History. The Guardian of History is a green-skinned, hooved giant with a wing composed of brown, orange, red, and yellow autumn leaves. Its head is crowned with a deer's majestic horn, and its facial features are more animal-like than human. It holds a giant two-handed sword that bursts with sparkles of energy. Use the **planetar** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The Guardian of History has a *lawful neutral* alignment.
- It makes Stealth skill checks with a +10 modifier. As an action, it can hide in plain sight if it has not moved in that round. Once it moves or takes an action or a reaction, it can attempt to hide again.
- It can cast the *misty step* spell at will without requiring any components to cast the spell.
- It lacks the *Healing Touch* special trait.
- ***Rejuvenation.*** If destroyed, the Guardian of History gains a new body in 1d10 rounds, regaining all its hit points, and becomes active again. The new body appears within area 3.

4. Essence of the Realm

Background

This small cave holds the essence of the Feyrealm domain, currently known as the Bleak Mire. It is an ancient place that stores the memories of every event that has taken place in this domain. Only the sovereign ruler of the realm is allowed to enter and immerse itself in the memories of the past. Everyone else is confronted by the Guardian of History and driven away.

Environment

The roots leave almost no space to move in this cave. The thick fog gives the area an eerie, menacing atmosphere.

Scene

Those who spend one minute of uninterrupted meditation within the cave can focus their minds and see past events of the Feyrealm domain unfold in front of their eyes. A meditating creature in the cave can cast the *legend lore* spell once every minute to acquire information about any event that has taken place in this Feyrealm domain currently known as the Bleak Mire.

5. Eyes of the Roots

Background

The drow camp provides only the basic needs for the group that has been living here for months now. A drow druid has been attached to the roots found in this chamber, allowing it to scry the Bleak Mire and follow the movement of creatures she met and locations she visited earlier. Once every day, she removes herself from the roots and directs the frenzied mutants towards targets to raid.

Environment

A neglected camp was erected in this cave with campfires, numerous bedrolls, and small tents. A couple of easily transportable chests stand next to the wall.

A mass of thin, tangled roots covers the southern wall, giving it an appearance as if strands of hair were growing from the rock wall. Within these roots is the body of a robed drow, lifted 10 feet high and held strong by the roots.

Scene

The **Inheritor of the Unbegotten,** Yaura Ausstyl, entangled by the roots, looks as if sleeping. A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice her eyeballs moving under her closed eyelids. She is awakened by a louder noise or if touched.

A creature that touches the roots can choose to be lifted and slowly, over the course of one day, be entangled by them. An entangled character becomes able to cast the *scrying* spell once every day.

Treasure

The chests of the drow contain the riches of those they have captured. One of the chests holds all

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non-magical items, including a variety of gemstones and crystals worth 2,750 gold pieces and jewelry from a wide variety of precious metals worth 845 gold pieces. The other chest holds eight *potions of healing,* three *potions of greater healing,* a *potion of superior healing,* a *potion of climbing,* a *potion of flying,* a *potion of speed,* a *ring of mind shielding,* a *wand of wonder,* an *iron bands of binding,* two *+1 daggers,* three *+1 longswords,* a *+1 rapier,* and a *+1 shield.*

6. Pit of the Unavailing

Background

The bodies of the unfortunate victims of sacrifice, living husks drained of their intellects, are deposited in a deep cleft in a side passage of the cave system, to die slowly from starvation or the crush of other bodies thrown into the pit, which was once the grave of only those who failed to challenge the ruler of the realm.

Environment

A gut-wrenching stench emanates from the pit below, which is half full of dead bodies of humanoids and fey. Some of the creatures on the top of the mound still move slowly, groaning in pain as if they were about to die.

Scene

The surviving creatures in the pit are two fey-realm born elves (use the **scout** monster entry with the **fey-realm-born** monster template), Ilthainthas and Kirionnyn, and a **centaur** named Baurd. Their Intelligence ability scores are drained to 0, and they are dying. They can be cured by a *greater restoration* or similar spell of the same level or higher. Once saved, they will try to escape the Dark Below and return to the surface, asking the characters to help in this regard.

67. Bwael Phindar, the Magnificent Beast

Background

The Gibbering Fort, as the non-drow call it, is named Bwael Phindar, the Magnificent Beast in the drow language. It is a colossal organism fused together from countless gibbering mouthers by the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. The druids fed and grew the aberration over the years until it attained its current gigantic size. The creature was commanded to circle the Chasm endlessly and devour everything that lay in its path. Bwael Phindar incorporates everything it consumes into its body, making it part of its enormous organism. With more and more creatures consumed and absorbed into its body, it has become so enormous that it can host the aboveground forces of the drow of House Ausstyl, which are led by Krasnar Azennar. Bwael Phindar is indifferent towards other aberrations but tries to consume and absorb any other creatures as soon as it discovers them. It is an unintelligent, slow, stolid creature that acts out of instinct rather than planned actions.

Bwael Phindar is Krasnar Azennar's seat of power where the aberration-infused ex-paladin warlock commands the aberrant forces of the drow. Krasnar Azennar is the general of House Ausstyl's armies on the surface and a spawn of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. The druids have commanded him to prepare the ground for cultivating the cortex pods and capture sacrifices for the Elder Cortex. The aberration-infused prince leads a group of aberrant barbarians and commands Querrai Xalo, the umbral stalker spy of House Ausstyl, who reports to him on events on the Bleak Mire and on the Shadowrealm. The fallen knight is also seeking Father Lestor. He knows that the cleric of Knowledge is hiding in the Bleak Mire and in possession of his princely signet ring that is a sign of his betrayal by his father and a memory that the fallen knight has not relinquished in his newly formed and alien intellect.

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The areas surrounding Bwael Phindar are patrolled by Krasnar Azennar's aberrant barbarians, who collect all living beings for food or for sacrifice to their dark masters. The Fort is creating a circular ring of aberrant ground around the Chasm, preparing the way for the ritual of the Elder Cortex below. All denizens of the Bleak Mire have learned to give the fort a wide berth lest they be engulfed by and merged into the living fortress of the new lord of the land.

Environment

Bwael Phindar is a mass of reddish flesh that constantly oozes an oily substance. It has a collection of glaring eyes of different sizes that occasionally blink and stare endlessly into their surroundings. Several orifices open on the skin of the being, fanged maws of various sizes, some that have grown with the body to the size of gates. The soft earth and hard materials like stones below and around the colossal sphere of aberrant flesh are doughy and soft as if their physical structures have somehow transformed. The smell of raw meat lingers in the air around the colossal aberrant creature that can be noticed from hundreds of feet.

All areas within Bwael Phindar are naturally dark. Chambers are 10 feet high if not noted otherwise in the description of a specific area. Bwael Phindar has AC 7, 3,500 hit points, and is considered as an object for the purposes of determining spell effects. Bwael Phindar regains 50 hit points at the start of its turn. If Bwael Phindar takes force damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of Bwael Phindar's next turn. Bwael Phindar dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Aberrant Ground. The ground in a 100-foot radius around Bwael Phindar is doughlike and considered difficult terrain. Each creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a **DC 14 Strength** saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Gibbering. Bwael Phindar incoherently babbles while it can see any creature. While it gibbers, all Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks are made with advantage within Bwael Phindar. Each creature that is not an aberration or aberrant creature that starts its turn within 200 feet of Bwael Phindar and can hear the gibbering must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failure, the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 2, the creature does nothing. On a 3 to 4, the creature makes a melee attack against itself with the weapon in its hands. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Maw Gates. Some of the maws on Bwael Phindar's body are gate-like orifices that allow entry inside its body. A creature approaching Bwael Phindar can make a **DC 14 Dexterity** (Stealth) skill check. On a successful skill check, the creature can enter one of the maw gates unnoticed by Bwael Phindar. Bwael Phindar can attempt to *chew* on the creature on a failed skill check.

- ***Chew.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 48 (4d20 + 6) piercing damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 18) if it is a Huge or smaller creature. If the target is killed by this damage, it is absorbed into Bwael Phindar.

Blinding Spittle (Recharge 5-6). Bwael Phindar spits a chemical glob at a point it can see within 150 feet of it. The glob explodes in a blinding flash of light on impact. Each creature within 25 feet of the flash must succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw or be blinded until the end of Bwael Phindar's next turn.

Scene

Bwael Phindar continuously gibbers incoherently in various tones. A large swarm of winged worms flies out of one of the mouths near the top of the creature from area 14. It encircles the fort and attacks the characters. The gibbering of Bwael Phindar alerts the frenzied mutants, and four of them also exit the fort to investigate. When Bwael Phindar takes damage

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BWAEL PHINDAR
(THE MAGNIFICENT BEAST)

1 TILE = 5 FEET

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on the inside or outside, it reacts with a convulsion that requires all creatures within a 20-foot radius of the damaged area to make a **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw or become prone.

1. Barbarian Den

Background

The frenzied mutants under Krasnar's command spend most of their time in this area unless they are on raiding parties or exploring the Bleak Mire.

Environment

This cavity looks like a messy living area with a few bedrolls, weapons, and clothing strewn around the chamber. Stone bowls hold dried blood and pieces of unidentifiable meat.

Scene

Six **frenzied mutants** occupy this area. They are alerted if Bwael Phindar starts gibbering, four of them will exit the **maw gate** to scout the area.

2. Meat Quarry

Background

The aberrant drow feed on the flesh and blood of Bwael Phindar, which they harvest in this area.

Environment

The walls of this area are covered with the scars of regenerated wounds. Some of these wounds are kept open by iron tubes from which fresh blood drips into stone bowls placed along the organic wall. Large cuts of aberrant meat lie in a mound in the middle of the area, and a heap of eyes harvested from the body of Bwael Phindar by the wall, staring blankly in every direction. Numerous bloody cleavers are scattered on the ground.

Scene

Two **frenzied mutants** are busy slicing large chunks of meat out of Bwael Phindar. The gigantic creature flinches with every hit they deliver with their cleavers, requiring every creature in the area to make a **DC 14 Dexterity** saving throw or become prone. The frenzied mutants are so focused on their tasks that the characters gain advantage on their Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks against them.

3. Hall of Petrifying Gazers

Background

Bwael Phindar has absorbed many basilisks over time. These eyes have grown into and with its body and have retained their supernatural abilities. The aberrant drow traverse this area by averting their eyes.

Environment

Scintillating bestial eyes of various sizes cover this bodily chamber. The bluish light that flickers in their eyes illuminates the room.

Scene

The eyes in this wall turn any creature who enters into stone. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check can recognize the eyes from a safe distance as those of basilisks.

A creature that starts its turn in this area must make a **DC 14 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by a *greater restoration* spell or other similar magic of the same or higher level. A creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it is considered blinded until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If it looks at the area in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Treasure

A small, beautifully cut diamond lies unnoticed on the fleshy ground, worth 250 gold pieces.

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4. SPAWNING PODS

Background

The reproductive organ of Bwael Phindar spawns several gibbering mouthers a day, which are released into the wild.

Environment

Bulbous wart-like growths cover the northern wall of this area, each bearing a mass of mouths and eyes. They groan and gibber as they jitter uneasily. Some of them are only the size of a melon, while others have already grown to the size of a grown-up human.

Scene

Four **gibbering mouthers** detach themselves from the spawning pods and start their new lives by trying to consume the characters.

5. CANCEROUS GROWTH

Background

Bwael Phindar has a cancerous growth in this body cavity. It is spreading very slowly and will not affect the creature in any way for the next millennia.

Environment

A lump of brownish, hardened flesh takes up a large section of this area that has no eyes or mouths on it. Its different texture and shape allude to a mutation of the aberrant flesh, a benign tumor.

Scene

The cancerous growth is a weak spot of Bwael Phindar. A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check can tell what the growth is and that it is very sensitive to damage, which would send waves of pain throughout the colossal aberration.

Dealing at least 5 points of damage to the growth in a round causes Bwael Phindar to contract with pain, and many of its organs cease to function for that round. A weapon thrust deep into the cancerous growth and left there is considered to cause pain continuously. The pain in Bwael Phindar's body has the following effects:

- The gibbering stops as the many mouths of the creature howl in pain.
- The maw gates open wide, screaming with the other smaller mouths and stop chewing or attacking.
- The eyes in area 3 shut tightly, temporarily ceasing their petrification effect.
- The stair of teeth and tongue in area 6 stiffens and will not be able to spit out intruders.
- The pit of teeth and the harpy mouths at area 10 open wide, ceasing to attack or lure creatures with their songs.
- The venomous fang that blocks passage to area 13 opens wide in a scream, allowing passage to the area beyond.

The painful trashing of Bwael Phindar is noticed by many of the inhabitants of the colossal aberration. A group of four **frenzied mutants** comes to investigate in 1d4 + 1 rounds. Separately from them, Krasnar also sends **Querrai Xalo** to deal with the problem. The drow umbral stalker arrives in 1d4 + 1 rounds.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if they discover Bwael Phindar's weak spot.

6. STAIR OF TEETH AND TONGUE

Background

This organ tastes those who traverse it and acts as a security measure.

Environment

A huge sloping, ribbed, and wet tongue leads up to the top level of Bwael Phindar. The sides of the tongue are lined with large teeth that resemble a railing that runs along to the top level, opening into a large space.

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Scene

If the tongue tastes any creature other than an aberration-type creature, it tries to grapple the targets and purge them out of Bwael Phindar's system. A creature standing on the tongue must make a **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check. On a failed check, the target creature is grappled and moved by the tongue to an orifice on the top of the stairs, where they get spit out through a **maw gate**. The target creature is forcefully ejected 50 feet away from Bwael Phindar and lands prone, taking 24 (7d6) bludgeoning damage. It is also subjected to a **blinding spittle** ability of Bwael Phindar.

The four **frenzied mutants** at the top of the stairs in area 7 notice any creature struggling to withstand the grappling tongue and will intervene by throwing handaxes at the advancing creature.

7. Forehall of the Mutants

Background

Krasnar's guardian frenzied mutants take turns guarding this area.

Environment

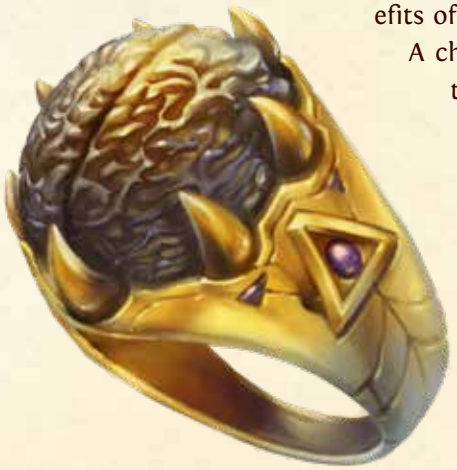
Yellowed bones and skulls are piled by the organic walls that are constantly licked by long wet tongues that seem to be seeking some leftovers to taste and consume.

Scene

Four **frenzied mutants** stand guard in this room, attacking any intruders they encounter. Their loud raging alerts both **Krasnar Azennar** in area 12 and **Querrai Xalo** in area 11.

Treasure

The skeletal arm of a once-great centaur champion still wears a *ring of mental stability* on one of its bony fingers.



Ring of Mental Stability

8. Lab of Organs

Background

Kannakar, an aboleth servitor of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, has equipped this area as an operating room to conduct its vile flesh-warping experiments.

Environment

Two operating tables made of stone stand in the middle of this area surrounded by an assortment of equipment like drills, bonesaws, scissors, injectors, and the like. Glass tubes filled with sickly green fluid hold severed body parts of drow, while two desks made out of some underground fungi hold different notes, liquids, and powders in vials and containers. All of the items in the room are covered by a thin layer of a slimy substance that smells awful.

Scene

The notes on the desk were written by Kannakar in Deep Speech and describe the process of grafting alien appendages onto humanoid bodies. A character who can read the notes and study them for an hour can make a **DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check to learn the process, risks, and benefits of the painful surgical procedure. A character who uses the required tools and tentacle parts, which are available in the room, to execute the risky two-hour operation must make a **DC 21 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check. On a failed skill check, the target creature's hit point maximum is permanently reduced by 10 points. On a successful skill check, the target creature gains a *grafted appendage*.

Grafted Appendages. The aberrant appendages grafted into your body soak up damage from attacks. You gain 10 temporary hit points and +1 bonus to AC while you have these hit

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points. You regain these temporary hit points after a long rest. You can have only one grafted appendage.

Treasure

The desks hold a healer's kit, a herbalist kit, a poisoner's kit, two doses of **torpor** poison, and ten doses of **oni blood essence**.

Oni Blood Essence. This regenerative ointment causes a creature to regain 2 (1d4) hit points when applied. It re-attaches small severed body parts or removes large scars.

9. Kannakar's Tank

Background

Welvynn Ausstyl, archdruid of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, delegated his advisor from the Farrealm, Kannakar the aboleth, to assist Krasnar Azennar in deploying the cortex pods around the Chasm. Kannakar considers the aberration-infused ex-paladin as an ally and works together with him to further the plans of House Ausstyl on the surface of the Bleak Mire. Kannakar also demonstrates ways to graft alien appendages onto the bodies to the frenzied mutants.

Environment

Aside from some illustrations and notes made in Deep Speech, the room only contains a large glass tank filled with a slimy sickly greenish thick fluid.

Scene

Kannakar, the **aboleth** advisor, spends most of its time submerged in the fluid-filled tank. First, it tries to parlay telepathically with intruders, offering them grafted appendages or treasures, and tries to learn their greatest desires through its probing telepathy ability to make the most fitting offer. It takes its time to enslave as many of the characters as possible. If all efforts fail, it flops out of its tank with surprising agility and bursts through the ranks of the characters to reach its allies outside its quarters. If cornered, Kannakar fights to the death.

Treasure

Kannakar wears a *ring of jumping*.

10. Harpy Mouths

Background

Bwael Phindar has absorbed a group of harpies years ago and assimilated their vocal organs into its body, which grew with it as it expanded. This area serves as a protective trap to keep unwanted visitors away from the cavities beyond.

Environment

Beautiful, large humanoid lips adorn the walls of this room. They show vicious fangs when they open to sing their aria. A shut maw gate forms on the ground at the enntrance to the cavity.

Scene

Bwael Phindar opens the mouths on the wall and starts to sing with the harpy mouths as soon as intruders pass the chamber in the corridor outside area 10. All creatures other than aberration-type creatures within 50 feet of area 10 that can hear the song must succeed on a **DC 14 Wisdom** saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. While charmed by the song, a target is incapacitated. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the harpy mouths inside area 10, the target must move on its turn toward them by the most direct route, trying to get within 5 feet. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks and must make a **DC 17 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the **maw gate** on the ground. If the charmed target notices the maw, it can repeat the saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target walks into the maw on the ground while it tries to get close to the harpy mouths. The maw chews on the target until it escapes. A charmed target can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to the harpy mouths' song for the next 24 hours.

Treasure

The decaying carcass of a spriggan assassin lies at the bottom of the maw. A character inside the maw can grab its *handy haversack,* which has the decaying dead bodies of two more spriggans inside. When opened, the spirits of the two suffocated spriggans

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are released in the form of two **wraiths** that attack any living creature in sight.

11. Querrai Xalo's Room

Background

The drow umbral stalker is an agent of House Ausstyl, sent on a mission by Welvynn Ausstyl to keep an eye on Krasnar Azennar and gather information from the aboveground areas of the Bleak Mire and the Shadowrealm, where he can travel freely using his magical powers.

Environment

The organic cavity is furnished as a regular but messy room with a dirty bed, a small writing desk, a narrow wardrobe, and a worn combat practice dummy.

Scene

Querrai Xalo spends most of his time in this room when not traveling or consulting Krasnar Azennar. He tries to use his shadow step to get away from direct combat if confronted and returns in hiding to deal sneak attacks.

Querrai Xalo

"Having no eyes on your back is a luxury you cannot afford."

Querrai Xalo returning from the shadows to backstab a character.

12. Throne of the Oathbreaker

Background

Krasnar Azennar is fanatically devoted to cultivating the cortex pods around the Chasm and capturing sacrifices for the Elder Cortex to feed the process. He is obsessed with eliminating any threat that would oppose this plan, especially the servants of the Matrons of Malice, against whom he breeds a special hatred. Krasnar Azennar is seeking the location of Blister, the third midnight hag of the coven. The ex-paladin and former prince of Aglarion also breeds a personal and vengeful hatred for those who served his father or his former inheritance, the Kingdom of Aglarion, most notably Father Lestor.

Environment

A large throne composed of sinew, leather, and bones extrudes from the organic ground of Bwael Phindar as if it grew out of it. A tentacled, malformed, armor-clad figure with a vicious-looking glaive in hand sits on the throne, staring at the entrance with an emotionless expression and unblinking eyes. A dragon's skull lies on the north section of the room, and a tightly shut giant viper's jaw grows out from the organic walls from the south wall of the area.

Scene

Krasnar Azennar, the aberration-infused ex-paladin sits on his throne, contemplating his mission when he is not outside of Bwael Phindar to defeat the minions of the Matrons of Malice, to hunt Father Lestor, or to confront any other threat that would endanger the development of the cortex pods or the slow advancement of Bwael Phindar.

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KRASNAR AZENNAR

"I am no longer the prince I was. I am vengeance. I am destruction. I am chaos incarnate!"

Krasnar Azennar bursting out at the characters.

Krasnar Azennar recognizes the characters from Father Lestor's dream and announces them as the allies of his traitorous father. His emotionless expression quickly changes to mad rage fuelled by hatred as he attacks the characters on sight. If the characters have acquired Queen Elyssa's hair comb from the erinyes at area 1 of Demonbane Isle and show it to Krasnar Azennar, the abomination-infused prince becomes stunned for one round as memories of his mother course through his mind.

The dragon skull is of an ancient feyrealm-born green dragon killed by Malzdreziret and Krasnar Azennar long ago. It is a trophy that symbolizes the allegiance between the dragon and the forces of the aberrant drow.

The viper maw is a secret door to area 13. It opens only on Krasnar Azennar's command or it can be forced open with a successful **DC 20 Strength** ability check. The viper maw attacks any creature that touches it. It has a +9 to hit modifier on its bite attack that deals 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage on a hit. It has AC 13 and 72 hit points. Once the viper maw reaches 0 hit points, it can easily be held open.

Experience

Award the party 700 experience points if the characters recover Krasnar Azennar's body.

13. Fanged Vault

Background

This tightly sealed vault is where the drow and their raiders, led by Krasnar Azennar, store the treasure they loot from their victims.

Environment

A small cavity holds a large heap of treasure.

Scene

Once this area is entered, the characters gain easy access to the treasures found inside. A simple small

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stone box with a stone lid holds five of the sixteen regional components collected by the forces of Krasnar Azennar that will be used in the Hall of the Sovereign (location 66.). They are each placed in a small pouch and labeled in Dark Speech. These include the following components:

- A piece of rock from the Chasm.
- Palm-sized petals of a flower from the Valley of Bloom.
- Red winter wolf fur from the Bloodrime Forest.
- A giant dead mosquito from the Fleshbite Swamps.
- A vial of blood-red liquid from the Lake of Blood.

Treasure

The room has a small pile of golden nuggets worth 3,450 gold pieces. A small green chest decorated with fey motifs holds a *deck of illusions,* a *+2 rapier,* and an *ioun stone of agility*. The skeletal torso of an elf lies by the wall in a *+2 chain shirt,* and wearing a thin silver necklace decorated with several rubies worth 500 gold pieces. A scarred metal *+1 shield* decorated with a powerful centaur lancer lies next to the skeleton.

14. Nest of the Parasites

Background

Swarms of winged worms have infested this mawed orifice, living off the flesh of Bwael Phindar.

Environment

The wall of this cavity is ridden with worms that crawl on its surface and fly within, among slightly pulsating pupae that are a foot in length.

Scene

Four **swarms of winged worms** inhabit the cavity and will be spewed out as soon as Bwael Phindar starts gibbering.

Swarm of Winged Worms (CR 2, 450 XP). Use the **swarm of magic-infused fire beetles** monster with the following modifications:

- The swarm of winged worms lacks the *Illumination* and *Infused with Magic* traits.
- It has a fly speed of 40 ft.
- Its creature type is aberration.
- ***Bites.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) slashing damage or 10 (3d6) slashing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer, and the target must make a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned. A poisoned creature's speed is halved, it takes a -2 penalty to AC and Dexterity saving throws, and it can't use reactions. On its turn, it can use either an action or a bonus action, not both. Regardless of the creature's abilities or magic items, it can't make more than one melee or ranged attack during its turn. If the creature attempts to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action, roll a d20. On an 11 or higher, the spell doesn't take effect until the creature's next turn, and the creature must use its action on that turn to complete the spell. If it can't, the spell is wasted. A poisoned creature makes another Constitution saving throw every 10 minutes. On a successful save, the effect ends for it.

68. Hunting Grounds

Background

The hunting grounds around the former winter court of King Dasmag were once the habitat of a pack of crimson-hued winter wolves that were kept as prey animals to be hunted during the annual Wolfhunt of King Dasmag, their numbers quelled and maintained through the ritualistic hunting ceremony. As the seasons have passed without the annual hunt, the pack has grown large, numbering about a dozen members. It has reclaimed the forest as its territory and even ventures outside of the forest to hunt herds of elk that have been scraping the snow cover for sparse lichen.

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Environment

The blood-red snow covering the Bloodrime Forest is dotted with the trails of large four-legged creatures traveling in a pack.

Scene

The characters can make a **DC 13 Wisdom (Survival)** skill check to notice that they have ventured into the territory of some larger than usual wolves. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check can identify the beasts as winter wolves.

A pack of six red-furred **winter wolves** begins to stalk the characters using their *Snow Camouflage* trait. They emerge to attack with their breath weapons from surprise and group on their victims in numbers of three. The winter wolves flee if half of their number are dead.

69. WINTER COURT

Background

Sharondaell was once a beautiful feyrealm-born half-elven huntress, overseeing King Dasmag's winter court tower and organizing the annual Wolfhunt. The court tower now stands in ruins, surrounded by standing lifelike statues of various humanoids, most with a terrified visage. The hags turned Sharondaell into a medusa, tasking her to roam the Bleak Mire and raise stone monuments from her victims. She stalked the Fleshbite Swamps, her favorite hunting ground, turning many victims who dared to approach the tower into stone statues.

Environment

A ruined wooden tower stands on a clearing in the blood-red snow. In its close vicinity, red snow-covered stone statues stand in different poses, most of them in fleeing or in fighting, defensive, or frightened positions. Many of them have arrows poking out of their limbs and bodies.

The wooden tower has three levels, each situated 10 feet above the other, taking up a 30-by-30 feet area on each. A 5-foot area has a ladder that climbs up to the second and third levels of the tower.

Scene

Sharondaell (use the **medusa** monster entry) is bitter and thirsty for blood. It hides on the top floor of the tower, taking three-quarters cover (improving its AC to 20 and its Dexterity saving throw to +7), and hunts those who come near with her longbow. The medusa reverts to melee only if anyone intrudes the tower, where it has advantage on attack rolls against creatures climbing the ladders.

70. MONUMENTS TO THE MIRE

Background

The Fleshbite Swamps and areas around the Winter Forest are littered with the stone statues of numerous humanoid figures that protrude from the muddy waters, all former victims of Sharondaell, the medusa.

Environment

Through the obscuring clouds of insects, the lifelike statues of various creatures can be seen scattered around this area of the swamps.

Scene

On a successful **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check, the characters can discern that most of the figures are in fleeing poses, looking behind their shoulders towards the southeast.

Most of the statues of the petrified creatures are cracked and broken, and returning them to life would cause them to die instantly. The latest victims of Sharondaell, whose statues are still perfectly intact, are those of three tentacled drow **frenzied mutants** of House Ausstyl, who were part of a raiding party.

Treasure

One of the petrified frenzied mutants carries the body of a dead spriggan over its shoulder that still

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has a stolen *rope of climbing* rolled up around its body. The rope can be removed only if the statues are shattered.

71. The Rotting Mound

Background

A giant mound of rotting corpses breaks the surface of the Fleshbite Swamps. These were just some of the victims of the extermination campaign led by the Matrons of Malice against King Dasmag's court. The mound is the lair of giant gadflies that lay eggs in the mound of rotting flesh and lure creatures close with their mimicry.

Environment

This hill looks like any other mound in the Fleshbite Swamps until one approaches its sloping sides and smells the putrid airs that emanate from it in a wide circle. When viewed from up close, the mound is a pile of hundreds of rotting corpses - of centaurs, satyrs, feyrealm-born dwellers of the land, drow, and various other fey creatures. Millions of insects form a buzzing cloud above the corpses.

Scene

Sixteen **giant gadflies** hover within the thick veil of insects that circles above the mound. The gadflies suck the blood of their victims, lured to the mound with mimicry and feeding the ever-growing hill of carrion.

Giant Gadfly. Use the **stirge** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The giant gadfly is Small size.
- It has 9 hit points.
- ***Blood Drain.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the giant gadfly attaches to the target. While attached, the giant gadfly doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the giant gadfly turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss. The giant gadfly can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the giant gadfly.
- ***Mimicry.*** The giant gadfly can mimic simple sounds it has heard, such as a person whispering, a baby crying, or an animal chittering. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful **DC 10 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check.

72. Mass Extermination

Background

When the Matrons of Malice took over the Bleak Mire, they began a campaign of mass incarceration and extermination. They gathered as many denizens of the Feyrealm domain they could find and imprisoned them in rows upon rows of ramshackle buildings in the Fleshbite Swamps, encircled in a pen constructed of barbed walls and guarded by merrow ghouls under their command. Those who were not deemed worthy of keeping as souls for the devilish soul-trading of the hags or as toy things for their vile tortures were executed at an altar on the shores of the Crystal Lake, turning the waters into the Lake of Blood.

Environment

A large altar sits at the shore of the blood-red lake. It is caked with crimson dried blood, as is the ground on which it stands. The compound behind the altar is encircled by a 10-foot high metal wall with barbs on its top. It lies in ruins after its abandonment, and the sole gate is hanging on its hinges, having rusted over the years. The air is thick with the ferrous smell of blood and the stench of decay. The half-eaten remains of hundreds of fey and feyrealm-born creatures cover the ground, within and outside of the holding pens, whose bars have been broken down.

Scene

Six **merrow ghouls** are drawn to the sounds of encroachments around the altar or the former holding

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pens. They will venture onto land from the lake, attacking interlopers, and try to draw victims in with harpoons before feasting on their paralyzed flesh.

Merrow Ghoul (CR 3, 700 XP). Use the **merrow** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The merrow ghoul's creature type is undead.
- It has damage immunity to poison and condition immunities to charmed, exhaustion, and poisoned.
- ***Claws.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

73. Pool of Starlight

Background

This small pond and the beautiful magical garden surrounding it was one of the favorite spots of King Dasmag, where he brought his chosen concubines or respected guests for dalliances or discussions. A unique flower grows in the pool - the **lotus of delight** - which releases euphoric scents when blooming in the starlight. However, as they have done with all other beautiful places in the Bleak Mire, the Matrons of Malice have ruined the beauty of the location, and the lotus flowers never bloom under the permanent cloud cover, keeping their euphoric scents locked within their closed petals.

Rhemit Boughseeker, an occultist merfolk wizard and professional alchemist who has fled the Lake of Blood and the site of Mass Exterminations through the Fleshbite Swamps, has found the pool and has managed to fool the flowers with a *major image* spell, reflecting starlight onto the pond and making the flowers blossom to release their perfumes. The merfolk wizard is experimenting with the flowers and is trying to distill their aromatic elements. He has made the Pool of Starlight his home and a refuge from the horrors of the Bleak Mire.

Environment

This small pool sits at the foot of the Glass Mountains, partly reflecting the dark clouds above and casting the pool into shadow and gloom. The brownish pond is surrounded by ornately crafted benches, decorated with illustrations of fey in revelry, all manner of flowers, and scenes of joy. In sharp contrast, the lotus flowers in the fetid pond are wilted, and their petals are closed. A fishlike humanoid figure floats half-submerged at the edge of the pool, with a set of alchemical appliances spread around the pool's rim.

Scene

Amongst the dying vegetation, a few small bushes of night roses grow (see area 3 of the Arcane Tower). If the cloud cover would break and the starlight would be reflected off the slopes of the mountains above, the flowers would bloom again and release their euphoric scent, causing unbound sensations of joy in those who smell their sweet perfumes.

If he sees or hears the characters approach, **Rhemit Boughseeker** will immediately cast *mage armor* and *greater invisibility,* and observe the characters before he engages them. If he perceives the characters as non-threatening, Rhemit will end its invisibility and make introductions. He relates his story of fleeing from the Matrons of Malice and their merrow ghouls that guarded the site of Mass Exterminations at the southern shores of the Lake of Blood. The wizard will not leave the location and will make barters for its potions or for information, trading them for spells or other magic items. He is familiar with all locations in the Fleshbite Swamps and Perfidy and the Ambrosia Winery. He knows the regions of the Lake of Blood and Russet River.

If the characters show any hostility, Rhemit Boughseeker will unleash his spells. If reduced to half his hit points, he will cast another *greater invisibility* or *fly* spell to escape. As a last resort, he will cast a *major image* spell to cause the pond to be covered by an illusion of the starry sky to cause the lotus flowers to bloom, hoping to resist their effect.

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RHEMIT BOUGHSEEKER

"He didn't see the dark omens nor the darkness lurking in the Dark Below. I warned the King amidst the revelry. That was King Dasmag's folly....but that's another tale. Tell me, are there wielders of magic amongst you? Is it information you seek? Or perhaps my creations? I will make fair trade for both."

Rhemit Boughseeker reminiscing of fate and pointing to his potions for trade.

Lotus of Delight. The lotus of delight is a purple lotus flower that blooms under starlight and releases its euphoric perfumes. Any creature within 20 feet of a lotus of delight when it blooms must make a successful **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw or be filled with sensations of pure pleasure that are narcotic in nature. On a failed save, the creature becomes poisoned for 1 minute. Until this poison ends, the target is incapacitated.

Rhemit Boughseeker (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **merfolk** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Rhemit Boughseeker has 46 hit points.
- He has an Intelligence score of 17 and saving throws of Intelligence +6 and Wisdom +4.
- He is proficient in the skills Arcana +6 and History +6.
- He speaks Aquan, Common, Primordial, and Sylvan.
- ***Spellcasting.*** Rhemit Boughseeker is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Rhemit Boughseeker has the following wizard spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, prestidigitation, true strike*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *scorching ray, suggestion*
  - 3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, fly, major image*
  - 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, divination*
  - 5th level (1 slot): *hold monster*

Treasure

Rhemit Boughseeker's spellbook is written on large clam shells held together on a string of interwoven kelp, containing the spells on his prepared spell list. He carries a set of 3 alchemist's supplies in a large sack, as well as 4 vials of *alchemist's fire*. In addition, the wizard has a plethora of potions strapped around its shoulder on a potion belt: 4 *potions of healing* and 2 *potions of greater healing*, a *potion of animal friendship*, 2 *potions of climbing*, a *potion of invisibility*, a *potion of poison*, 2 *potions of resistance to psychic damage*, and a *potion of water breathing*. The merfolk occultist also carries a strange dark green conch that works as a *decanter of endless water*.

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The Ritual of Cleansing

Background

The Matrons of Malice are masters of curses and spellcraft who weaved a curse so complex that it utilizes and exploits every possibility provided by the universal rules of laying curses. It was intentional that the process required to manifest and remove the Midnight Curse would be so complicated. It required an item of importance that represented the target, in their case the kingdom of Aglarion and its royal crown, the removal of the rightful heir to the throne, and an event that would activate the curse, in their case the coronation of an heir that is not the rightful ruler of the targeted kingdom.

Naturally, each curse must contain a clause that describes how it can be broken. Most of the time, it is just a spell, but it can be a seemingly impossible task in the case of more complex curses. The complexity of the activation allowed the hag coven to fabricate a removal procedure of the same complexity. The Midnight Curse can be lifted from the *crown of Aglarion* only by the Matrons of Malice who cast the curse, and only if the rightful heir of the crown, Krasnar Azennar, wears the cursed crown and burns on a pyre built from the Hagtree, while the former sovereign of the land, King Dasmag sings his favorite song.

The Matrons of Malice can be intimidated into lifting the curse. This can be achieved only by learning about and acquiring their phylactery, and threatening the hags with their immortality, which they value above anything else.

Unknown to everyone, the Matrons of Malice have added a detail, for which they made the preparations a long time ago. When the flames consume the body of the prince and the Midnight Curse is lifted, the soul of Krasnar Azennar flies across the planes to the soul fragment that was previously removed by the hags and bound into his statue in the Mausoleum of the Royal Palace in Onadbyr. In this way, the statue becomes Krasnar Azennar's phylactery. The dead soul of the prince rises as the Lich-Knight and lays destruction to the land that was once his inheritance.

Environment

The pyre is set in the once majestic Court of King Dasmag, and the aberrant body of Krasnar Azennar lies on top of it. The three wretched hags stand close by, waiting for the flickering image of the ghost of King Dasmag to start its song. When the ghost of the satyr lord is placated and starts to sing its song, the

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hag coven cackles uncontrollably and reaches out to inflame the massive logs of the Hagtree.

Scene

The hag coven grudgingly performs the ritual that lifts the curse from the *crown of Aglarion* only if the Matrons of Malice have already been defeated by the characters, if they are threatened with their lives and the destruction of their phylactery, and if the components are readied.

The ritual takes one hour and involves the hag coven chanting over the pyre until the flames completely incinerate the body of Krasnar Azennar. The *crown of Aglarion* levitates above the funeral pyre and the flames burn away the ugly deformities that appeared on it with the manifestation of the Midnight Curse. When the Midnight Curse is lifted from the *crown of Aglarion,* it loses its sentience, and it ceases to function as a sentient magic item but retains all of its other magical properties.

The pyre crumbles, and the Matrons of Malice demand their phylactery back in a threatening manner.

"Now you must return our phylactery as promised or our souls will haunt you eternally, even in the afterlife, and you shall be cursed to conceive children who are born undead!"

The Matrons of Malice demand that the characters hold to their promise after they fulfill their part of the bargain by lifting the Midnight Curse.

Once the curse is lifted, the Matrons of Malice return to Demonbane Isle with a *plane shift* spell, where they pack up their most prized possessions and leave to inhabit a new lair in secret. If the characters return the phylactery to the Matrons of Malice, they secure it in a new secret lair and hunt the characters to eliminate them. If the characters destroy the phylactery of the Matrons of Malice, they retreat to a new secret lair and lay dormant for one year until they can create a new phylactery. Soon after, they start to hunt the characters to eliminate them. The only option to get rid of the Matrons of Malice is to destroy their phylactery and kill them once and for all.

The **ghost** of King Dasmag will gladly join the fight against the hag coven. Once the hags are slain, the King's countenance is restored to its former self from that of a ghost. The Lord Dasmag thanks the characters as its spirit is released and finds eternal rest.

King Dasmag

Experience

Award the party 5,000 experience points if the characters lift the curse from the *crown of Algarion.*

GETTING HOME

Once the Ritual of Cleansing has been successfully completed, the only way for the characters to get home is to take sovereignty of the realm (see section Errands of the Challenger in location 66.) and lift the restrictions on planar travel or even open a portal to the Material Plane. However, at this point, Frumby Goldtooth will make his move and attempt to claim sovereignty himself by turning the characters' allies against them (see. area 3 in location 64b.).

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War of the Living

When the characters return to the Material Plane, they find the Kingdom of Aglarion ravaged by hordes of undead. After regrouping at Camp Perseverance on the hills of Cloud Peak, they meet the surviving allied forces under the command of General Sundabar Stormbreaker. However, the mettle of the army is soon tested as an army of zombies converges on the camp.

A Call to Arms

General Sundamar Stormbreaker tasks the characters to traverse the lands once again and seek out forces to bolster the army of the living. These missions take the characters to notable locations and against unforeseen dangers as they gather troops for a final push against eastern Aglarion and Onadbyr.

Onadbyr, the City of the Dead

Once all ranks of the united armies have been recruited, the characters can undertake several strategic missions inside the undead-infested capital to gain tactical advantages in the final siege of the city. They will have to infiltrate the city and capture key locations to gain the upper hand over the undead when the armies finally invade the capital.

Siege of Onadbyr

Depending on the characters' actions to bolster their troops or weaken those of the undead, the final invasion of Onadbyr is one of urban combat against the seemingly overwhelming forces of zombies, wights, and ghouls led by greater undead.

Palace of the Lich-Knight

When the undead armies infesting the city are defeated, the characters can clear the mound of zombies covering the entirety of the Royal Palace with a devastating barrage. This will allow them to enter the Royal Palace and face the Lich-Knight in its throne room, to end the reign of the twice-risen prince once and for all.

The Dawn of a New Age

With the defeat of the Lich-Knight, its undead servitors, and armies, the Kingdom of Aglarion is finally freed from the machinations of the Matrons of Malice. It becomes a land of opportunity where the characters are hailed as heroes, and a new king is crowned.

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Chapter 6

Reign of the Lich-Knight

Characters should be level 13 when they start Chapter 6 of Crown of the Oathbreaker.

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War of the Living

Background

Time flows slower on the Feyrealm than on the Material Plane, and as a result, months have passed since the rise of the Lich-Knight created from Krasnar Azennar by the malicious machinations of the Matrons of Malice. The characters return to a ravaged land, torn by the innumerable undead forces that have already slain many of the helpless citizens and the standing units of the crumbling army that tried to resist them. The source and the cause of the undead infestation are shrouded in mystery. However, general knowledge is that the Royal Palace has become flooded with undead from the inside and from a flying, ominous-looking upside-down ziggurat that broke free from below the Napping Giant and now hovers over Onadbyr, continuously pouring forth zombies onto the palace from above.

With the Midnight Curse lifted, the people of Aglarion could traverse the land with relative ease if not for the large number of undead slowly streaming out from the capital. Many have fled to the west, as far as possible from the source of the infestation, looking for refuge behind supposedly safe town walls or the army camp of the last surviving general of the kingdom, General Sundamar Stormbreaker. Many of the kingdom's citizens have heard about Camp Perseverance at the foothills of Cloud Peak and are looking for a way to reach it or are hoping that the general will send troops to safely escort them there. Most towns have sealed their gates and fortified their walls, getting ready to withstand the wave of biting and clawing undead. However, when the hordes of undead finally arrived at the first of these towns, Ronul's End and Willow Creek, the residents saw their morale crumbling, and these towns soon became the graves of those who stayed behind.

The Kingdom of Aglarion has become non-functional, where chaos and death prevails. Trade has stopped, shops stand looted, and resources are unavailable. Everyone is on their own, trying to save themselves and their families, gathering food, and surviving from one day to the next.

The city of Onadbyr, the epicenter of the undead infestation, stands deserted by the living, with only a few residents remaining due to their dire misfortune. These trapped individuals are trying to find a way out of the city through the hordes of undead that wander the streets, looking to consume the living.

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The most capable warriors or spellcasters of the capital have either fled, joined Camp Perseverance, or fallen victim to the undead forces, leaving the rest of the survivors in a hopeless situation.

Master Zaophas has relocated the Arcane Tower to the Astral Plane, sealed it with powerful magic and returned with the wizards of the Arcane Tower. The spellcasters now lend aid to the forces of General Sundamar Stormbreaker.

The horde of undead, pouring out from the capital, has already infested Onadbyr Plains, Willow Creek Plains, and the Ulden Swamps. The plague of undeath continues to spread to the north, south, and west of Aglarion, along the shores of the Calhay Sea and the King's Road. With the death of Queen Aphinah and the mystery surrounding the origin of the undead onslaught, there is no rightful monarch or authority in the realm. Still, most people don't care about the vacant throne with respect to their daily survival.

The neighboring Drayl City-States to the south and the tribes of Vordan to the north have prepared standing armies to withhold the undead forces if they were to reach their borders. Drayl accepts refugees and provides them with shelter and food but, in return, expects those it saves to fight for them if needed. In the meantime, the Vordani tribes have sealed themselves off and launch fiery missiles from their massive war machines at anything that moves up the slopes of the Vordan Mountains.

The Kingdom of Aglarion is still the home of many other NPCs that the characters might have encountered or befriended during the adventure. If they are still alive and allied in cause to the characters, they will either be located at Camp Perseverance or be ready to join the fight if encouraged. The most capable and possible allies are Selvaro, the young bronze dragon, Cygnus, the couatl paladin, and Avra, the sentient flesh golem wizard. Add these and any other NPCs as you see fit.

The character should become informed about the state of the kingdom and the location of Camp Perseverance wherever they arrive in the Kingdom of Aglarion from the Feyrealm.

CAMP PERSEVERANCE

Background

General Sundamar Stormbreaker is a wise military leader, a stalwart and uncompromising commander, a paladin of the Wondermaker, the god of magic, and the last remaining pillar of the Royal Army. The general continued to serve the kingdom and the crown under Queen Aphinah and followed her few orders even if he resented them. At the arrival of the undead hordes, the general saw that outright war with the overwhelming forces would only slowly diminish his resources and eventually lead to a horrific defeat. He has ordered all of the troops that survived the initial chaos of the first wave of undead to regroup on the eastern slopes of Cloud Peak. The steep mountainside offers a good vantage point, a well-defendable location that is hard to access, and an advantageous fighting position.

General Sundamar Stormbreaker is currently biding his time and focuses on gathering as many troops as possible to balance the odds, to this well-fortified position. The general has also prepared an escape route down the mountain's western slopes and a second camp on the other side of river Halueth. He has made preparations to demolish the Overpass of the Giants if needed, to cover the retreat of his troops. He is ready to march further to the west into the Mountainfall, should the undead be able to cross the river. However, the general considers the foothills of the Mountainfall as the place where he would take his last stand.

Environment

Dozens of campfires, tents, and makeshift wooden huts dot the steep mountainside, where the ground has been worked by mundane tools and magic to accommodate the impromptu military camp erected by the united forces that remain. Each cottage accommodates up to 20 people, and the large army tents have enough space for up to 10 people. These

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tents and huts have very simple furnishings made from whatever the camp residents could fabricate from nearby resources or carry on their persons.

Several rows of large wooden palisades run across the slopes, and spells have shaped most elevations to become even steeper with only narrow stairs on the cliffs to slow the advance of an invading force. Three larger plateaus (zones B, C, and E) rise from the side of the cliffs to a height of 20 feet, each of them supporting a 30-foot tall wooden watchtower. The outcroppings (zones D and F) rise 20 feet above the cliffs, gradually decreasing in height as the cliff rises on their sides.

The escape route on the top of the camp was also fashioned by magic. It turns into a serpentine road that runs along the side of the mountain, slowly descending until it reaches the foot of the mountain on its western side. 5-foot wide stone stairs were formed by magic to allow an easy climb up from each zone to the other, except for zone C, where rope ladders are lowered when needed.

The lights of the small settlement can be seen from afar, flickering in the clear night sky. At the foot of the towering mountain, a small group of mounted warriors have erected camps and regularly leave to scout the close vicinity. The camps are silent except for the occasional neighing of the horses at the foot of the mountain.

Cliffs. The steep rock walls are rugged and hard to climb. A creature that attempts to climb the wall must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to ascend the wall up to half its speed. Climbing the almost vertical surface of the side of the outcroppings (zones D and F) requires a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. A skill check that fails by 10 or more causes the climber to fall unless it catches something to hold onto by succeeding on a **DC 15 Dexterity** saving throw. A creature that falls down the cliffs takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet of falling and is only blocked from falling to the bottom by the palisades.

Explosive Runes. Some parts of the first flight of cliffs are covered with *glyphs of warding* spells (marked on the map) cast by Master Zaophas using 9th level spell slots. An undead creature that touches the runes sets off the glyph that erupts with magical energy in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on the glyph. The sphere spreads around corners. Each creature in the area must make a **DC 17 Dexterity** saving throw. A creature takes 49 (11d8) thunder damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. An exploding glyph can be heard throughout the camp.

Palisades. The palisades are constructed out of large logs to form 10-foot high walls. A creature that wants to climb over a palisade must succeed on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The palisade deals 10 (3d6) piercing damage to any creature that failed its climb check. The palisades have AC 17, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against bludgeoning damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Scene

The base of the last group of organized survivors on the mountainside make up about five hundred people, including children, women, the elderly, other noncombatants, a **unit of armed commoners,** a **unit of Royal Swords,** a **unit of Royal Arrows,** and a **unit of Royal Riders** stationed at the foot of the mountain.

Families share wooden huts built recently, while the troops spend the colder nights in larger or smaller tents. The working facilities of the military base are a forge, a large wooden warehouse, a large tent that serves as a field hospital, a command post located in a wooden cabin, and some watchtowers on higher outcroppings also built from wood.

When the characters approach the foot of the mountain, a group of ten Royal Riders (use the **scout** monster entry) on horses surround them and ask about their business. They soon lead the characters to **General Sundamar Stormbreaker**, who takes them away to the command post to conduct a private meeting to discuss their intentions.

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If the characters show General Sundamar Stormbreaker the *crown of Aglarion* and the *falcon blade,* he will be reluctant to comment on the future state of the monarchy. The general considers Queen Aphinah dead because he witnessed firsthand how the undead have erupted from the Royal Palace, and he is unaware of Gren's heritage. At this moment, he is not interested in anything besides winning the war against the undead.

"No one could have survived the onslaught at the Palace. So it might very well be that we will see the emergence of a new dynasty on the throne. But we have more pressing corners than the fate of the crown."

General Sundamar Stormbreaker speaking his thoughts about the royal lineage.

If **Gren,** who considers himself the rightful king of Aglarion, is with the characters, he will demand control of the remaining army and General Sundamar Stormbreaker to pledge on the *crown of Aglarion,* which at this point he has already demanded to wear as his own rightful heritage together with the *falcon blade.* The general will be stubbornly unwilling to accept Gren as the new king without any tangible proof of his right to the throne. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can convince General Sundamar Stormbreaker to look for proof provided by a council of divine and arcane spellcasters loyal to the crown. If the general is not convinced, he will ask Gren and his troops to join him, but will otherwise try to avoid any conflict with Gren and his family. On the other hand, Gren, together with his family of

General Sundamar Stormbreaker

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Uncanny Vagabonds, becomes furious and resentful if his demanded authority is refused. He and his troops will leave to the Drayl City-States unless a character convinces them to stay and join the fight by succeeding on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. On a successful skill check, Gren and the Uncanny Vagabonds join the forces of General Sundamar Stormbreaker grudgingly and keep voicing their demands throughout the military campaign.

"I hear ya, I hear ya. We save the land to have s'ing to rule over later. Once dis be all over, y'all will have plen'y o'time to bow to yer new king."

Gren accepting the situation as it is for now.

The General's Strategy

Scene

If the characters prove their competence in any way or succeed on a **DC 13 Charisma** ability check during their meeting with General Sundamar Stormbreaker, he will soon start to consider them as competent allies and will be ready to discuss his tactics with them at his command post at area 3. The general is reluctant to leave the well-protected camp and its advantageous location until a formidable enough force is amassed to face the undead.

General Sundamar Stormbreaker has ordered the Royal Riders and the wizards of the Arcane Tower to cull the advancing undead wherever they can, to buy time for his troops to grow. The wizards, led by Master Zaophas, patrol the Ulden Road between the Azure Bridge and Southkeep, forming the first line of defense.

The general is unwilling to thin his resources and plans a single decisive strike on the capital to reclaim it once he has recruited all available fighting units from the kingdom. He is aware that the recruited units will bring more commoners that need care, so he has been preparing temporary housing and stocked up on food supplies to accommodate the refugees. General Sundamar Stormbreaker asks the characters to find the following remotely located fighting units that he knows of and to recruit them under his banner:

- News is that the townsfolk of Harveston and the Uncanny Vagabonds who have taken refuge at the town wish to escape to Drayl en masse. The general wants to save the citizens, enroll the Uncanny Vagabonds, and acquire the grain reserves of the town. So he asks the characters to achieve these goals.
- Nangrath has suffered greatly under the Midnight Curse. Still, Lord Arenbar Nangrath has reportedly been able to muster a unit of his dwarven defenders who vigorously protect the town's strong walls. The general asks the characters to convince the dwarven lord to abandon his ancestral fort and join forces with the unified armies, who can offer protection to the isolated town's citizens.
- The situation at Gorso has gone out of hand as Lord Ziademos and his extended family consider the undead infestation as a manifestation of the Elemental Chaos. The entropists enjoy the sudden change and new threats, but they want to live to witness it. The confident sorcerers fight the undead from behind their gates and do not allow townsfolk to leave. General Sundamar Stormbreaker wants to save as many of the residents of Gorso as possible, using any means the characters can employ.
- Lord Kabok Goldtooth of Gonshar feels safe with the distance between his town and the horde of approaching undead. The illusionist noble fears to part with his troops and leave the village unprotected. He trusts General Sundamar Stormbreaker to break the advance of the dead and will not willingly commit to his success until convinced that the general's armies have a higher chance to win with their aid.
- The Wild Whale is a gigantic warship kept in the drydocks of the Royal Shipyard until it sailed out during the rise of the dead, stolen by the Golden Masks. It has been seen on the waters of North Bay, from where the characters should recover it.

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However, scouts also report that the shoreline and Ronul's End are swarming with undead armies, so army units would need to be allocated to clearing the village and saving the ship. If recruited, the ship could be used on the river as part of the offensive. The general would like to see the criminal organization make up for their crimes by joining the war effort against the undead.

- General Sundamar Stormbreaker tells the characters about Jasmin Johandulc and her Draylish mercenary group called the Ravens of Winter. The general paid a handsome amount of gold to the troop for scouting missions. Master Zaophas regularly contacts the mercenary captain through magic and relays messages to General Sundamar Stormbreaker. The last known location of the Ravens of Winter is near the King's Forest to the west of Willow Creek. According to the latest reports, the mercenaries have refused to advance after a failed deep-dive mission into Onadbyr's sewer system. The general requests the characters investigate why the Draylish mercenaries have retreated and convince them to stay fast until the united armies arrive.

The general knows how hard and time-consuming it would be to convince the entire Council of the Heirs of the Drayl City-States to change their tactics regarding their standing army on the border. Therefore, General Sundamar Stormbreaker makes no effort to convince them to join their fight, especially after the Midnight Curse, which has made the Draylish significantly more cautious about Aglarion.

General Sundamar Stormbreaker also envisions a possible tactic of drawing the mindless undead to the borders of Vordan and subjecting them to the destruction of the Vordani war machines. This tactic would require a highly mobile and small squad that can easily traverse the mountainside and evade the bombardment of the Vordani weapons.

Once all available units have been gathered under his banner, General Sundamar Stormbreaker plans to invade the capital with the united army. He points out the three strategically important locations that could aid in the battle against the undead if they were recaptured and utilized. The general plans to take over these locations using a small and capable squad while drawing the attention of the hordes of undead on his main forces. He again implies that the characters would be the most likely to be able to infiltrate the city before the siege and accomplish the following missions:

- The upside-down ziggurat that floats over the city spews an endless stream of undead over the Royal Palace. It or whatever empowers it must be destroyed to cut off the supply of undead reinforcements before the armies can execute a final assault.
- Capturing the Minaret of the Speaker would allow the liberating army to gain a vantage point over the city and coordinate troops with the use of the sound-amplifying traits of the magic tower. The general hopes that the mindless undead won't react to the information broadcasts and that coordinating attacks would allow a more focused offensive.
- Reclaiming the Fists of Azennar on both sides of the Royal Palace would add considerable firepower to the list of assets that could help defeat the undead. Their proximity to the Royal Palace allows them to direct fire at the mound of zombies that covers the Palace, which could change the outcome of the final wave of the siege.

ATTACK ON THE CAMP

Background

Master Zaophas and the unit of wizards of the Arcane Tower have met a larger than usual horde of zombies a bit north of the Monastery of Spirited Leaf. The zombies have crossed the Ulden Swamps and emerged in astonishing numbers, which forced the wizards to retreat to the west. Master Zaophas has teleported himself and his most potent arcanists to Camp Perseverance to aid in the preparation of the assault. The rest of his unit of wizards is making haste to return to the military base as soon as possible.

The units of zombies that approach the camp are led by a unit of wights who detach from the main zombie horde and climb the north side of the mountains

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to strike at the camp's rear once their zombies have engaged the forces of the living. The units of wights try to stay in hiding as long as possible to surprise the camp from their flanking position.

Scene

Once the meeting is conducted between General Sundamar Stormbreaker and the war council, the general orders refreshments to the command post and continues discussing some finer details of the planned assault on Onadbyr. At this moment, Master Zaophas (use the **archmage** monster entry with its 7th level spell slot already used) teleports into the command post with four nervous-looking **academicians of the Arcane Tower** and four **apprentices of the Arcane Tower.** The archmage warns the general and the characters about an approaching horde of undead that will arrive in less than a day, according to his calculations.

Master Zaophas

"The dead are near. A wave larger than any other we have seen before. We must prepare now!"

Master Zaophas warns everyone in an agitated tone.

The camp starts to buzz with anticipation as everyone begins to prepare for battle under the command of General Sundamar Stormbreaker. Fresh torches are placed on the perimeter and the walls, and noncombatants are hurried to the safest places at the highest points of the mountain camp. The fighting units take their positions. Everyone eyes the land beyond the forest at the foot of the mountain to spot the retreating group of wizards and the dark amorphous shape of the approaching undead army behind them. In exactly 20 hours, just after sunset, the undead horde arrives.

Tactics of the General

General Sundamar Stormbreaker announces his tactics and offers the command of a unit to each character. Feel free to share the appropriate monster entry with your players so they might roll for their own units. The general joins the unit of wizards of the Arcane Tower at their position together with Master Zaophas, who acts as the captain of the unit of wizards. The archmage has the following spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, identify, mage armor*, magic missile*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image, misty step, scorching ray*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, fly, lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *fire shield, stoneskin*, wall of fire*
- 5th level (3 slots): *arcane hand, cone of cold, wall of force*
- 6th level (1 slot): *wall of ice*
- 7th level (0 slot): *teleport*
- 8th level (1 slot): *sunburst*
- 9th level (1 slot): *meteor swarm*

*Master Zaophas casts these spells on himself before combat.

The weary and worn-out **unit of wizards of the Arcane Tower** arrives only one hour ahead of the zombie horde. General Sundamar Stormbreaker orders them to take positions at the protruding cliff in zone D, engage the undead horde with ranged magical attacks, and levitate or move to higher ground when melee combat reaches their positions.

The **unit of Royal Swords** is positioned on the outcroppings of zone E. They are ordered to meet the

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undead in melee to slow their advance, then move to higher ground if reduced to half of their hit points.

The **unit of Royal Riders** is ordered to fall back and engage the zombie horde on its flanks in zone G at the bottom of the slopes in hit and run tactics, but only when the zombies start climbing the mountain. If all units of zombies have climbed onto the slopes, the unit of Royal Riders will dismount and pursue them from below.

The **unit of Royal Arrows** is positioned in the flat area in zone D and is ordered to fire at will at the center of the zombie horde as soon as it is within range, then move to higher ground before the unit of Royal Swords retreat.

The **unit of armed commoners** is positioned at zone A to serve as a final line of defense and ensure the safe retreat of the noncombatants if needed. They are commanded to leave through the path of withdrawal if the undead would reach zone C.

Tactics of the Undead

Six **units of zombies** approach from the lightly forested area at the eastern feet of Cloud Peak at zone G and start to climb the cliffs below zone E. Each unit of zombies attempts to climb the palisades and cliffs and makes the appropriate **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** checks every round to advance. The units of zombies will follow retreating opponents and use the stairs to ascend the mountainside, but they will not wait for each other, meaning that the rest of the units of zombies will try to ascend by climbing up the cliffs while a unit of zombies occupies the stairs.

When a unit of zombies reaches zone E and engages the unit of Royal Swords in melee, a stealthy **unit of wights** climbs up the cliffs on the northern side of the mountain and sneaks up along the serpentine road that leads to the top of the camp, arriving to zone A in the third round of combat. A character who explicitly states that it keeps watch over the escape route can make a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the ambush two rounds before it happens. The wights clash with the unit of armed commoners and try to turn them or any other slain units into a new unit of zombies before descending the mountainside to crush the living in a vice.

Experience

Award the party 1,800 experience points if they are victorious over the undead horde and defend Camp Perseverance.

THE ART OF WAR

In a mass combat situation, units of creatures combat each other. Characters and NPCs can attack and interact with units as they would with normal creatures, with the following modifications:

Size. Each unit is considered to be a single creature. A gargantuan unit consists of 50-100 medium creatures, while a huge unit consists of 25-50 medium creatures. Less for creatures of larger size.

Actions. Units resolve actions at an initiative count of 10 on each round simultaneously. Units can take the Dodge, Dash, or Disengage action in combat, and they can take a short or long rest to regain hit points. Some terrain features or environmental effects might provide a unit with advantage (flanking position, higher ground) or disadvantage (fog, dense undergrowth) on their attack rolls and ability checks.

Effects. Non-damaging and non-healing spells, or effects and and conditions that have a single target or an area of effect affect a unit only if the unit's entire space fits in the area of the effect or if the effect affects any number of creatures. Effects that modify the damage of an entire unit are multiplied by 8. Spells that deal damage or cause a target to regain hit points work normally on a unit. Individual creatures within a unit can be considered as multiple targets for the purposes of non-area spells that have multiple targets, such as the *mass cure wounds* spell.

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Unit Damage. A unit automatically deals melee or ranged weapon damage to another unit even on a missed attack roll. A unit deals double damage to another unit on a successful hit instead of its normal damage or triple damage on a critical hit.

Experience Points. Only award experience points to characters for units defeated if there are no allied units taking part in the encounter.

1. Forge

Background

Metal equipment, armor, and weapons are mended and simpler items made at this small makeshift forge. Rida, the only skilled blacksmith of the camp, also uses magic to fix things.

Environment

This small iron forge is only moderately equipped, missing some of the more complex tools usually found in such a facility. It has a small portable anvil and a fireplace, a few weapons that need repairs, and a greataxe of orcish design with a beautifully twisted iron handle.

Scene

Rida, a young blacksmith apprentice with sorcerer powers, is working on the greataxe, which was found by one of the Royal Swords on the mountain and given to him in exchange for 20 gold pieces. He uses magic and tools to mend it, but it will take a couple of days to finish. Rida is obsessed with mending the magic greataxe and welcomes any help to accomplish the task. The young warrior-sorcerer will not give up on the weapon for any amount of money.

Rida (CR 1/2, 100 XP). Use the **guard** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Rida has 21 hit points.
- ***Spellcasting.*** Rida is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Rida has the following sorcerer spells prepared:
  - Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mending, shocking grasp, ray of frost*
  - 1st level (3 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile*

Rida

"It would be a waste not to fix this massive weapon. I can feel it calling me to battle."

Rida working on the weapon without removing his gaze from it.

Treasure

The forge contains two smith's tools and the broken *+2 greataxe,* which needs at least 3 days of work to be repaired.

2. Field Hospital

Background

The field hospital usually hosts refugees who arrive at the camp and Royal Riders who most often clash with the undead.

Environment

This large tent has ten beds made out of fur and a wooden frame standing around a large table for operations if necessary. The table is covered with bandages and vials of various sizes.

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Scene

Solan Anastasios (use the **druid** monster entry) is the only healer in the camp. The impish and playful half-elven druid tries to hide his concern about his limited capabilities soon to be required by so many people in these desperate times. The half-elf is highly knowledgeable about seafaring and hides the secret of once being a pirate on a ship that broke from House Ronul.

Solan Anastasios

"Don't break a leg! We need to keep some healing spells for the horses."

Solan Anastasios trying to be funny in a time of desperation.

3. Command Post

Background

General Sundamar Stormbreaker and Master Zaophas prepare and discuss their strategy in this small building created by the archmage's magic.

Environment

The small octagonal building has windows on each side and only one table in the middle, with numerous maps and notes laid out.

Scene

The maps on the table show different parts of the Kingdom of Aglarion in great detail, while the notes list the particulars of stocked foodstuff, armory inventory, and troop names.

4. Warehouse

Background

The warehouse is filled with crates and sacks of non-perishable foodstuff, weapons, ammunition, armor, tools, and other mundane supplies that can sustain an army far larger than the one at the camp.

Environment

The walls of this enormous building are constructed from planks. Inside, one can find a vast storage room packed with resources, stored in crates, sacks, and large storage shelves made out of wood.

Scene

A middle-aged, foul-mouthed, blond Royal Sword, Harlgard Stonesplitter (use the **veteran** monster entry), elder brother of Tasran Stonesplitter of the Heroes of Virtue, is responsible for the supplies. The veteran is a trusted, loyal man of the general and despises his brother. He will not let anyone take items unless ordered to do so by General Sundamar Stormbreaker.

"None of you zombie-banging piss drinkers takes anything from this hoard of goat's farts unless I have that shiny marble-balled general's permission right here in my bitchslapper."

The foul-mouthed Harlgard Stonesplitter setting the rules.

5. Watchtower

Background

These watchtowers were erected by magic and allow the soldiers on the lookout to survey a wide area.

Environment

The wooden watchtowers rise 30 feet above the rock that magically encases their pillars.

Scene

There are two Royal Arrows (use the **scout** monster entry) stationed in each watchtower at all times unless they are ordered to join their unit for war.

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A CALL TO ARMS

Scene

After the battle is over at Camp Perseverance, General Sundamar Stormbreaker, in fear of the intensifying advance of the undead horde, urges the characters to leave immediately and gather the remaining available units of which he knows. Master Zaophas offers to take the characters to each location by a *teleport* spell but will immediately return to Camp Perseverance to support it. The archmage also notes that he would not be able to bring entire units to the camp with his spells, so the characters must escort back anyone they can.

The characters find a scared and scarce population in Nangrath. An exhausted and weary Lord Arenbar Nangrath greets them and explains how he has sent his last troops to Darkstone to excavate and establish a safe haven for his town and how they never returned. The old noble begs the characters to investigate the troop's disappearance at Darkstone. Thermerson the Wise (use the **mage** monster entry) is eager to tag along and help rescue his friend Ick Forge-n-hammer. The lord offers to join Camp Perseverance with his troops as soon as they are able to do so or evacuate the town if the troops have perished

"We are truly cursed by every god all at once. I sent the last of my swords to secure a safe place to hide at Darkstone, and I have not heard of them since. My grandfather probably closed the mines for a reason, but we had just cause to open them again..."

Lord Arenbar complains about the fate of his soldiers.

DARKSTONE MINES

Background

Lord Arenbar Nangrath has ordered his single remaining unit of Royal Swords, led by Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer, to clear the collapsed mine tunnel of Darkstone in hopes to create an easily defendable underground stronghold that could save his people from the undead infestation. Lord Arenbar and the people of Nangrath were unaware that the main tunnel of the dwarven mine did not collapse

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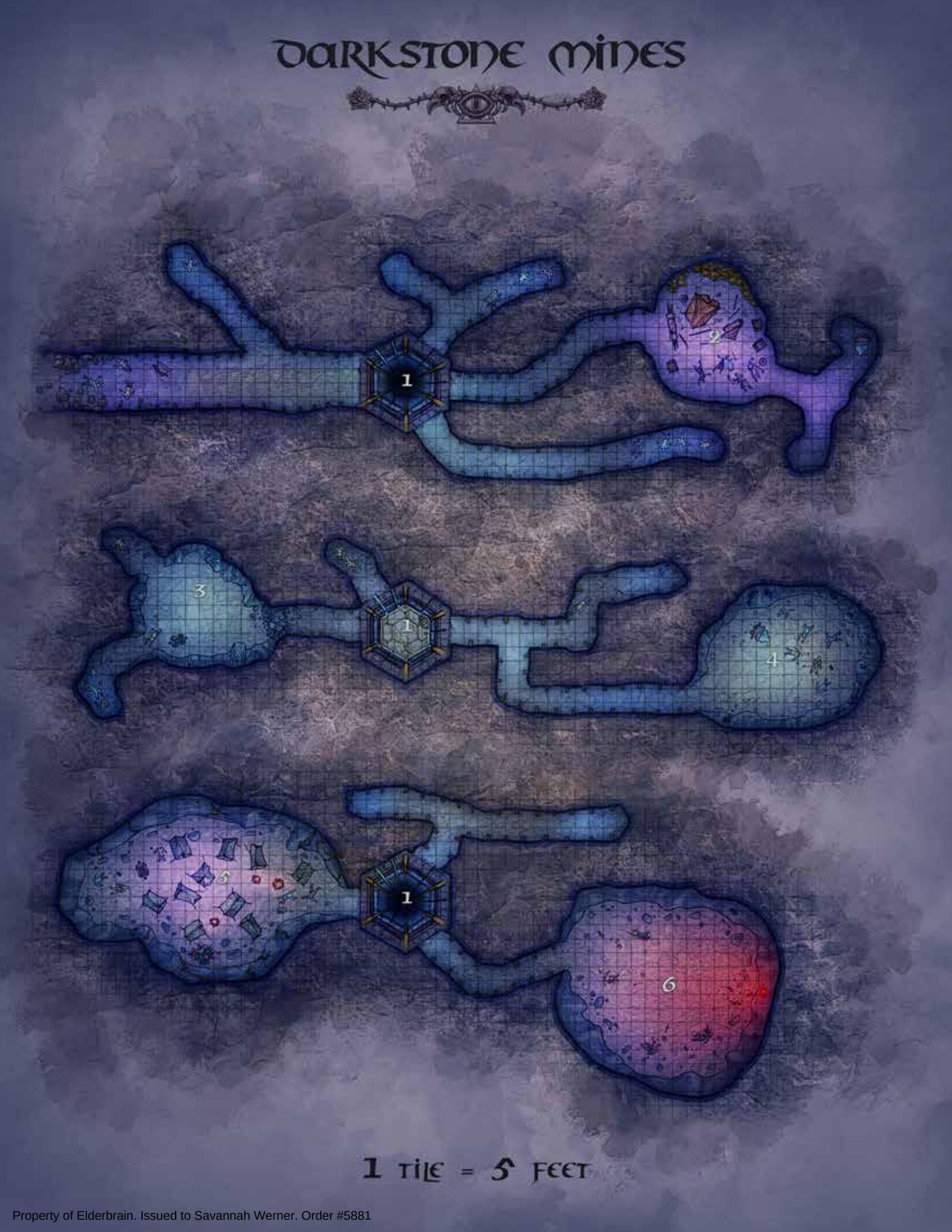
Darkstone Mines



1 tile = 5 feet

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due to natural causes but was intentionally demolished by the miners after some horrific events that took place within its confines several hundred years ago. The dwarven miners of the past unearthed a strange, magical ruby marked with the rune of Faeryl Myrryn, which was kept safe from any unwanted meddling by a priest of the Redeemer, who was delegated to the site from Onadbyr. On a terrible night, a dark figure in blood-red robes arrived at the mine, slaughtered the priest, and bathed the runed ruby in the priest's blood. The ritual caused a terrible vrock vampire, Dag'drirath, to emerge from the ruby. The demonic undead soon took control over everyone it could, even though it was bound to the close vicinity of the gem. The last survivors, those who could evade its charm, collapsed the tunnel to entomb the powerful undead fiend along with their own kin within the mine.

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer and his unit of Royal Swords worked on the collapsed tunnel for over a month before they could reach the mines that lay beyond the debris. The Royal Swords explored the mine and found the blood-red ruby but gave it no particular importance besides its worth. They left it untouched and started remodeling the mines to make them usable to accommodate the villagers of Nangrath for the long term. As the hours passed, Dag'drirath slowly stalked the dark tunnels in bat form and charmed the soldiers one by one until it was able to announce its dominance over them. As of now, the soldiers feel compelled to obey their new undead demon master, whom they feed regularly with their own blood. The vampire vrock forces the Royal Swords to venerate Faeryl Myrryn and Orcus in hopes of reaching out to them and bargaining for a return to the Abyss.

Environment

The artificially excavated tunnels of Darkstone Mines were bored into the natural rock that still holds veins of silver, gold, and onyx in some places. The tunnels and caves are naturally dark and rise to 10 feet. The walls are lined with small oil lanterns, but only those on level 3 are lit. The roof of the tunnels is supported by massive timber logs that are quite cracked and rotten. The ferrous smell of blood lingers in the air throughout the caves, which gets more intense as one approaches the lowest level of the mine. Shadows cast within the lair seem abnormally gaunt and sometimes move as though alive within a creeping fog that clings to the ground. The fog occasionally takes eerie forms, such as grasping bird talons and demonic faces.

1. Elevator Shaft

Background

The tunnel that leads to the top of the elevator shaft was blocked by debris until the Royal Swords cleared it recently. The elevator platform raised and lowered heavy carts to the levels below.

Environment

The hexagonal shaft is 100 feet deep with an exit to the levels below at every 50 feet. Sturdy iron railings run along its sides, running in a massive wooden frame bolted to the stone with screws the size of a grown person's arm. The wooden parts of the elevator are cracked and worn by the centuries that have passed, and the metal is partially corroded. A large hexagonal elevator platform made of wood and framed by iron can be seen from above, stationed one level below. It has a rusty metal wheel attached to its side.

Several ancient, blackened, and crumbling skeletal body parts lie scattered on the ground. A character who inspects the bodies and succeeds on a **DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine or Investigation)** skill check learns that they were torn apart by the claws of a large beast or have died due to an immense explosion.

The sounds of slow rhythmic chanting can be heard faintly from the shaft below, the words unintelligible. The chanting is pierced by the sounds of rocks being hewn from a closer distance.

Scene

The bodies are the remains of the miners killed by the vampire vrock and those who were not quick

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enough to escape the blast that demolished the entrance when the survivors fled the mines.

The chanting comes from area 6, where most of the Royal Swords venerate Orcus and Faeryl Myrryn in front of the blood-red crystal. The sound of the picks emanates from area 3 located one level below.

A character that has proficiency with carpenter's, mason's, smith's, or woodcarver's tools can make a **DC 12 Wisdom** ability check to confirm that the railing and the frame could still support the weight of four medium creatures on the elevator platform, but more would make it collapse.

A total of 16 medium-sized creatures can fit on the elevator platform, but it can only support 4 creatures or 700 pounds of weight. If more weight is placed on the platform, it breaks and collapses in three rounds. Any creature on the platform falls to the depth below, taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall for each level of fall, plus 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage from the falling timber and debris from the broken platform.

As an action, a character can make a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to rotate the metal wheel on the elevator platform. On a successful ability check, the platform is lowered or raised 25 feet. The wheel breaks off on an ability check result of 20 or higher, and the platform can no longer be lowered or raised unless repaired.

2. Upper Settlement

Background

The soldiers of Nangrath explored this chamber first and left their heaviest supplies within. They intended to establish a base here before continuing to explore and remodel the mines for the civilians to follow, but they didn't even have time to unpack properly.

Environment

Large backpacks and crates are heaped next to a wall section of this cave, which was depleted of its ore and onyx reserves long ago. Some of the backpacks are open, some equipment, bedrolls, and tents lie around, but the cave looks more like a storage space than the actual camp of an expedition.

Scene

The fully loaded military backpacks, marked with the insignia of the Kingdom of Aglarion and House Nangrath, hold the personal gear, clothes, and partially rotten foodstuff brought here by the soldiers.

3. Silver Hall

Background

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer fought against the mind-bending charm effect of the strange bat that followed him and his troops around the mine. He saw the strange look in the eyes of his soldiers and as they called out in adoration of an unknown master. He realized that if he did not resist the magic that befell all his troops, he would lose his entire squad and his own life. He tried to evade the bat and eventually fled to this dead-end cave. He saw no other choice to buy time but to collapse the connecting tunnel with his *ring of the ram* before the bat could follow him inside. Left with only a few days of rations, he is prepared to die alone in a cold dark cave.

Dag'drirath has sent four soldiers to excavate the cave-in and recover their former captain. The soldiers have been toiling on the rocks without food or water for days. They are exhausted and on the verge of collapse.

Environment

Four soldiers in dirty clothes and armor are quarrying the rocks outside the cave-in. They look drained, and the smell of heavy sweat lingers around them.

Inside the cave, the walls are lined with deep and lighter grey veins of silver. A small-framed, exhausted dwarf sits by the wall opposite the caved-in tunnel, wearing patchwork clothes under his dirty armor, with a large iron ring on his finger that forms the head and horns of a ram.

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Scene

Four Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry with four levels of exhaustion) work here endlessly to remove the debris from the cave-in. They are about a few hours away from breaking through the rubble and reaching their former captain. They look up at the characters if they approach but ignore them, following Dag'drirath's orders. If asked, they reveal between gasps that their master has tasked them to capture their former captain for reasons unknown to them. The charmed Royal Swords describe their master as a large winged, bird-like creature of great power who has promised them eternal life.

The characters can break through the thin layer of leftover rubble with four hours of work. Inside the cave, they find a weak and pale **Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer** who has four levels of exhaustion and smokes one of his last cigars. The dishevelled and shabby-looking captain is grateful for being rescued from the tight situation. He needs to recuperate, eat, and drink, but if given time, he soon becomes active and urges the characters to free his troops by finding a way to save them without bloodshed.

Treasure

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer wears a *ring of the ram* and an old patchwork *cloak of protection*.

The silver can be mined from the cave walls with the right mining equipment by professional miners over two weeks of work. When extracted, the silver reserves in the cave walls are worth 1,000 gold pieces.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they save Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer.

CAPTAIN ICK FORGE-N-HAMMER

"I ran as fast as I could to lose that strange bat. I felt it clouding my mind with thoughts that were not mine! I had no other choice but to isolate myself and look for a way to save my soldiers. But I could not find the means... Without your aid, we would all be lost!"

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer tells his tale.

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4. BLUE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Background

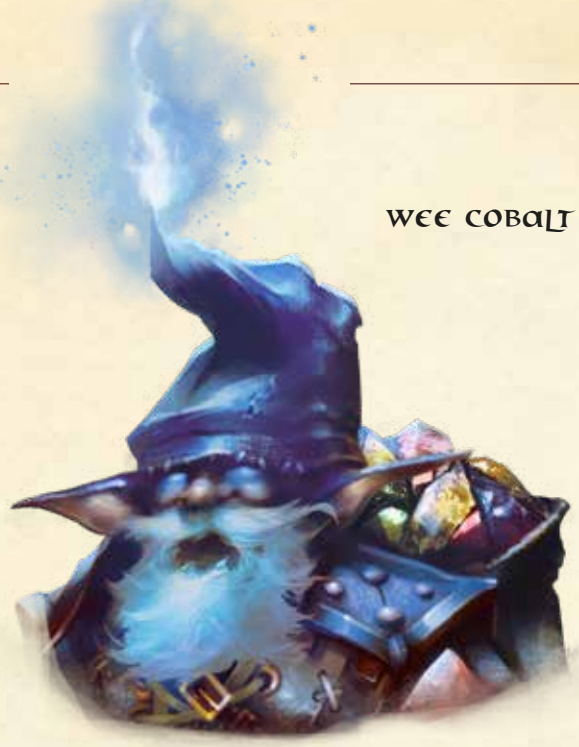
This chamber is only partially depleted of the onyx reserves embedded within its rock walls.

Environment

A few jet-black patches of stone break the otherwise homogeneous rock surface in this cave. Aside from a few mining tools lying around, there's nothing of importance here.

Scene

If the characters have helped Wee Cobalt on the Bleak Mire, the **bluecap** will appear to the characters and offer its assistance in working together to resume operations within the mine. The fey creature is unaware of the vampire vrock and why work has ceased in the mines but is dedicated to helping if it means that mining can commence at the location. It will accompany the characters and even help fight any threats, all for payment of 1 silver piece per day.



WEE COBALT

"I be Wee Cobalt for thee. Pay me fair wage of a silver a day, and I'll be yer aid. There's a lot to mine here, and work needs to resume. What say ye?"

Wee Cobalt offering its help.

Treasure

The onyx in the rock is worth 650 gold pieces and can be mined with the right tools by a proficient miner over two weeks of work.

5. LOWER SETTLEMENT

Background

The Royal Swords of Nangrath have moved most of their equipment to this cave and made a temporary camp, which is used only for sleeping, and to accommodate their basic survival needs.

Environment

Thin veins of gold run within the walls of this cave. Its rough floor is littered with dirty bedrolls, waste, and equipment scattered everywhere. The smells of urine, feces, and rotting organic materials are heavy in the air. A few dead bodies are piled up in a corner, covered by white maggots that wriggle on their rotting flesh.

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Scene

The filthy camp is devoid of life. The Royal Swords return here only after days of worshipping Faeryl Myrryn and Orcus, and spend only a few hours here before returning to perform their new duties. A creature that spends more than a minute in the cave or touches anything contracts **filth fever** unless it succeeds on a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw for every minute spent in the cave.

6. Dag'drirath's Lair

Background

Dag'drirath is an ancient being constrained both by its undead vampire nature and demonic origin. It was created by the drow vampire conjurer Faeryl Myrryn, chosen of Orcus, who developed a secret form of blood magic to spread vampirism to any being with blood in its body. Dag'drirath was her most powerful creation at the time. The drow vampire summoned the vampire vrock to the Material Plane over a thousand years ago and gave it a task that it could not accomplish. As punishment, the drow conjurer has cast a minimus containment version of the *imprisonment* spell on Dag'drirath and trapped it in the ruby, deep underground. She set the spell's release condition to activate if the ruby was bathed in the blood of three good-aligned clerics. In this case, the vampire vrock would be freed.

Unfortunately, the gem was discovered by the miners of Darkstone eons later. A human priest of Orcus, named Zanthyr, was searching for the creature for decades, and when he learned its location, he arrived to free it by soaking it in the blood of the priest tasked to watch over it. The deed only partially released Dag'drirath, making it impossible for it to leave the ruby's close vicinity. Being unable to control the disappointed and raging undead fiend, Zanthyr was the first to fall victim to its bloodthirst, followed by the innocent miners who were nearby. Dag'drirath has been looking for a way to fully escape its imprisonment ever since.

Darkstone is too far for its charmed minions to bring more clerics before the mind control wears off, so Dag'drirath has spent the past few weeks forcing the charmed Royal Swords of Nangrath to recite chants to Faeryl Myrryn and Orcus, hoping to gain its masters' attention. The vampire vrock also hopes for clerics to come to the rescue of the lost unit of soldiers, as it has yet not found other means to escape the bonds of the blood-red ruby that functions as its coffin.

Environment

Dozens of armor-clad, dirty, exhausted, and sickly looking humanoids kneel before a fist-sized blood-red ruby that is partially buried in the rock wall of the cave and emanates a deep red light enveloping the cave and its inhabitants. The gem has a dark mist

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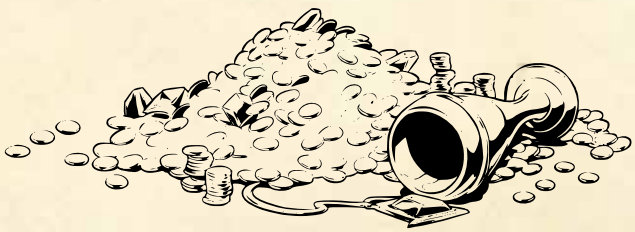
swirling inside and is engraved with the symbol of Faeryl Myrryn. The cave walls still hold deposits of onyx, waiting to be extracted.

Blood Red Ruby. The gem is Dag'drirath's resting place, from which the vampire demon can't move further away than 300 feet. When reduced to 0 hit points, Dag'drirath returns to the ruby in mist form. The blood-red ruby has AC 18 and 50 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Scene

The **unit of Royal Swords** has four levels of exhaustion, and all of the soldiers have contacted **filth fever.** As a result, their speed and maximum hit points are halved, and they have disadvantage on ability checks, saving throws, and attack rolls. They are slowly chanting praises to Faeryl Myrryn and Orcus in Abyssal and pay no attention to the characters if they enter the cave. When approached, an individual soldier will not respond to any questions and will not cease its chanting.

When the characters appear at the mouth of the cave, the vampire vrock exits the ruby in mist form and materializes in a dramatic entry, initiating a conversation only to try to charm the characters, starting with those who resemble clerics. If attacked, or if its charms do not work as intended, it will command the unit of Royal Swords and any charmed characters to fight the party's remaining members. If there are no obvious clerics in the party, and if Dag'drirath sees a potential spellcaster, it will try to telepathically negotiate its release and even its return to the Abyss if the character can cast the necessary spells.



"As you can see, they all are loyal subjects of the Blood Queen and all-mighty Orcus now. They were offered immortality for their service and accepted their faith. Otherwise, they would merely remain flesh that crumbles to dust with the passage of time. Those who serve will be rewarded. Choose your fates wisely. Are you here only to serve as my replenishment, or are you ready to serve Orcus, the immortal demon lord?"

Dag'drirath conversing with the characters.

Treasure

The fist-sized ruby is worth 8,500 gold pieces and can be removed from the cave wall with the necessary tools over a day's work.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they save the Royal Swords of Nangrath and secure their aid in the coming war against the undead.

FEY OF THE FEYREALM

Background

The survivors of the Refuge will most likely become close allies of the characters. They are ready to cross to the Material Plane if provided the means of planar travel and are willing to join the fight against the undead.

Scene

The fey delegate a **unit of fey** composed mainly of satyrs led by Commander Pricklethrust.

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COMMANDER PRICKLETHRUST

"At your service. Let's show them how it's done in Swigglegard!"

Commander Pricklethrust reporting for duty.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they bring fey to the Material Plane to join the coming war against the undead.

HARVESTON

Background

Harveston has become the home of the Uncanny Vagabonds, who have befriended the local townsfolk and joined forces to protect themselves and the citizens from the undead infestation. With Taris gone, Gren has become the leader of the extended family that has gathered its surviving members at the farming town.

Environment

Harveston's northern border is blocked by makeshift barricades formed out of timber, old carriages, broken doors, and furniture piled up on each other between the outermost houses of the town. Several armed soldiers with spears can be seen behind the blockade, holding torches and watching for movement on the other side of the barricade. The town is relatively peaceful and orderly, but many of the ordinary citizens bear arms of any sort they could find to protect themselves.

Scene

The locals greet the characters warmly, but the Uncanny Vagabonds treat them according to the relationship formerly established with them. **Gren,** backed up by a large group of his family members, tersely declares that with the death of Queen Aphinah, he considers himself as the rightful ruler of the Kingdom of Aglarion. He brushes aside any other options, and his kin become quite loud and irritated if the characters press an opposing standpoint.

If he is acknowledged as the rightful heir to the crown, Gren and his men are willing to accompany the characters to Camp Perseverance to make General Sundamar Stormbreaker announce Gren's right to rule and command the royal forces gathered there. A **unit of scoundrels** and a **unit of armed commoners** is ready to leave town in under two days, along with about three hundred noncombatants.

If Gren learns that the characters possess the *crown of Aglarion* and the *falcon blade,* he demands both to be handed over to him immediately. If the characters relinquish the crown and the sword, the Uncanny Vagabonds hold a wild coronation ceremony for two days. They then release the grain reserves and accompany the characters to Camp Perseverance to fight for King Gren's kingdom on the side of the united armies against the undead.

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GREN

"Oi, there's a new porker in this pen. It's a big blue-blooded piggy. Yeah, I'm talking about myself! Don't look so baffled. My father should have known better where to put his wiener before he spawned me. Aphinah sleeps with the worms, and I'm the only one left in this shitshow who has the right to wear that golden latrine seat. Deal with it! I'm your new King, and trust me, I will make a better ruler than that horny cock before me."

Gren voicing his demands.

If Characters don't meet Gren's demand, his troops will stand up against the characters and threaten them with a united stance. Gren's family members are composed of two **assassins,** four **spies,** and eight **thugs** who all try to surround the characters and snatch the *crown of Aglarion* and the *falcon blade,* from them during the fight if they have been displayed. They can all cast *true strike* once per day. If Gren takes more damage than half of his maximum hit points or half of his entourage is down, the Uncanny Vagabonds retreat, gather their families the same day, and leave for the Drayl City-States.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they secure the aid of the Uncanny Vagabonds in the coming war against the undead.

GORSO

Background

Lord Ziademos Gorso, or his sorcerer offspring if he has been dealt with by the characters, are watching the unfolding chaos from behind the closed gates of their town. The Heirs of Entropy and their guards are reluctant to let anyone in or out of Gorso. The town's citizens have suffered terribly from the intensifying irrational behavior of their masters during the Midnight Curse. They became panicked when news of the undead hordes reached them. Many want to leave town and have even armed themselves to fight the sorcerers if a revolt was to break out.

Environment

The front and back gates of Gorso are both shut and guarded by armed soldiers. A few rotting dead bodies lie in front of the gates to the south, their corpses pierced by arrows.

The town on the inside seems deserted. People live behind closed doors and try to avoid the mad sorcerers of chaos and their soldiers. Shops and services are closed, and several rotting bodies litter the streets, all evidence of the lethal temperaments of the populous local nobility.

Characters can climb the walls of Gorso with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

City Gate. The gates are heavy double wooden gates (20 by 15 feet) that have AC 15, 70 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They are barred from the inside with a wooden crossbeam that can't be picked, but can be forced open with a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

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Scene

The handful of dead humanoids in front of the gates were part of a family that begged for entry but were slaughtered by the Heirs of Entropy and their soldiers.

There are eight soldiers (use the **guard** monster entry) at the gates at all times who will call for reinforcements of eight other soldiers and two **Heirs of Entropy.** They arrive in 1d4 + 2 minutes if the characters ask for permission to enter at the gates. A character who comes up with a good bluff and succeeds on a **DC 17 Charisma (Deception)** skill check will be able to gain a personal audience with Lord Ziademos Gorso if he is still alive or be admitted through the gates by an Heir of Entropy. The sorcerers are suspicious of anyone. A character who wants to maintain the lies that got the party through the gate must make a **DC 17 Charisma (Deception)** skill check every 10 minutes to avoid being attacked by the same force that led them inside.

"You scum dare to play tricks on us? The end of the world is here, and we will not let you ruin the meticulous scrutiny of this spectacular event!"

An Heir of Entropy confronting the characters.

Sneaking into the town is possible by climbing the walls and succeeding on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check. The characters need to succeed on a **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check every 10 minutes they spend within the walls of Gorso to remain unnoticed, unless staying at a location that is not constantly monitored by the soldiers or the Heirs of Entropy, or if disguised as locals by succeeding on a **DC 12 Charisma** ability check every time they meet a soldier or an Heir of Entropy. If the characters are noticed, a group of eight soldiers (use the **guard** monster entry) apprehend them and call for reinforcements of another eight soldiers and four **Heirs of Entropy** who arrive in 1d4 + 2 minutes together with **Lord Ziademos Gorso** if he is still alive.

A character who successfully infiltrates the town and initiates conversation with the townsfolk can make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check to discover the revolutionary undercurrents in town. A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can find the right people to agitate and spark a revolt. On a success, a group of angry citizens gathers in a barn and storms the gates to escape Gorso. The fight at the gates involves a similar force as if the characters were discovered in the town. The **unit of armed citizens** will fight the guards and the nobles and follow the characters to Camp Perseverance to join the fight against the undead.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if the characters can recruit a unit of armed citizens from Gorso to join the coming war against the undead.

GONSHAR

Background

Lord Kabok Goldtooth has received news of the hordes of undead pouring out of the capital city and the establishment of Camp Perseverance by General Sundamar Stormbreaker and Master Zaophas. The goblin illusionist would rather see the remaining army take care of the zombies than commit his own troops. He trusts the distance between Gonshar and Camp Perseverance to give him and his town enough time to relocate to Drayl through a secret pass through the Drayl Mountains.

Environment

The town of Gonshar is surrounded by three layers of a smooth stone wall of seamless rock with a few openings located far from each other along the stone rings, all fit for small creatures. Several goblins guard the walls with bows in hand. The town inside shows its familiar face, residents going about their daily tasks, seemingly unaffected by the news of the undead hordes marching their way.

Scene

Lord Kabok Goldtooth erected the ring of stone walls around Gorso with the frequent casting of the *wall of stone* spell. The guards on the walls allow the

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characters to climb through the small openings to enter the town and the Supreme Wizard of Gonshar welcomes them warmly, especially if they helped his town earlier against the Blackfur bandits.

If the characters bring up the matter of joining forces with General Sundamar Stormbreaker, the lord wizard starts making excuses and explains that he is not willing to move his forces from his town and leave it unprotected. A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can convince Lord Kabok Goldtooth to abandon Gonshar and join the fight against the undead. The illusionist wizard commands his **unit of Royal Swords,** mostly composed of goblins, bugbears, and hobgoblins, to prepare themselves and leave at sunrise. Before leaving, the wizard closes the openings on his wall by casting a *wall of stone* spell.

LORD KABOK GOLDTOOTH

"You are right. Unity is strength. Especially if we have Xycot on our side."
Lord Kabok Goldtooth smiling and preparing to leave.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if the characters can convince Lord Kabok Goldtooth to join the coming war against the undead.

RONUL'S END

Background

At the onset of the zombie armageddon that took Onadbyr, Samsadur, the crime boss of the Golden Masks, was quick to evacuate the entire organization and its treasures from the city. The Golden Masks seized the Royal Shipyard and commandeered the Wild Whale to sail to the safety of open waters. However, Samsadur didn't have time to restock the ship and miscalculated when seeking refuge and a chance to resupply in the northern waters because the hordes of undead soon reached North Bay. Swarms of zombies and ghouls overran the town of Ronul's End, and hundreds of zombie merfolk also started to hound the ship from beneath the waves, both created by Morkiel Reborn after its brief and murderous visit to the village. The Golden Masks have so far managed to ward off attacks by the undead merfolk by covering the ship's sides with oil, but the gang is trapped on the seas without a source of fresh water and with food supplies running low.

Dangerous Shores

Background

The village of Ronul's End has been hard hit, both by the raids of Whosshinassh, the sea hag, during the Midnight Curse and the recent arrival of the hordes of undead that have ravaged the village. It is infested with zombies that roam around the charred buildings and empty streets, as well as scores of ghouls that feed on the corpses of the dead in the village cemetery. The undead has massed into a deadly swarm and must be eradicated by army units for a chance of success.

Environment

Ronul's End is a desolate town, twice sacked and razed in recent years. Skeletons litter the streets and empty houses, their flesh eaten off by the undead. The burnt-out husk of Lord Dyzag Ronul's flagship and seat of power, the Boundless Pearl, sits at the center of the village, surrounded by hundreds of shambling

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figures. The moans of the undead can be heard from afar, spreading over the entire village. Two usable rowboats are tied to the docks, where the masts of several sunken ships rise from the waves.

Scene

Six **units of zombies** are scattered around the village, concentrated on the town square (area 1) and the eastern shoreline (area 2). The zombies converge on threats if they notice the approach of the characters and their armies or if they are attacked from afar. A **unit of ghouls** lairs in the village cemetery (area 3). They are more intelligent than the mindless zombies and will move to flank positions from stealth if battle ensues.

If characters have made contact with the Wild Whale before they storm the village with troops and convinced the Golden Masks to join the fight, the battleship can be used to assault the village from the sea. However, in this case, the two **units of merfolk zombies** (see The Trapped Whale section below) harassing the Wild Whale will trail it. Once the ship takes position in the harbor, the merfolk zombies will try to finally swarm over the ship or engage forces close to the shore (area 2.)

Experience

Award the party 1,800 experience points if they are victorious over the undead horde and take Ronul's End.

The Trapped Whale

Background

The entire organization of the Golden Masks, primarily its affiliated thugs led by Samsadur and Yhlsaby, if the lamia lieutenant survives, have sought refuge from the zombie apocalypse on the Wild Whale and the relative safety of open waters. However, the warship has been cut off from the mainland and unable to resupply its drinking water and food resources due to the swarms of undead that roam the eastern part of the kingdom. Additionally, scores of merfolk zombies trail the ship from under the water but have been unable to overrun it. As a result, Samsadur is in a perilous predicament. The rakshasa crime lord wants to relocate the organization to either the legendary Isles of Xantharos or the southern seas of the Drayl City-States. However, these regions are out of its reach as the ship's resources have already worn thin. It would take almost a week to reach the shores of Drayl and twice as long to near the isles. Fresh water and food are already rationed, as the resupplying seems out of reach, and the zombies under the ship make fishing impossible. Most of the crew already show signs of dehydration and starvation, which don't affect the rakshasa. However, it is only a matter of time before the entire crew perishes and leaves Samsadur as the sole survivor, sitting on its treasures in an empty ship that it cannot navigate alone.

Environment

The Wild Whale currently floats off the coast of Ronul's End in North Bay, about a mile from the shore, its distinguishing massive whale figurehead clearly visible from afar. The three-masted warship (see page 119 of the Dungeon Master's Guide) is crewed by dozens of battle-ready figures operating the twenty ballistae (see page 255 of the Dungeon Master's Guide) of the ship, pointed at the waterline. The sides of the ship glisten with an oily sheen above the waterline.

Scene

Two intact large rowboats (see page 119 of the Dungeon Master's Guide) can be salvaged in Ronul's End. Each can accommodate six creatures of Medium size and has 100 hit points. If the characters row towards the Wild Whale, one of the two **units of merfolk zombies** takes notice and swims under the boats, meeting the characters 100 feet from the ship. The zombies try to swarm the boat, which will eventually cause it to capsize under the weight of the zombies trying to climb on board. Due to the rocking movement of the rowboat caused by the reaching zombies, everyone in a rowboat must make a successful **DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check every round or become prone. The weight of only four zombies climbing on board would be enough to capsize the rowboat. The characters must slay up to four **zombies** each round to prevent this from happening. Otherwise, the boat becomes unbalanced from the

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weight of the undead and capsizes, making everyone inside fall into the waters that are teeming with the unit of merfolk zombies. If the boat is propelled by rowing, it takes five rounds to reach the hull of the Wild Whale, where rope ladders are quickly lowered to allow passage onto the warship.

Unless **Samsadur** recognizes the characters from a distance, the Golden Masks on the ship are wary of all who approach and guard it with ten ballistae on both sides. The ship's crew is composed of sixty enforcers of the Golden Masks (use the **thug** monster entry with two levels of exhaustion), many of whom have experience on ships. The signs of dehydration and hunger can be seen on all of the crew. Samsadur is unaffected by the starvation and has assumed command as the ship's captain, accompanied by Yhlsaby, the **lamia** lieutenant, if it has survived the adventure. Samsadur is not willing to abandon the ship, which holds the accumulated wealth of the organization. However, its plans to leave Aglarion have also been thwarted unless a chance to resupply or alternative solutions could be opened.

SAMSADUR

"Welcome to my ship, friends from the shadows! Unless you've brought barrels of water or cases of hardtack, we cannot offer you hospitality. Those are what we need, and armies to smash the undead swarm of merfolk under the Wild Whale. We have sailing to do until we reach the shining shores of Drayl or the legendary Isles of Xantharos. Either would be fertile ground for my associates and I, now that Onadbyr has fallen..."

Samsadur explains its plans and needs.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 20 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can sense that Samsadur's behavior is that of a cornered beast, hidden behind pretenses of calm rationality. If offered amnesty by the kingdom and enough resources to survive, it requires a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to convince Samsadur not to sail to distant shores and to join the war effort instead. If the check is successful, Samsadur pledges the organization's soldiers, a **unit of scoundrels,** to aid the united armies from the sea when they try to retake the capital. However, the rakshasa demands to keep the Wild Whale as payment for their services, as there are no legitimate claims to its ownership without a state.

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Unit of Merfolk Zombies (CR 7, 2,900 XP). Use the **unit of zombies** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The unit of merfolk zombies is Huge size and its space is 25 feet.
- It has 545 hit points.
- It has a speed of 10 ft. and swim speed of 40 ft.

Treasure

The entire treasury of the Golden Masks is stored in an armored safe room in the ship's keel. The treasure is worth 50,000 gold pieces and is an assortment of chests of gold and platinum pieces, gems, works of art, and jewels.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can convince the Golden Masks to join the war effort and lend support from the sea.

DREGS OF THE APOCALYPSE

Background

Jasmin Johandulc and her Draylish mercenary group, the Ravens of Winter, took on the mission to scout on the capital, evading the undead hordes from the side of the King's Forest near Willow Creek. The company successfully infiltrated the city from the cliffside sewers. On their way under the city, the scouts came to a large drainage chamber where an undead horror barred their path - an amalgamation of dead bodies whose sight spread an aura of palpable fear and moved as a mass to engulf many of the company, including Jasmin Johandulc. The seasoned mercenary veteran managed to free her body from the mass of rotting bones and flesh to escape, fleeing the chamber with the remainder of her company, but her twin swords "Susano" and "Sunna" were incorporated into the body of the undead monster and left behind. Shaken and in fear, the survivors quickly fled the city sewers and returned to camp near Willow Creek. No one from the company is willing to return to the city from fright. Jasmin Johandulc has already abandoned her agreement with General Sundamar Stormbreaker, and will only take part in actions in Aglarion with her troops if her twin blades are first recovered. And even then, she will demand new terms for her service.

Environment

The camp of the Ravens of Winter is on a rocky hill hidden by the trees at the edge of the King's Forest near Willow Creek. There are six large tents at the top of the hill in a circle, with a campfire in the center. Several dozen soldiers occupy the hill's summit around the tents, clad in black leather armor.

Scene

The characters know the camp's location from General Sundamar Stormbreaker, so they should not have a problem finding it. The surrounding forest is under constant guard by scouts in the trees, who alert the rest of the company with bird calls if they see anyone approach. When the scouts see the characters are not zombies or undead, or if the characters hail them and explain they were sent by the general, the guards will direct the newcomers to the camp. The camp is home to the 53 remaining Ravens of Winter (use the **unit of scoundrels** monster entry with the frightened condition) and their leader, **Jasmin Johandulc** (with the frightened condition and armed with two longswords).

The veteran mercenary captain stands amongst her troops and faces the characters when they approach. She is in her late twenties, with an athletic figure and a core strength, but her differently colored, brown and blue eyes are ageless and speak of lifetimes of battle experience under her belt. Her attitude is cold and calculated, her words terse. She tries to hide the fright under her strict gaze and bluntly explains that she will not lead her troops back to Onadbyr, due to a force majeure in her contract - unforeseen consequences. Characters who succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check notice that Jasmin Johandulc and her troops show signs of deeply rooted fear whenever Onadbyr is mentioned. She details the route her troops took from the Cliffside into the sewers and to the drainage chamber where they met the terrible undead

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mass that forced them to retreat. If characters can remove the frightened condition from the mercenary captain, she will be adamant about joining them in recovering her swords from inside the undead horror. Otherwise, she bluntly states that she will not lead her troops anywhere without her swords and will not return to the city.

"Strength and skill for battle can be taught and trained. Loyalty and the willingness to push past your limits cannot. Do you have loyalty? And the mettle to descend into the bowels of undeath? Susano and Sunna must be reclaimed, without them, I go nowhere, and neither will my Ravens!"

Jasmin Johandulc stating her ethos and terms in a monotonous voice.

1. Tunnels of Filth

Background

The sewers of Onadbyr have not been maintained since King Waldrann's death, and as a result, they are often overflowing due to the clogging, which is even more drastic with the recent carnage in the city.

Environment

The route of the Ravens of Winter leads from the Cliffside through drainage vents found high in the cliffs to the east of the city. Iron ladders descend to the vents from the top of the cliffs above a roiling sea. The ducts connect to drainage tunnels that ascend at a slight angle into the city's bowels, a completely dark maze of sewers. It is soon apparent that the drainage ducts are clogged, and so the way leads to higher-level tunnels before connecting to a wider main tunnel heading west. The stench in the tunnel is nauseating and grows more potent on the approach to the central drainage cistern. The sewage level is almost up to the 5-foot wide walkways on the sides of the 15-foot wide tunnel, overflowing in some places from the central trench. It is filled with whole body parts and skeletal remains that clog the sluggish flow of the wastewater.

Scene

As the characters approach area 2 to within 50 feet, the stench of the waste in the tunnels has a gut-wrenching sickening smell, so strong that anyone within the tunnel must succeed on a **DC 12 Constitution** saving

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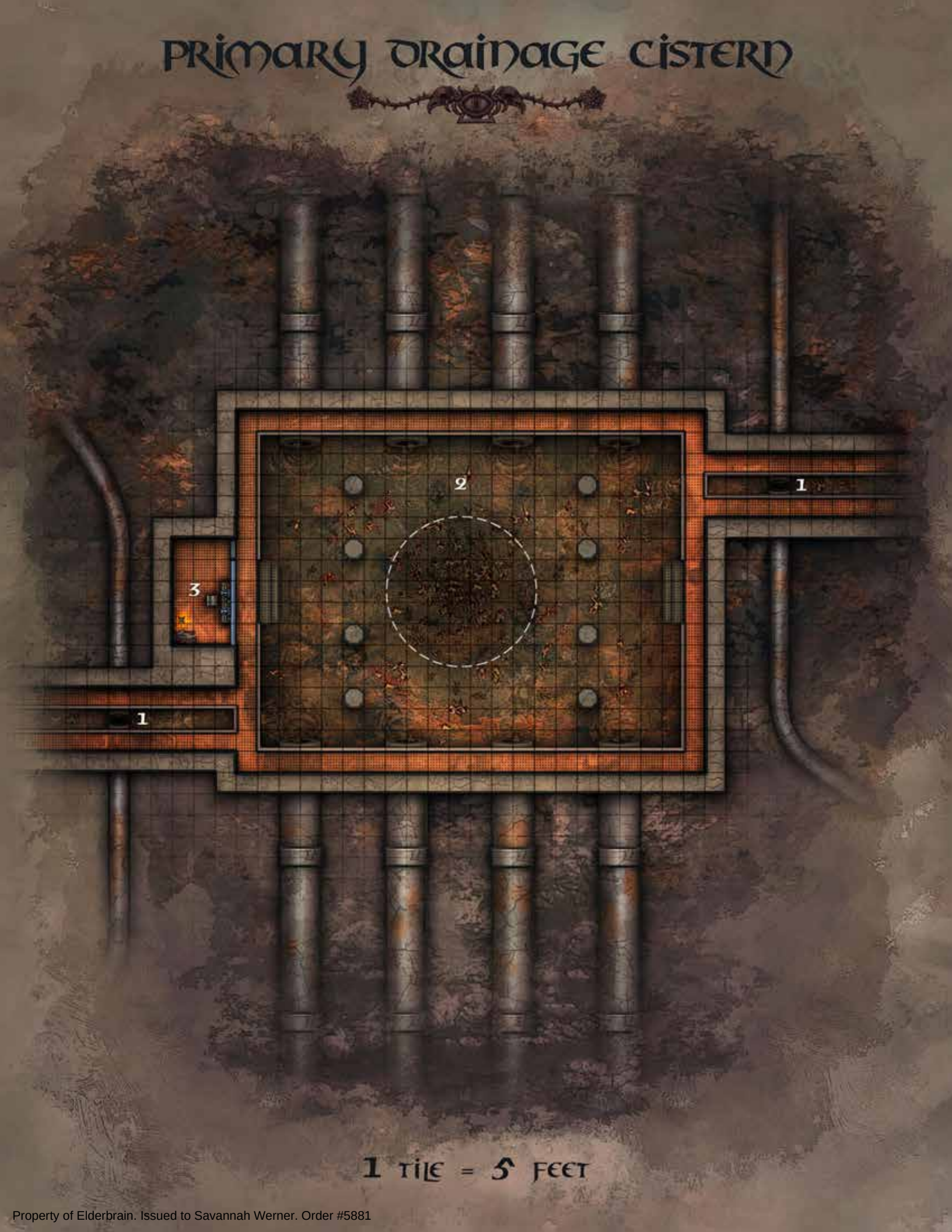
Primary Drainage Cistern



1 tile = 5 feet

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throw or become poisoned for 10 minutes and lose concentration on spells.

2. Primary Drainage Cistern

Background

The primary drainage chamber of Onadbyr's sewer system is an immense pool of waste mixed with water, collecting the scum of the city. It is fed by inflow tunnels that can be washed out with great gushes of water from reservoirs connected to their tunnels. The valves are controlled by levers in the control room (area 3). The pool of waste hides a gigantic drain, which has been clogged by rotting carcasses and body parts that also float on the surface of the sewage. The fetid circumstances have given rise to a gargantuan amalgamation of corpses that sprung from the mounds of dead flesh soaking in the waste. This unique undead terror lurks under the surface of the pool, slowly amalgamating more and more carcasses into its gigantic form.

Environment

This vast chamber is an immense cistern filled with the waste of the city. A-5 foot wide walkway encircles the cesspool, which is 20 feet deep and filled to a level 10 feet below the walkway. Eight 10-foot diameter inflow tunnels open under the walkway, four to each side of the chamber. There is a single light source at the room's opposite end, behind the large window of a side room. The ceiling of the chamber is 20 feet above the walkway.

Scene

As the characters enter the chamber, the stench of the waste becomes almost unbearable. Anyone within 10 feet of the sewage must succeed on a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw or become poisoned for 10 minutes and lose concentration on spells. The **corpse amalgamate** lies in wait under cover of the sewage, waiting until the characters are at least 20 feet from where they entered the chamber, at which point it rises to surprise them. Characters can attempt a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check with disadvantage to notice the movement of the corpse amalgamate in the cesspool. The sewage in the pool is disease-ridden, and anyone in contact with the waste for more than 3 rounds risks catching **sewer plague.**

The control room is illuminated by a flickering light source within, but there are no signs of movement. If the inflow valves are opened from the control room, a gush of water erupts from the tunnels on the sides of the room under the walkway, dealing 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage to any creature that is within 30 feet from the opening of the tunnels. If the creature is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a **DC 18 Strength** saving throw or land prone in the pool of waste. Also, for every round that the valves are open, the level of the cesspool rises 5 feet, reaching the bottom of the walkway in two rounds, overflowing onto the walkway in round three, and reaching the ceiling of the chamber in four additional rounds, unless the clogging of the drain is fixed. This requires submersion in the pool, blindly locating the clog, and removing it with a successful **DC 20 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Corpse Amalgamate (CR 7, 2,900 XP). Use the **shambling mound** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The corpse amalgamate is Gargantuan size and its type is undead.
- It has 216 hit points.
- It has a Strength score of 24.
- It has a Stealth skill of +3.
- It has additional damage immunity to poison.
- It has additional condition immunities to being charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, and prone.
- ***Frightful Presence.*** Each creature of the corpse amalgamate's choice that is within 120 feet of it and aware of it must succeed on a **DC 17 Wisdom** saving throw or become frightened. A creature can repeat the saving throw once per day, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the corpse amalgamate's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

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- ***Multiattack.*** The corpse amalgamate makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 17), and the corpse amalgamate uses its *Engulf* on it.
- ***Slam.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.
- ***Engulf.*** The corpse amalgamate engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw at the start of each of the amalgamates turns or take 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. The corpse amalgamate regains hit points equal to the amount of the necrotic damage dealt. If the corpse amalgamate moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The corpse amalgamate can have four Medium, two Large, or one Huge creatures engulfed at a time.

Treasure

A gold-trimmed red cloak of a Red Cloak Lawgiver can be found in the mass of corpses if the amalgamation is defeated. It bears the monogram "N.W." stitched into its lapel. It is a *cloak of blinking*. The mass also contains the twin longswords of Jasmine Johandulc - Susano and Sunna.

3. Control Room

Background

The control room operates the drainage system of the cesspool. Boltor Glanik, a half-elf warlock with some experience with hunting undead and part of Jasmin Johandulc's company, managed to escape the corpse amalgamate and lock himself into the room. However, Boltor is at the edge of death, crumpled in a corner and weakened from starvation.

Environment

This is a bare room with an iron door and a large wire mesh window looking over the chamber. There is a bench along the window with two control levers - one for opening and closing the drainage vents and flooding them with water and one for opening and closing the main drain valve under the pool of sewage. The door to the control room is closed.

Control Room Door. The door opens inwards and is made of metal. It is barred from the inside and can be forced open with a successful **DC 16 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The door has AC 19, 30 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Control Room Window. The large window of the control room is laced with wire mesh. It has AC 15, 20 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, it has damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Scene

Boltor Glanik (use the **assassin** monster entry with four levels of exhaustion) lies slumped in the corner of the room, shivering from fright and near death from starvation. If alerted to sounds of combat or knocking on the door, Boltor will crawl to the bench to peek out the window. He will only open the door if the corpse amalgamation has been slain. If the characters restore him to health, offer him food and drink, or remove the frightened condition from him, Boltor Glanik will thank the characters in a somewhat world-weary and accepting manner. He will be keen to regroup with the Ravens of Winter.

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BOLTON GLANIK

"Get it to the pipes! To. The. Pipes!".

Bolton Glanik's almost inaudible cries from behind the window.

The control mechanism of the drainage system is quite simple. There are two levers built into the iron bench. Both are marked by pictograms and the words open and close. One is for opening and closing the inflow ducts, while the other is for opening and closing the drainage valves. It takes an action to move either of the levers to their positions.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for saving Boltor Glanik.

Return of the Swords

Environment

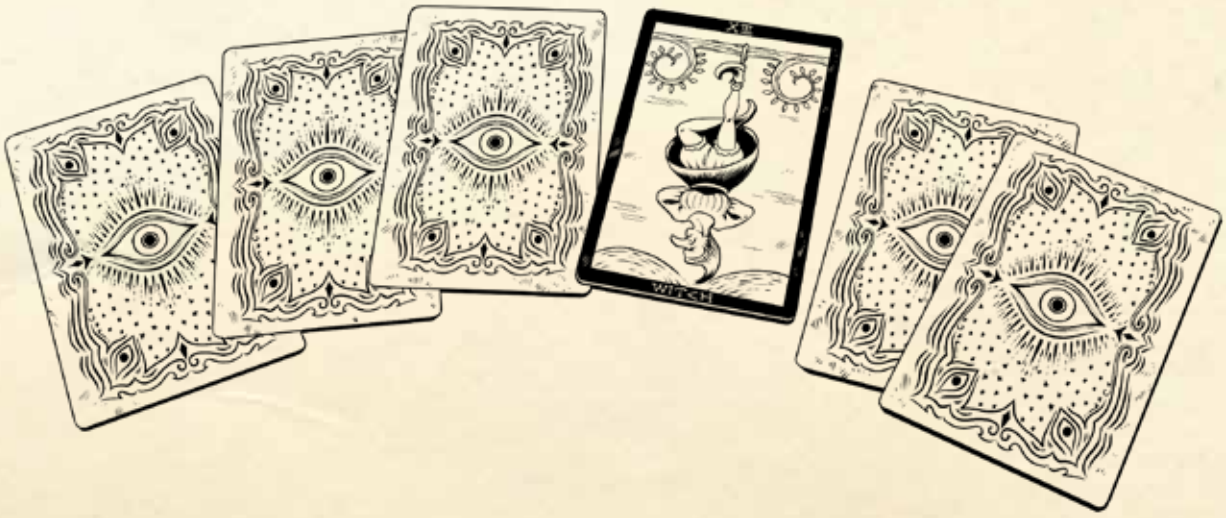
Either the camp of the Ravens of Winter or the sewers if Jasmin Johandulc accompanied the characters to the sewers.

Scene

Once the characters recover the swords, **Jasmin Johandulc** will demand their return. She will fight characters with the Ravens of Winter (use the **unit of scoundrels** monster entry) at her side if the swords are not relinquished to her. Even if she regains her blades, the mercenary captain will demand more money for her service, an additional 2,000 gold pieces, unless a character succeeds on a **DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. On a success, she is convinced to remain in the war effort at a reduced price of 1,000 gold pieces. On a failed check, she sticks to her demands or otherwise breaks camp and returns to Drayl with her troops.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for recovering the twin blades of Jasmin Johandulc and returning them to her.



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Onadbyr, the City of the Dead

Background

When the characters broke the Midnight Curse on the *crown of Aglarion,* Krasnar Azennar's soul reunited with the soul fragment that anchored it to the Material Plane. The aberration-infused prince rose as a lich-knight through the effects of the cleansing ritual devised by the Matrons of Malice, who wanted to strike a final blow against the kingdom that slipped from their grasp. The Lich-Knight emerged from the Mausoleum of the Monarchs and slaughtered everything and everyone it could find within the Royal Palace, consistently reanimating the slain and creating a formidable horde of undead. Next, the Lich-Knight unleashed its undead forces on the city and grew its army by raising more and more of the recently deceased. Soon, Onadbyr was in a panic as the undead horde swept across its streets, devouring anyone they found.

In her Abyssal lair, Faeryl Myrryn, the drow vampire conjurer and chosen of Orcus, the demon lord of the undead, sensed the rising of so many souls and the creation of the Lich-Knight. She has been plotting her return to the Feyrealm for over a thousand years and now decided to take action by aiding the Lich-Knight on the Material Plane. With Onadbyr in the grasp of the undead and the Lich-Knight as her tool, she plans to launch an offensive to take over the Material Plane and the Feyrealm. Faeryl Myrryn discovered the petrified remains of one of the planetar generals of the Dark Star, Morkiel, the manifestation of fear, in the middle of Onadbyr in its ziggurat under the statue known as the Napping Giant by the locals. A thousand years ago, Morkiel was slain by Sarath and entombed in its own Ziggurat of Dread under the giant statue. The embodiment of fear lay dormant for over a thousand years until the drow vampire raised it as an undead celestial. Morkiel was a formidable archmage when alive, and as an undead, its powers only grew stronger. It tore its ziggurat from under the earth and raised it into the air, unleashing death upon the capital city of Onadbyr as ordered to do so by the Lich-Knight under whose command the drow vampire conjurer placed the undead angel.

The city could not withstand the necrotic powers spreading rapidly through its streets. Those who could have fled, but only a minority of those who once lived in the city have survived. Most of the residents have been turned into undead or have found death at the claws and maws of the horde. The growing number of walking dead have already started their conquest against the rest of the Kingdom of Aglarion and have

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swept over the closest towns - Ronul's End and Willow Creek. Their numbers are so overwhelming that it seems impossible to stop them, especially considering the powerful Lich-Knight and Morkiel Reborn, who are endlessly fueling their numbers.

Environment

The streets of Onadbyr echo with the whispering raspy voice of the ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas, emanating from the Minaret of the Speaker and expounding the glory of the undead. The ghostly voice is broken only by the sounds of moaning and growling undead and the crumbling of the burning houses that still stand in the wake of the destruction. Half-eaten corpses litter the streets, and entire neighborhoods are ablaze in the inferno that slowly spreads from house to house. The sky is dark from the smoke that rises from the ground, and ominous flying shapes hover in the haze. One of these is an upside-down green ziggurat that levitates above the Royal Palace, unceasingly pouring undead over the court from its lowest point and covering the entire structure with a thick layer of zombies. The other is a gargantuan bulbous globe of inflated skin with huge eyes, gigantic mouths, and enormous hands protruding from its lower body, slowly floating through the smoke-filled air above the city. The gigantic animated corpse of the roc, known as the Cackling Crow, sits motionless on the Old Wall and sometimes flies above the burning buildings of the city.

Scene

The undead-infested city of Onadbyr is the hunting ground of **skeletons, zombies, ghouls, ghasts, shadows,** and **spectres** that wander the streets alone or in small groups. Some of the more dangerous encounters are outlined below, including all strategic locations that can give tactical advantages to the united armies when they are finally ready to assault the city. The characters must move through the city in stealth, seize key locations, gather survivors, and eliminate threats before the army of the living can invade the capital and assault the Royal Court in full force. Feel free to use the following encounters in any order.

THE DREAD WATCHER

Environment

A gigantic shadow envelopes the area, cast by a gargantuan bloated creature with numerous large eyes on its skinless flesh. It floats high above the ground flailing in the air with several arms, its eyes unblinking and constantly scanning the ground. One of its giant arms holds the clocktower of a building.

Scene

A character who succeeds on a **DC 10 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check notices the **bulbous observer** flying over their head at the height of 100 feet. The bloated undead is looking for survivors and directing zombies to their locations. A character who succeeds on a **DC 21 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check can hide from it. On a failed skill check, the bulbous observer drops the tower on the character. It spends the next round lowering to another nearby roof to break off part of a building and continue bombarding the characters from above. It also telepathically alerts a nearby **unit of zombies** and directs them to the character's location. The zombies arrive in 2d4 rounds. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check can hide from the undead who pass by. On a failed skill check, the zombies spot the characters and try to overwhelm them with numbers, most likely forcing them to retreat and hide.

WIGHT RIDERS

Environment

The sounds of several hooves on the cobblestones can be heard as they approach rapidly from the street ahead.

Scene

Ten **wights** riding on **warhorse skeletons** cross the characters' path. The undead cavalry appears 150 feet from the characters, riding hard towards them between smoldering buildings. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check can hide from the undead, who pass by if they don't no-

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tice anyone. On a failed skill check, the wights spot the characters and charge towards them.

COLLAPSING BUILDING

Background

Many of the buildings in Onadbyr have suffered structural damage either due to the fires that ravage the city or the fighting that took place near or inside them. This encounter can happen during a fight where a damage-dealing area spell is involved, or if the building is damaged in any other way, or just by accident.

Scene

A character can examine a building for structural damage by succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom** ability check. On a successful ability check, the character notices that the building is about to collapse. A collapsing building deals 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage to any creature in its vicinity, usually a radius of 20 feet for a typical residential building. A creature in the area of the collapsing building can make a successful **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw to halve the damage. On a failed saving throw, the creature is trapped under the rubble and is restrained, taking 5 (1d10) damage at the start of its turn until freed. The trapped or another creature can use an action to free itself by succeeding on a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The area covered by the rubble is considered difficult terrain.

THE UNDEAD CROW

Background

Morkiel Reborn realized the need for aerial support for its undead troops and decided to use the largest suitable creature in reach, the Cackling Crow. The reanimated zombie roc has been delegated to Shardarahaz, the general of the Lich-Knight, as a steed to oversee unit movements and provide deadly aerial support.

Scene

The **zombie roc** sits on high outcroppings of Onadbyr or circles above the city when not serving Shardarahaz as a steed. It attacks any living creature it sees. Getting past the undead roc requires a **DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check.

Zombie Roc (CR 12, 8,400 XP). Use the **roc** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The zombie roc is an undead type creature.
- It has AC 13 and 328 hit points.
- It makes Wisdom saving throws with a +2 modifier.
- It has darkvision 60 ft.
- It has damage immunity against poison damage and condition immunity against being poisoned.
- ***Undead Fortitude.*** If damage reduces the zombie roc to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie roc drops to 1 hit point instead.

AVATAR OF DREAD

Background

One of the clones of Morkiel Reborn has already matured, and it sometimes appears on the streets of Onadbyr amongst the zombies to oversee the hordes of undead (see Ziggurat of Dread location).

Environment

A large figure flies in the skies above the city over the heads of the living dead that roam the streets. It is an angelic creature with green skin and four angelic wings. However, the signs of undeath are apparent on its perfectly proportioned features. Its wings are molting and decaying, its hands are skeletal, and its green skin is desiccated. It is dressed in a simple black loincloth and wields a great mace of large size.

Scene

The figure is a matured clone of **Morkiel Reborn** (equipped with a simple great mace rather than its *mace of terror* and without its *Rejuvenation* ability or lair actions) created by a *clone* spell. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 23 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to hide from the watchful gaze of the planetar

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lich. If it spots the characters, it points to them and addresses them telepathically, as it starts to weave a *blade barrier* spell before assaulting them individually with deadly necromancy spells. Morkiel Reborn will engage in melee only if anyone dares to come within his reach. The dark celestial lich will fight to the death, safe in the knowledge that its original body will become active in the Ziggurat of Dread above the city.

MORKIEL REBORN

"Kneel before your God, the Avatar of Dread, General of the Dark Star, One of the Three Darknesses, Morkiel Reborn, as befitting my power and station! Bring your living to me, and I will guide them into undeath and into the service of the Blood Queen and the Lich-Knight who now rules your lands!"

Morkiel Reborn proclaiming its titles and alliances as it issues its pronouncement.

RAVENOUS DEAD

Environment

A large mound of dead bodies is surrounded by loudly chewing and growling humanoid shapes. The fires of a burning building nearby illuminate their hunched backs and pale skin.

Scene

The mound is 120 feet from the characters when they notice it. A character who succeeds on a **DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check can remain unnoticed by the twelve **ghasts** feasting on the bodies. On a failed skill check, the ghasts turn their heads and charge the characters.

ZEALOTS OF DEATH

Background

The rise of the undead in Onadbyr has attracted several of those who venerate the vile aspect of the Inevitable. These zealous individuals have come to the capital to participate in the extermination of the living and to witness the unfolding apocalypse, which they consider a sacred occurrence. The priests of death avoid the undead with the use of their spells and magical *zombie masks,* slaying any living creature they encounter to bolster the army of the dead.

Environment

Twelve white-robed humanoid figures slowly walk the streets, chanting ominous prayers while holding smoking thuribles and aspergilli made out of skulls.

Scene

The twelve evil **priests of death** walk the streets of Onadbyr, chanting prayers and sprinkling unholy water on the dead bodies they encounter. They attack any living creature on sight and cast *hold person* to paralyze them before casting *spirit guardians* and *spiritual weapon* to slay them where they stand. They engage in melee only if they run out of offensive spells and use their *Divine Eminence* trait to maximize damage. The priests animate creatures they slay to add them to the already formidable army of the undead.

Priests of Death. Use the **priest** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The priest of death is *neutral evil.*
- Its *Divine Eminence* trait deals necrotic damage instead of radiant damage.

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- It has the following spells prepared:
  - Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, resistance*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *bane, inflict wounds, protection from evil and good*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*
  - 3rd level (2 slots): *animate dead, spirit guardians*

Treasure

Each priest of death wears a *zombie mask* and has 35 gold pieces.

Zombie Mask

TRADERS OF DEATH

Background

A group of armed Royal Soldiers has barricaded themselves in a large building where they keep several dozen citizens as hostages. Their captain, Shev, a grizzled waterling veteran of the army with a dark sense of humor, has struck a deal with the wights that tried to bash through the gates of their hideout. In exchange for their lives, Shev and his troops provide the wights with living victims to kill with their *Life Drain* ability and turn into zombies.

Environment

This sizable building has thick metal bars in place of its main door, which was broken down long ago. Debris and piles of broken furniture block visibility and the way inside. As the characters approach, the bodies of four dangling, screaming humanoids are being lowered to the street from the roof, while two armored wights on skeletal warhorses wait for them below.

Main Door and Windows. The main door of the building is missing, and its frame is barred by horizontal iron rods driven into the frame and the wall every 4-5 inches. The large pile of debris behind the bars blocks the view into the building. There are windows on the ground floor and at the height of 10 feet from the ground on the second floor, all fitted with the same iron bars. Breaking the iron bars requires a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check. The iron bars have AC 19, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, they have damage immunity against piercing, poison, psychic and slashing damage.

Trapdoor. A wooden trapdoor on the roof is locked from the inside with strong iron latches. It requires a successful **DC 20 Strength** ability check to break it down. The trap door has AC 17, 25 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, damage resistance against piercing and slashing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Scene

Two **wights** on **warhorse skeletons** are waiting on the street in front of the building for prisoners to be lowered to them from the roof by six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry). The building (chose one as you see fit) has been well-fortified by an additional fourteen Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and Shev (use the **veteran** monster entry) who have sealed themselves inside, leaving only a single, hardly accessible exit through the roof. They exit the building every other day to scavenge

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for food, resources, and any survivors they can find with less and less success. The former soldiers keep seventy-two dirty, hungry, and weak **commoners** on the ground level of the building and in the cellars, packed tightly without food or water. The six guards on the roof will retreat to the building through the trapdoor and regroup with Shev and his soldiers, who try to capture the characters if they are confronted and fight them if unable to subdue them. Finally, the soldiers will try to flee through the trapdoor on the roof when half of them are dead or unable to fight.

SHEV

"Capture them! We have them outnumbered."

Shev issues commands to his men.

If rescued, the terrified commoners will be grateful for their freedom and worried about their future. Many would be ready to fight if given food, water, a day's rest, and proper armaments, but most are non-combatants. A character can convince the recuperated commoners to join the fight against the undead with a successful **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check. If convinced, heartened, and provided with the necessary equipment, they will form a **unit of armed commoners** once they escape the city.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if the characters can free the commoners and safely get them out of Onadbyr to join the fight against the undead.

FISTS OF AZENNAR

Background

Created by Master Arlen, these bastions house powerful magical siege engines that protect the Royal Palace. While the western bastion of the Fists of Azennar (Onadbyr location 43.) is unoccupied, the eastern tower and its siege equipment have been seized by a group of wights raised by the Lich-Knight and tasked to guard the river passage to the Royal Palace from the sea. The wights have also extended the retractable poles, barring the way to the Royal Palace.

Environment

The gates of the immense tower that stands 50 feet tall on the northern shore of the River Nenock by Grankar's Chains are closed. Three huge ballistae aim their bolts over the river, and a dozen figures can be seen around them.

Inside, the rooms of the bastion - guard rooms and barracks, an officer's room, assembly halls, and storage areas with thousands of ballista bolts - are unoccupied. The captain of the tower tried to make a last stand but was slain by the wights, its body sprawled on its desk.

Main Gate. The gate is a (20 by 20 feet) heavy double reinforced wooden gate that has AC 18, 90 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, and damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. It is barred from the inside with an iron crossbeam that can't be picked, but it can be forced open with a **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Magical Heavy Ballista. Three heavy ballistae made out of wood and metal parts are mounted on the top of each of the Fists of Azennar. All feature a magical dial that can infuse the bolts fired from the ballistae with a choice of energy. A heavy ballista is a Large object that has AC 17, 75 hit points, damage immuni-

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ty to poison, psychic damage. It is a ranged weapon that fires heavy bolts with a range of 150/600 ft. that deal (22) 5d8 piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) points of either acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage depending on the setting of the magical dial. It takes one action to load the weapon, one action to aim it, and one action to fire it. A heavy ballista can be rotated 360 degrees as part of taking the action to aim it, and can be aimed and fired in the same round if two creatures perform these two actions at the same time. It also takes an action to set the magical dial to any one of the four energy types listed above.

Retracting Poles. Parts of the primary defenses of the River Nenock are the immense poles that can be extended from a fortified room within the Fists of Azennar across the breadth of the river. It takes six medium creatures and three rounds to operate the mechanism and fully extend or retract the poles. If only five medium creatures try the maneuver, it takes a successful **DC 5 Strength** ability check to move the poles. The DC increases by 5 for every creature under five. A Large creature counts as two Medium creatures.

Scene

Twelve **wights** guard the top of the Fist of Azennar, six operating the siege engines while six stand in reserve and protect them. If characters approach by stealth, they must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check or be noticed by the wights who rain down the full might of the Fist of Azennar on the characters or approaching army units. Six wights always operate the ballistae on the battlements, while the rest fire their longbows at enemies from behind three-quarter cover, improving their AC by +5. If the characters storm the gate of the tower, six of the wights descend to intercept them, reinforced by the six ballista operators once they run out of targets from the battlements.

Treasure

Hidden in the vest pocket of the dead officer is an *instant trebuchet*.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for taking the Fists of Azennar.

MINARET OF THE SPEAKER

Background

The Minaret of the Speaker (Onadbyr location 41.) was built by Master Arlen the Constructor using arcane techniques to amplify sounds from the top level of the minaret so the entire city can hear them. The former High Speaker of the Minaret was Wharrynn Theloanthas, slain by Morkiel Reborn, and now risen as a ghost obsessed with his duties in life - spreading information and words of encouragement to all citizens of Onadbyr, who now happen to be zombies.

Environment

The cylindrical Minaret of the Speaker rises to 200 feet within the Old Wall of Onadbyr. A ghostly voice speaks stirring praises from the bulbous dome at the apex of the tower to the undead hordes, audible throughout the entire city. The gate of the tower hangs ajar.

The small chambers along the central spiral staircase are mainly abandoned offices and libraries with tomes that chronicle the history of the office of High Speaker and reveal the exercises and rituals to master the abilities and duties of this bardic college.

Scene

The climb of twenty stories to the top of the minaret is exhausting. Unless characters succeed on a **DC 10 Strength (Athletics)** skill check, they gain one level of exhaustion from the climb.

The **ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas** haunts the dome at the top of the tower, using the sound-amplifying effects of the **Minaret of the Speaker** and its corrupted bardic abilities to grant undead creatures advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead. Characters must succeed on a **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check to approach the minaret without being noticed by the ghost. If the ghost notices the characters, it uses the spell-extending nature of the minaret to unleash its sound-based magic against them. It extols the undead "citizens" of the city and curses the living. If characters draw within

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range, it uses its *Horrifying Visage* ability and its *Withering Touch* when it has exhausted its potent spells. Wharrynn Theloanthas' spirit will only find rest if all undead in the city are destroyed. Otherwise, it returns to haunt the place of its former station in 7 days after being slain.

GHOST OF WHARRYNN

"You are not like us...Not deceased and yet living....Not citizens...Resist them... Rise...Feed!"

The ghost of Wharrynn Thelonthas spurring on the undead when it notices the characters.

Minaret of the Speaker. All sounds spoken or created in the uppermost dome of the minaret are amplified and audible over the entire city, with a range of 2,000 feet, possibly alerting the undead in range. The range of all spells, abilities, and effects that require a target to hear the source increase to 500 feet.

Ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas (CR 9, 5,000 XP). Use the **ghost** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas has 90 hit points.
- ***Spellcasting.*** The ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas is a 14th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas has the following bard spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *message, minor illusion, prestidigitation, vicious mockery*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *healing word, heroism*, hideous laughter, thunderwave*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *enthrall, magic mouth, shatter, suggestion*
  - 3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance, dispel magic, major image, sending*
  - 4th level (3 slots): *compulsion, confusion*
  - 5th level (2 slots): *geas, scrying*
  - 6th level (1 slots): *irresistible dance, mass suggestion*
  - 7th level (1 slots): *arcane sword*

  *The ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas casts these spells on itself before combat

- ***Innate Spellcasting.*** The ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

  - At will: *command* (as a reaction), *tongues*
  - 3/day each: *speak with animals, speak with dead, speak with plants*
  - 1/day: *divine word* (as a bonus action)

- ***Accentuated Tone (3/Day).*** As a bonus action, the ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas can force a target to make a saving throw against its spell with disadvantage if that spell requires the target to hear it.
- ***Bolster Undead.*** As an action the ghost of Wharrynn Theloanthas can grant undead creatures advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead until they hear its voice.
- ***Universal Language.*** Wharrynn Theloanthas' spells that require their target to hear it can affect any creature type that has an Intelligence ability score of 3 or higher even if that creature was immune to being charmed or frightened.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points for taking the Minaret of the Speaker.

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TEMPLE OF LIFE

Background

During the reign of Queen Aphinah, the Temple of Life (Onadbyr location 123.) was purged, closed off by Queen Aphinah, and has since been abandoned. The only temple that was allowed to operate was the Temple of Magic, led by Father Beau Semias, a cleric-turned-witchservant agent of the Children of the Coven. Father Beau Semias, the power-hungry priest, enjoyed the benefits of his former scheming and the warlock powers bestowed upon him by the Matrons of Malice until their defeat and the end of the Midnight Curse. When the undead started to spread all over the city, Father Beau relocated to the abandoned Temple of Life. He refused to provide aid to the needy and had the building locked by his hesitant acolytes. He pillaged the temple, and as he thought he would, he found a powerful magic item in the reliquary, an *amulet of positive energy* that could keep the undead at bay outside the temple.

In the coming days, the frustration of the self-isolated and self-sustaining acolytes grew, and some have either fled the temple or died when confronting Father Beau. Three days after the undead outbreak, a larger group arrived at the temple, led by Tazmal of House Neyfin, a former Knight of the Crown who demanded entry. The acolytes gave in to his demand despite the threats of their superior and let the large group of commoners inside the temple. Father Beau Semias lashed out at the knight with all his magical might but was soon mortally wounded and eventually lynched by the angry mob.

Since then, the refugees trust the magic amulet to protect them from the raging undead gathering outside, but they are stuck in the temple without any hope of leaving the city.

Environment

The sprawling Temple of the Redeemer has remained untouched by the devastation of the undead. The temple and its close vicinity are under a dome of bluish-white light surrounded by a massive ring of zombies that constantly try to break through it without any success.

The inside of the temple has been turned into a refugee camp, with bedrolls and common household items lying around the floor of the large common areas and the rooms of the acolytes.

Scene

The dome of light emanates from the *amulet of positive energy* that keeps undead out of its area in a 200-foot radius. A **unit of zombies** surrounds the dome at its edge, trying to penetrate it without any success.

Inside the temple, six **acolytes** of the Wondermaker and a large group of scared residents have gathered in the hope of their survival, trusting Tazmal of House Neyfin (use the **knight of the crown** monster entry) and the *amulet of positive energy* to protect them from the undead threat outside the temple.

If the characters can get through or over the zombies and reach the safe area within the dome of light, Tazmal and the acolytes quickly move to open the apertures of the temple and hurry them inside. The noble knight and those inside welcome the characters and ask about their backgrounds and goals. Tazmal tries to create a plan with the characters to break out of the besieged temple and is willing to join the united armies with the refugees of fighting skills.

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TAZMAL OF HOUSE NEYFIN

"Are we cattle to be slaughtered? Are we not going to use whatever we can get our hands on to fight the undead that threatens our lives?"

Tazmal of House Neyfin aiding the characters in rallying the commoners.

A character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can convince the commoners to fight for their land, and if armed properly, they can form a **unit of armed commoners** ready to break out of the temple and join the forces at the camp. This skill check is made with advantage due to the charismatic intervention of Tazmal of House Neyfin.

The reliquary of the temple was opened by Father Beau Semias, who had deactivated its protective wards. The small room features several pedestals with mundane holy items on them, above them small plates that describe the item and the former high priest of the temple who possessed them.

AMULET OF POSITIVE ENERGY

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if the characters can free the commoners and safely get them out of Onadbyr to join the fight against the undead.

Treasure

The activated *amulet of positive energy* sits on the central altar of the temple.

TEMPLE OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Background

The former head priest of the Temple of Light and Darkness (Onadbyr location 52.), Father Kalozark Solamyr was slain by a group of werehellhound knights soon after the Midnight Curse fell upon the kingdom and Queen Aphinah ordered the extermination of all clerics and paladins within the realm. Xeno, the prodigious young cleric, was one of the few who knew about the secret crypt of Rodnar the All-Seeing, archbishop of the Order of the Eternal Light, that was located below the lighthouse. The young cleric fled to the ancient catacomb as a last resort to save his life when the lycanthrope knights arrived to ransack the temple.

Xeno passed the guardians of the crypt and eventually found himself face to face with Rodnar, who rose as a mummy lord upon his arrival. Both wielders of the same divine power, the two got engaged in a theological conversation about their faith, arguing and reasoning about the nature and final judgment of their deity, the balance of light and darkness, and the essence of their shared dogma. Rodnar tries to convince the young but powerful

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cleric to accept its views, while Xeno tries to make the undead priest understand the nature of the balance that he considers as the essence of his faith.

Cygnus, the couatl paladin and emissary of the Shining Light, has been trying to use its *scrying* and *dream* spells on any potential ally it could recruit to aid the people of Aglarion in yet another cataclysmic war against evil. The couatl has recently discovered that Xeno, the Rekindled Flame, is still alive. Cygnus has reached the cleric in his dreams where it conversed with him, updating him on the events taking place in the outside world, and learned about his year-long theological debate with Rodnar the All-Seeing. Xeno understood the call for help but asked for the couatl's patience because he hoped to convert the mummy high priest to his views. He is confident that he is close and could evangelize the ancient evil cleric, but Cygnus knows that their time is running out.

The couatl contacts the characters in person or via a *dream* spell and urges them to retrieve Xeno, the most powerful cleric in the kingdom, and gain his support in the coming war against the undead. Cyngus tells the characters about the secret sliding property of the altar that reveals the passage that leads to the underground crypt of Rodnar the All-Seeing.

Morgawr, the kraken necromancer archmage of the underwater kingdom of A'rvanshy has sent its emissary in the form of an undead sea serpent to join the undead uprising and to assess the events taking place in Onadbyr through its eyes.

Environment

The lighthouse that serves as the temple of Light and Darkness is a ruined place where no one has set foot since the time the forces of Queen Aphinah ransacked it. The levels of the building are neglected and littered by the bodies of the clerics who were killed there. The lighthouse is 80 feet tall and has four levels. Rooms are naturally light or dark depending on the time of the day. Huge, 15 feet tall glass windows let the sunshine in when the sun is up. The ceilings of the rooms are at the height of 20 feet.

The middle section of the floor of the second, third, and fourth floor of the lighthouse is made out of glass, which makes the light of the sun and the darkness of the night visible throughout the building.

The crypt below is an ancient structure and provides an entirely different atmosphere than the lighthouse above. Its austere design is meant to project the martinetish and self-assertive rigidity and fanatical devotion of the Order of the Eternal Light. The rooms are constantly lit with magical flames and are 10 feet high.

Doors. The doors that lead into the temple and into the private rooms of the clerics can be locked with a key. They have AC 17, 20 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage. They feature masterfully crafted locks that can be picked with thieves' tools on a successful **DC 15 Dexterity** ability check or forced open with a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** skill check.

Glass Floor. This thick magically hardened but clear glass floor section can support a lot of weight just like stone would. It has AC 18, 80 hit points, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage.

Crypt Doors. The double doors of the crypt are closed but don't have a lock. They have AC 17, 60 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, they have damage resistance against slashing damage, and damage immunity against piercing, poison, and psychic damage.

Forbiddance. The crypt of Rodnar the All-Seeing is protected against all forms of magical travel by a permanent *forbiddance* spell effect that deals radiant damage to celestials and fiends.

Rodnar's Lair Actions. Areas 5, 6, and 7 are considered as the lair of Rodnar the All-Seeing. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Rodnar the All-Seeing takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Rodnar the All-Seeing can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

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Temple of Light and Darkness

1 tile = 5 feet

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- Each undead creature in the lair can pinpoint the location of each living creature within 120 feet of it until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Each undead in the lair has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead until initiative count 20 on the next round.
- Until initiative count 20 on the next round, any non-undead creature that tries to cast a spell of 4th level or lower in Rodnar the All-Seeing's lair is wracked with pain. The creature can choose another action, but if it tries to cast the spell, it must make a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 3 (1d6) radiant damage per level of the spell, and the spell has no effect and is wasted.

Scene

A gargantuan **undead sea serpent** sent by Morgawr is coiled around the tower, looking for living creatures to devour. It will break through the glass windows of the lighthouse to pursue its victims inside the building.

Undead Sea Serpent (CR 8, 3,900 XP). Use the **giant constrictor snake** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The undead sea serpent's size is Gargantuan and it is an undead type creature.
- It has 180 hit points.
- It has a Strength score of 27.
- It has damage immunity to poison damage and condition immunity to the poisoned condition.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) piercing damage.
- ***Constrict.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the undead sea serpent can't constrict another target.

1. Chapel of Light and Darkness

Background

The grand chapel of the temple was a place for followers of the duality of Light and Darkness to gather to worship their deity.

Environment

The floor of this huge chapel is divided into a black and a white section with a stone altar located in the middle. Two narrow and long floating glass staircases rise on the two sides of the chapel, leading to the floor above with a large circular glass panel in the center of its floor. Enormous glass panels form a giant windowed panel behind the stairs and the wall opposite the entry gates. The bodies of long-dead priests clad in black and white robes lie scattered throughout the chapel.

Scene

The chapel is the hunting ground of the spirits of the dead clerics who have risen as six **shadows** when the undead infestation of Onadbyr took place. The shadows emerge from the bodies and attack the character with the highest Strength ability score.

Those not aware of the secret panel that allows the altar to be pushed aside must succeed on a **DC 23 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice a button on its pedestal. Otherwise, it requires a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** skill check to slide the altar. The secret passage opens to an ancient spiral staircase that leads down to a brightly lit room below.

2. Cleric's Quarters

Background

The small rooms on this floor were the private cells of the priests who lived in the temple. The altar in the center of the glass floor panel was used only by the clerics during the holiest ceremonies.

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Environment

Each small cell holds a bed and a small wardrobe, which are vandalized in most rooms. An altar similar to the public chapel below stands in the middle of the glass floor.

Scene

A character who searches the rooms can find the journal of one of the priests, which describes the events that took place after the coronation of Queen Aphinah and the manifestation of the Midnight Curse, amongst other mundane daily events from earlier. The last entry was written in haste and tells how the priests feared for their lives and knew that the lycanthrope knights of the queen would come to slaughter them.

"In his final desperation, Brother Jhankai tried to assemble the holy artifact. May the radiance of the Shining Light and the shroud of the Darkness Within protect his soul on his final journey."

The last sentence of the priest's journal.

3. RELIQUARY

Background

This room holds the six fragments of a fabled, legendary item of the clergy, a fragment of the lost tombstone of Sarath, the first high priest of the temple who defeated the Dark Star. No one, not even the Matrons of Malice, could piece the fragments together due to the powerful wards and the guardian protecting them.

Environment

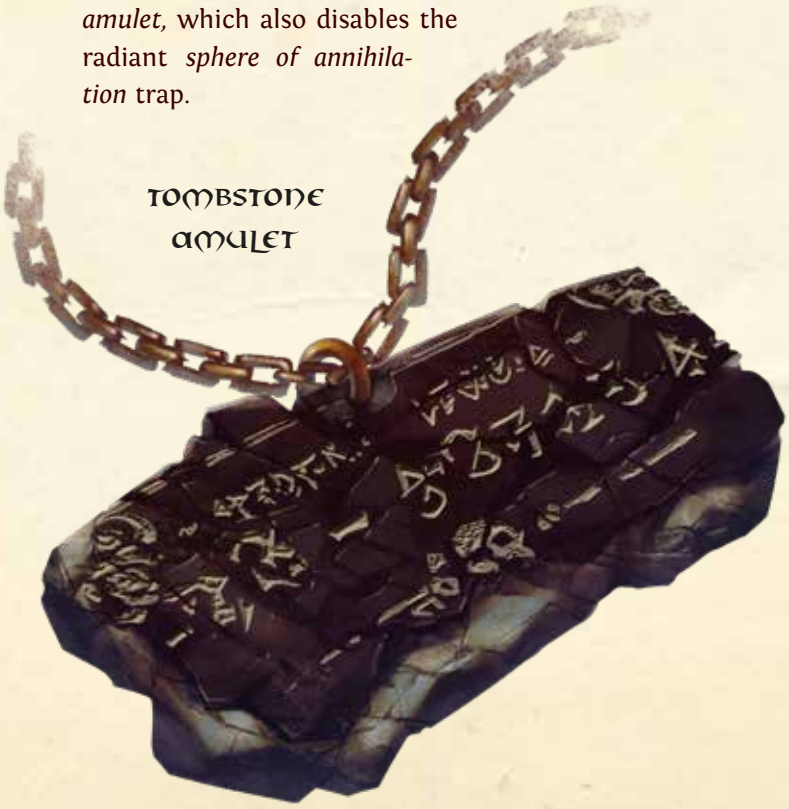
Six pedestals stand on the glass floor with a fragment of a chiseled stone on each of them. Each stone fragment has a different section of a single text. One of them has a chain lanyard attached to it.

Scene

The stone fragments are the pieces of the legendary *tombstone amulet* of Sarath. A non-good, non-celestial creature that touches any of the fragments causes all the fragments to shine with a blinding flash of light and assemble into a radiant *sphere of annihilation* that is one foot in diameter. A creature that can see the radiant *sphere of annihilation* must make a **DC 21 Constitution** saving throw at the start of each of its turns or become permanently blinded. The radiant *sphere of annihilation* can't be controlled by any means and destroys planar portals it comes into contact with, unlike a normal *sphere of annihilation*. The radiant *sphere of annihilation* flies at a random creature with a speed of 10 feet at the start of each turn within area 3 until no more creatures are present in the room. A creature touched by the radiant *sphere of annihilation* takes 22 (4d10) radiant damage. If there are no creatures in the room, the radiant *sphere of annihilation* disappears, and the stone fragments of the *tombstone amulet* reappear on the pedestals.

Treasure

A good-aligned celestial creature can assemble the fragments of the *tombstone amulet*, which also disables the radiant *sphere of annihilation* trap.



TOMBSTONE AMULET

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Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they can recover the *tombstone amulet*.

4. Pane of Light

Background

The metal plate under the huge mirror in the middle of the room was lit by the *light* spells of the priests. The magical mirror focused the light into a beam that could be seen for miles. The magical mirror was created by Rodnar the All-Seeing, and the Order of the Eternal Light used it as a weapon to punish its enemies and protect the city. Xeno and Father Kalozark Solamyr were the only ones who knew the secret command word that turned the light of the mirror lens into a searing radiant beam.

Environment

The circular mirror pane of the level allows an excellent view over the sea and the city. A giant, gently curving metal plate dominates the center of the room, with a huge vertical mirror levitating in its center.

Scene

The mirror reacts to any light source by intensifying its reflection manifold and slowly rotating, creating a bright illumination that can be seen from far. The light acted as a guiding point for ships and those who traveled on the shores of the Calhay Sea.

Searing Mirror. When the command word "Eternal light, Searing bright" is uttered in Celestial, it activates the magical mirror's light-enhancing property that releases a line of searing radiant energy with a range of 3,000 feet that burns everything in its path. After the discharge of radiant energy, the mirror needs to cool down and recharge for nine rounds. A character can use its ranged attack modifier to attack with the weapon, which deals 90 (20d8) radiant damage on a hit.

5. Tomb of the Fists of the Sun

Background

The most devoted holy warrior monks of the Order of the Eternal Light sacrificed themselves to serve Rodnar the All-Seeing in the afterlife. They willingly cremated themselves alive to prove their devotion and to take the honor of being the last servants of the mightiest high priest of the theocracy. Their souls exist eternally and are ready to protect the crypt of the All-Seeing from those who wish to disturb it. Xeno fought the spirits and destroyed many of them before stepping through the gates to the next chamber. The remaining, risen spirits still haunt this room.

Environment

A crumbling stone spiral staircase leads to this brightly illuminated chamber from above. The blinding light emanates from the niche at the northern section of the room, making it hard to look in that direction. A burning heat also emanates from the niche and gets stronger as one gets closer to it. The floor is engraved with a sun symbol that spreads its beams outward from the northern section of the chamber. Two narrow corridors line the room on both sides, holding clay urns.

Scene

The blinding light in the northern niche is the representation of the sun itself. A creature who looks in its direction must make a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw at the start of their turn or become blinded for one minute. A creature that steps in the niche is burned by the powerful radiance of the place, taking 36 (8d8) radiant damage at the start of each of its turns.

When the characters enter the room, six brightly glowing **spirits of the Fists of the Sun** monks materialize and attack them. The spirits stay between the characters and the niche to force those who would attack them to look in the direction of the blinding light.

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Spirit of the Fist of the Sun (CR 2, 450 XP). Use the **shadow** monster entry with the following modifications:

- ***Glare Stealth.*** While in bright light, the spirit of the fist of the sun can take the hide action as a bonus action. This trait replaces the *Shadow Stealth* trait of the shadow.
- ***Darkness Weakness.*** While in darkness, the spirit of the fist of the sun has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. This trait replaces the *Sunlight Weakness* trait of the shadow.
- The *Strength Drain* action of the spirit of the fist of the sun deals radiant damage instead of necrotic damage.
- ***Flurry of Blows (3/day).*** The spirit of the fist of the sun makes two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- ***Dodge Blow.*** The spirit of the fist of the sun uses its reaction to add 4 to its AC against one attack that would hit it. To do so, the spirit of the fist of the sun must see the attacker.

6. Guardian of the All-Seeing

Background

Rodnar the All-Seeing was gifted the honor of service by a guardian androsphinx named Abasi-Aten by the Shining Light for his zealous service during his life and so that his earthly remains would stay undisturbed. The room is not the lair of the androsphinx. It only visits this plane when someone would disturb the remains of Rodnar the All-Seeing.

Environment

This domed room tiled with sparkling white, seamless tiles looks as an infinite void of whiteness.

Scene

When the characters enter the room, a large winged lion with the head of a bearded old man walks slowly out of the whiteness and sits on its hind legs in the middle of the empty space in front of the characters. Its mane, fur, and wings are a gradient of yellow, cream, and white, and its eyes glow with a bright light. Abasi-Aten (use the **androsphinx** monster entry) speaks slowly in a booming voice.

"I am Abasi-Aten, the Stern Sun, guardian of the final resting place of Rodnar the All-Seeing, who sees only those who follow in his footsteps and are worthy of his attention. You might have passed the Fists of the Sun but you don't seem like devoted servants of the King-Priest's church. You can turn back now, or you must prove your devotion to the Shining Light by answering a single question. If you fail to do so, I shall feast on your bodies."

Abasi-Aten introduces itself and its terms.

If any of the characters stay in the room and accept the challenge, the androsphinx asks its question.

"You had your chance to leave, but you are too pretentious to make the right choice. Now tell me, what is the most important purpose of the Shining Light? Be careful with your next words."

Abasi-Aten asks his question in a dramatic tone.

A character who wishes to answer the question can make a **DC 22 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check to come up with the correct religious knowledge, which is that the Shining Light's main purpose is to keep the Darkness Within in balance. The androsphinx accepts any answers related to balance.

If the characters provide the right answer, a door appears behind Abasi-Aten leading to area 7, and the sphinx slowly walks away into the whiteness of the room, plane shifting back to its lair.

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"You have proven your worth. Rodnar the All-Seeing will accept your visit."

Abasi-Aten's farewell.

If the characters fail to provide the right answer or give no answer within a minute, Abasi-Aten stands on all fours and growls three times before attacking the characters with its spells and claw attacks in melee.

"You were not meant to face his holy brightness. You will pay for your immodesty!"

Abasi-Aten's last words before it attacks the characters.

The door to area 7 appears when Abasi-Aten is slain.

7. Crypt of the All-Seeing

Background

Xeno the Rekindled Flame passed the guardians of Rodnar the All-Seeing and entered the crypt of the former high priest and founder of the Order of the Eternal Light. Upon his arrival, Rodnar rose as a mummy lord and confronted the cleric, a member of his own faith but with a substantially different dogma. However, the mummy lord still considered him as a servant of its deity. Instead of slaying the intruder, Rodnar started a conversation with Xeno, which soon expanded into a theological debate that is still ongoing. The two clerics debate each other on the different views of their deity, the duality of its nature, the events that took place in history, especially those related to Rodnar, and the future of the faith that lies in the hands of Xeno, the current high priest. Rodnar is persistent in convincing Xeno about his own truth and wishes to radicalize the young priest, who, on the other hand, wants to learn as much as he can from the undead cleric and somehow redeem its soul.

Environment

The floor and the ceiling of this ancient crypt is decorated with the engravings of a sun and flames. Extremely bright balls of light illuminate the room in which a sarcophagus made out of mirrors reflects the light of the magical illumination in every direction. Two figures stand not far from each other within the beams of light, both of them wearing clerical garments. One of them is a tall and young man with a strikingly beautiful face, while the other is bent and wrapped in loose bandages under its robes, showing dark, desiccated flesh.

Scene

Rodnar the All-Seeing demands the characters to leave immediately, so that it may continue to convert Xeno through their theological debate.

Rodnar the All-Seeing

"More who disturb my eternal rest. Do the rays of the holy light shine through their souls or does it burn them intensely?"

Rodnar contemplating on the motives of the characters.

Xeno asks the characters to remain calm and explain their visit's purpose. The young priest is convinced of the characters' intentions right away if they mention Cygnus, the end of the Midnight Curse, or the resulting undead infestation of the kingdom.

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"I think we must postpone our theological debate Archbishop. A matter of life or death is something that needs immediate attention."

Xeno explaining his wish to leave the mummy's presence.

XENO THE REKINDLED FLAME

When Rodnar the All-Seeing sees that the characters will ruin the conversation with the young priest, the mummy quickly becomes hostile and attacks the characters. The mummy lord uses its legendary actions to hinder the characters throughout the combat. First, it casts a *gate* spell and calls forth an **efreeti** named Lahab Mashriq Haseeb, who swiftly throws itself into battle to protect the mummy. The mummy archpriest continues with instantaneous spells such as *fire storm* or *flame strike,* and protects itself from melee combat with *blade barrier* and *holy aura.* Throughout the battle, Rodnar the All-Seeing tries to exclude Xeno from its spells until it becomes inevitable to strike at the young high priest.

Rodnar the All-Seeing. Use the **mummy lord** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Rodnar the All-Seeing has damage immunity against fire instead of damage vulnerability.
- ***Spellcasting.*** The mummy lord is a 19th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The mummy lord has the following cleric spells prepared:

  - Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
  - 1st level (4 slots): *command, guiding bolt, shield of faith*
  - 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, silence, spiritual weapon*
  - 3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, daylight, dispel magic, protection from energy*
  - 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, divination, freedom of movement, guardian of faith*
  - 5th level (3 slots): *contagion, flame strike, insect plague*
  - 6th level (2 slot): *blade barrier, harm, true seeing*
  - 7th level (1 slot): *fire storm*
  - 8th level (1 slot): *holy aura*
  - 9th level (1 slot): *gate*

Xeno the Rekindled Flame will side with the characters if they are attacked but will not let the characters search and destroy the heart of the mummy lord. A character who wants to convince Xeno to destroy the heart of the mummy lord must succeed on

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a **DC 21 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check to make Xeno overcome his desire to learn the secrets of Rodnar the All-Seeing.

Rodnar's heart is located in a sealed floor panel under the mummy's sarcophagus that can only be found if the sarcophagus is moved or with divination magic. The stone sarcophagus can be moved with a successful **DC 25 Strength (Athletics)** skill check or must be destroyed to access the panel. The heart in the niche has AC 5, 25 hit points, and immunity to all damage except for fire.

When Xeno exits the crypt, he summons Girshad (use the **deva** monster entry) in the chapel with a *planar ally* spell to aid in the war effort. Xeno asks the deva to recover the *tombstone amulet* from area 3 and gives it to one of the characters to signify his gratitude, preferably a character who uses divine magic. He asks for the relic to be returned once the war against the undead is over. He also tells the command word to operate the Searing Mirror in area 4.

GIRSHAD

Blessed light shine on you! I pledge my mace and will not rest until the city is cleansed of the undead. The payment I demand is that you sustain the power of light deep within your souls and look upon the dawn when it rises over a city of life!

Girshad pronouncing its holy terms.

Experience

Award the party 1,100 experience points if they group up with Xeno the Rekindled Flame.

ZIGGURAT OF DREAD

Background

The Ziggurat of Dread was the planetar Morkiel's seat of power whenever the dark angel visited the capital thousands of years ago. Slaves constructed and dedicated it to the manifestation of fear that was Morkiel, providing a throne of the general of the Dark Star, consecrated to the Darkness Within. During Sarath's final battles, Morkiel withdrew into its ziggurat to escape the searing light that reappeared over the realm and banished its brethren. However, Sarath soon confronted the dark angel in its ziggurat and desiccated its body with the light she wielded. The

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Ziggurat of Dread

1 tile = 5 feet

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Order of the Eternal Light buried the ziggurat and toppled the giant statue of the planetar that graced its peak, which has lied undisturbed at this site, known as the Napping Giant to the citizens of Onadbyr. This all changed with Krasnar's rise in undeath and the city's fall to zombie hordes. The carnage and Krasnar's rebirth as a lich-knight drew the attention of Faeryl Myrryn from Orcus' side in the Abyss, and the vampire drow conjurer soon arrived in the city. She offered a deal to the Lich-Knight, offering the forces of undeath to aid it in conquering the realm. Using spells of the highest order, Faeryl Myrryn unearthed the ziggurat, harnessed Morkiel's soul from its petrified form, infused it into a phylactery of her own creation, and raised the planetar as a lich in her service. Orcus tasked Morkiel Reborn through Faeryl Myrryn to act as an advisor to Krasnar and bolster the ranks of the undead. The drow conjurer vampire opened a gate to the domain of Orcus on the top of the ziggurat, whence demonic undead poured forth before she returned to the Abyss. Morkiel Reborn then cast a series of *wish* spells to raise the ziggurat out of the earth, turn it upside down, and float it above the city. Morkiel Reborn moves the ziggurat if needed through mental command and sits on its throne when not assisting Krasnar the Lich-Knight in the Royal Palace.

Environment

The Ziggurat of Dread is of marble with a dark green tint. It floats upside-down over the mound of zombies covering the Royal Court at the height of 200 feet, and zombies occasionally fall out of a circle of flaming blackness at its bottom. Inside the ziggurat, the ceilings are 30 feet high, and rooms are fashioned to accommodate creatures of large size. There are no light sources in any of the rooms unless specified otherwise.

The entire ziggurat is under an effect similar to a *hallow* spell infused with the unholy power of dread, except the spell only hedges out good celestials, elementals, and fey, and negates the charm, frighten, or possession abilities of all creatures that are not celestials or undead. Second, the area is bound with the spell's Fear effect that affects all creatures that are not celestials or undead, with a **DC 15 Charisma** saving throw. Those who fail their saving throw can still move around in the building while frightened.

The Ziggurat of Dread flies at a speed of 20 feet at the will of Morkiel Reborn.

1. Portal to Orcus

Background

The bottom of the ziggurat features a gaping two-way portal to the realm of Orcus. A steady stream of abyssal zombies falls from the portal and lands on the mound of crawling undead that covers the Royal Court. The portal is anchored to four living hezrou demons that have been embedded into the stone to power the portal and keep it open with their blood.

Environment

A circle of reddish magical energy with a dark interior covers the center of the bottom of the floating ziggurat, which would be the sole entryway into the structure. Four spiked, large demonic figures are trapped in the stone surrounding the portal and writhe in agony and hiss curses in Abyssal as their blood flows into it. On the other side of the portal is a frozen, bleak landscape covered in bones and hordes of zombies in front of a vast mountain range whose peaks cut the horizon like colossal jaws. The feet of a giant green statue protrude from beside the circle, broken off at the ankle in ancient times.

Scene

As the characters reach the portal, they can see that the four figures held in the stone are **hezrou** demons. All bear two fang marks on their frog-like necks from where their greenish blood flows into the swirling portal, maintaining its magic. Each demon also has a gemstone embedded into its skull that keeps the wounds open and also continuously regenerates them. The demons are incapacitated and cannot attack, however, their *Stench* ability functions normally. All four hezrou must be slain and the gems removed from the demons' skulls to stop their regeneration for the portal to close. If the characters damage any of the demons, three **vampire spawn deva**

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fly out of the portal and defend it from harm. The deva will use their maces to attack until they fall to half their hit points. They then drop their maces and pounce on the characters and try to suck their blood.

Vampire Spawn Deva (CR 11, 7,200 XP). Use the **deva** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The vampire spawn deva is an undead type creature that has damage resistance to necrotic damage instead of radiant damage.
- ***Dark Angelic Weapons.*** The vampire spawn deva's weapon attacks are magical. When the deva hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 4d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack).
- ***Regeneration.*** The vampire spawn deva regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If it takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn.
- ***Spider Climb.*** The vampire spawn deva can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.
- ***Vampire Weaknesses.*** The vampire spawn deva has the following flaws:
  - *Forbiddance.* The vampire spawn deva can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
  - *Harmed by Running Water.* The vampire spawn deva takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.
  - *Stake to the Heart.* The vampire spawn deva is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.
  - *Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* The vampire spawn deva takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.
- ***Vampiric Touch (3/Day).*** The vampire spawn deva touches another creature. It makes a melee spell attack with a bonus of +9 against a creature within its reach. On a hit, the target takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage, and the vampire spawn deva regains hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt. This ability replaces *Healing Touch*.
- ***Multiattack.*** The vampire spawn deva makes two attacks, either with its mace or its claws, only one of which can be a bite attack.
- ***Mace.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage
- ***Claws.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, the vampire spawn deva can grapple the target (escape DC 15).
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire spawn deva, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire spawn deva regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Once the characters close the portal, an opening to the ziggurat is revealed, with a shaft leading to a chamber within.

Treasure

The four red garnets embedded into the skulls of the hezrou lose their regenerative quality if removed from the foreheads of the hezrou, and each is worth 400 gold pieces.

2. Morkiel's Effigy

Background

Morkiel is the manifestation of the fear aspect of the Darkness Within. The dark planetar was one of the three generals of the Dark Star during its reign over the land of the mortals. Morkiel was the fallen solar's advisor in the arcane and its court magister with the wizardly capabilities of an archmage.

Environment

Morkiel's 20-foot tall statue hangs from the ceiling in a corner of the room and glares with a cold threatening look on its oddly smooth green face. Its black

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tunic seems to be blown by the wind as it raises its mace for a tremendous strike. A circular opening on the opposite corner of the room connects to a chamber above. The upside-down murals on the walls depict Morkiel at the side of the Dark Star with legions of mortals fleeing from the pair or cowering in fear at their feet.

Scene

Morkiel's eyes radiate an aura of palpable terror that manifests as a sense of dread within those who stand near the statue. A character within 30 feet of the effigy must make a **DC 15 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the character becomes frightened until it finishes a long rest.

An *arcane eye,* maintained as Morkiel Reborn's lair action, is always stationed at the statue's base on the ceiling.

Scene

The chamber is filled with a **unit of zombie dretches** who claw at anyone that enters the room and tries to pass them.

Zombie Dretches. Use the **unit of zombies** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The unit of zombie dretches is Huge size and has a space of 25 feet.
- It has 436 hit points.
- It has damage resistance to cold, fire, and lightning damage.
- ***Multiattack.*** The unit of zombie dretches makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.
- ***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit:* 28 (8d6) piercing damage, or 14 (4d6) piercing damage if the zombie dretches have half of their hit points or fewer.
- ***Claws.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit:* 40 (16d4) slashing damage, or 20 (8d4) slashing damage if the zombie dretches have half of their hit points or fewer.
- ***Fetid Cloud (1/Day).*** A 10-foot radius of disgusting green gas extends out from the unit of zombie dretches. The gas spreads around corners, and its area is lightly obscured. It lasts for 1 minute or until a strong wind disperses it. Any creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both, and can't take reactions.

When the characters enter the chamber and engage the zombie dretches, Morkiel Reborn flies forth from the statue with a *project image* spell from its lair action and addresses the characters. A character that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

"Cower at my feet mortals! My new form demands greater tribute than the old. But the tribute is the same: blood, life, souls. All in the dark glory of the darkness within us all!"

Morkiel Reborn threatening the characters in dark Celestial speech.

3. Library of Death Magic

Background

Morkiel Reborn spends considerable time in this library, etching necromancy spells onto clay tablets and skulls. When the ziggurat was turned upside down, the furniture fell to the floor but is still usable. However, many of the clay tablets and skulls have shattered, leading Morkiel Reborn to replace them from memory.

Environment

Gigantic, ancient, and ornate ebony chairs and tables stand in the center corner of the room, laden with clay tablets, skulls, and tools for scribing, molding, and etching. Next to the furniture are two giant vats

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- one filled with raw clay and one with water. The ground is littered with broken tablets and skulls, and the shelves around the walls are stocked with intact ones, some freshly made and some thousands of years old.

Scene

The vast library of tablets is a collection of lore, written in a dark Celestial dialect. The tablets contain historical information about the rule of the Dark Star, the religion of the Darkness Within and its separation from the Shining Light, as well as all necromancy and enchantment school spells scribed onto skulls, from level 1 through level 9 (these are not scrolls but can be copied into a spellbook). One day of study in the library grants advantage on Intelligence (History) skill checks on topics related to ancient history or Intelligence (Religion) checks that cover the faith of the duality of Light and Darkness, and its two manifestations, the Darkness Within and the Shining Light.

Tiny death scarabs the size of peas with golden skull markings on their black chitin shells hide under the tablets on the shelves. They climb onto any character who disturbs the tablets and attempt to bite unexposed flesh to inject their incredibly potent necrotic venom. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check to notice the scarabs before lifting a tablet and can remove it safely from the shelves on a successful check. On a failed check, the scarabs make a melee weapon attack with a bonus of +2 against the creature that lifted the tablet. On a hit, the character must make a **DC 13 Constitution** save, taking 61 (7d8 + 30) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

When the characters enter the chamber and disturb any of the tablets, Morkiel Reborn flies forth from the chamber above with a *project image* spell from its lair action and addresses the characters. A character that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

"Your petty lives and thoughts are mere blips in the eons that I have seen. I have witnessed the parting of the heavens, the Mountainfall descend, and the rise of the Dark Star. May its name be revered forever as the true manifestation of the Darkness Within! What knowledge do you possess that can eclipse my own?"

Morkiel Reborn addressing the characters in dark Celestial speech.

4. CLONING CHAMBER

Background

Morkiel grew and stored several clones in ancient times in this chamber, which the newly risen Morkiel Reborn has refashioned. The lich has already produced a mature clone, and several others are near completion, growing in coffinlike tanks.

Environment

Four large ornate coffins with glass sides and inlaid with runes in jade that glow with a menacing green light are spaced around the room. The lid of one is open and the coffin empty. Two others are filled with water and store the partially formed bodies of a large, green-skinned, winged angel already showing signs of undeath. A broken coffin lies unused in a corner, surrounded by the bodies of several partially-formed and discarded bodies of the same creature but without signs of undeath.

Scene

The bodies in the coffin tanks are the clones of Morkiel Reborn, not yet fully matured. The discarded bodies are of its previous form, cast aside by the lich when it rose in undeath. The coffins are magical and emulate auras of necromancy. Characters who study the coffins and the bodies with the *identify* spell or succeed on a **DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana)** skill check can identify the coffins as vessels used in conjunction

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with a *clone* spell and that the coffins are special, having been treated with necromantic enchantments to allow any type of creature to be cloned, even undead. Characters who study the partially formed and discarded bodies for at least a minute and succeed on a **DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check can gain a deep understanding of Morkiel Reborn's physiology as a planetar lich. The knowledge can be imparted to others and all creatures who possess the information automatically score critical hits against Morkiel Reborn on a hit.

When the characters enter the chamber, Morkiel Reborn flies forth from the darkness of area 5 with a *project image* spell from its lair action and addresses the characters. A character that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

"Immortality has many forms, and all of them are now mine to exploit. What are your fleeting lives worth in the face of such mastery of death?"

Morkiel Reborn addressing the characters in dark Celestial speech.

Treasure

The three intact coffins are incredibly valuable, each worth 3,000 gold pieces. They each weigh 800 pounds. The jade inlays can be removed from the broken coffin if a character spends an hour with the appropriate tools, collecting jades worth 500 gold pieces.

5. Shrine to the Darkness Within

Background

Perpetual and impenetrable darkness covers this room, the shrine of the Darkness Within. In addition to the utter darkness, the chamber has been infused with necromantic energies that manifest as the worst nightmares of those that step into the shrine.

Environment

The entire chamber is covered by magical darkness. Unseen to most, magical runes cover the entirety of the bare walls of the chamber. Otherwise, the room is absolutely devoid of all decoration.

Scene

The entire room is under the effect of permanent darkness as the *darkness* spell. All characters who enter the room see visions of lashes that strike at them from the darkness and can cause actual pain. A creature that is not an undead or evil celestial is targeted by an effect similar to a *phantasmal killer* spell at the start of their turn until they remain in the room and they must succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes frightened. At the end of each of the creature's turns, it must succeed on a **DC 20 Wisdom** saving throw or take 22 (4d10) necrotic damage. On a successful save, the spell ends for the creature for that round.

When the characters enter the darkness of the shrine, Morkiel Reborn flies forth from the darkness of area 6 with a *project image* spell from its lair action and addresses the characters. If a character can see the image and uses its action to examine the image, it can determine that it is an illusion with a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check.

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"Give in to your fear and feel the pain that wells from the essence of the Darkness Within! Feel the dread, be humbled by its unholy power, and die!"

Morkiel Reborn angrily snarling at the characters in dark Celestial speech.

6. MORKIEL'S THRONE

Background

The hiddenmost chamber of the Ziggurat of Dread was Morkiel's seat of power in the capital when the planetar occupied the large throne within. Few creatures other than the Dark Star or its other planetar generals have ever seen the interior of this grand space. Morkiel Reborn usually sits in its damaged throne when not in council at Krasnar's side.

Environment

Morkiel's immense throne dominates this vast columned space. The throne shows signs of damage, having fallen from the ceiling when the ziggurat was uprooted before it was righted. It is made of black jet and covered by engravings of screaming open mouths covering its entire surface. A large four-winged being sits on the throne, partially decayed and showing signs of undeath, grasping a large mace in one hand as a swirl of skulls with tiny runes floats around it.

Morkiel Reborn has placed two *symbol* spells with glyphs of *Death* and *Fear* at the entrance to area 6 in a circle with a diameter of 10 feet. The glyphs are nearly invisible, requiring a **DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to find. The glyphs activate when a creature that is not an undead or evil celestial enters the room and passes over the space of the glyphs. Both symbols have a DC of 20.

Scene

Morkiel Reborn occupies its throne and rises when the characters enter. It reaches out to the characters telepathically as it starts to weave its deadly necromancy spells.

Morkiel Reborn's Phylactery. Morkiel Reborn's Phylactery is well-hidden, invisibly affixed to the to rail of the throne. It is an urn made of bloodstone and adorned with the symbol of Faeryl Myrryn. It is under the effects of a *sequester* spell cast by Faeryl Myrryn. It has AC 19, 22 hit points, it has damage resistance against piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage. The phylactery is cursed, which is revealed only when an *identify* spell is cast on it. Any creature that touches the phylactery other than Morkiel Reborn or Faeryl Myrryn is cursed until targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. Letting go of the phylactery fails to end the curse. As long as the creature is cursed, it is unwilling to let the phylactery out of its sight and will sacrifice its life to protect it from harm.

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"What hubris to dare oppose me, one who has stood in the presence of gods and was venerated as one! My powers in death overshadow what once was. Praise be to the Blood Queen for this gift of powers unseen in the multiverse and the pact with the Lich-Knight prince! I am Morkiel Reborn, I am undeath, I am your doom!"

Morkiel Reborn telepathically challenging the characters.

MORKIEL REBORN

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Siege of Onadbyr

Background

When the characters have gained tactical positions in the city around the Royal Court and have eliminated the advantages of the undead forces, a final mass assault can be launched against the zombie-infested city to break the crust of swirling zombies that covers the Royal Palace. The troops gather outside the broken walls of the capital and prepare for the invasion.

Environment

The allied troops under General Sundamar Stormbreaker's command gather outside the city's walls. The siege of Onadbyr is one of urban combat, where the armies of the living fight the armies of the dead from street to street.

City Streets. Units can move through main avenues, plazas, parks, and bridges at normal speed but only at half their movement speed if they take to narrow side streets.

TACTICS OF THE LIVING

General Sundamar Stormbreaker gathers the allied troops outside of the city walls and holds a council of war to plan the attack, inviting the characters and all notable NPCs present if the characters have made contact with them, such as Xeno the Rekindled Flame, Gren, Cygnus, Selvaro, Jasmin Johandulc, Commander Pricklethrust, and Master Zaophas among others. (See the Attack on the Camp and Tactics of the General section at the beginning of Chapter 6 for information on the tactics of these NPCs.)

General Sundamar Stormbreaker allocates command of the various army units, either to the characters if they are willing to serve in this capacity or to notable NPCs. The allied armies consist of all units at Camp Perseverance that have survived the initial onslaught of the undead and those recruited from around the kingdom or rescued from the city.

General Sundamar Stormbreaker's plan is a concentrated attack through the walls using **units of Royal Swords** as an infantry wedge, with ranged support from the **unit of wizards** and the **unit of Royal Arrows.** The **unit of Royal Riders** and **units of scoundrels,** namely the Uncanny Vagabonds, Golden Masks, and the Ravens of Winter, support the flanks of the central units. He plans to use the strategic locations

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liberated by the characters as rallying points for the troops as they advance through the city.

TACTICS OF THE UNDEAD

The Lich-Knight commands the army of the undead. All undead receive telepathic information on the events that take place outside the Royal Palace from the **bulbous observer.** The Lich-Knight gives commands to units indirectly through the bulbous observer and has **Morkiel Reborn** move the Ziggurat of Dread to strategic locations if needed. The pouring undead from the gate opened at the bottom of the Ziggurat of Dread slowly accumulates a **unit of abyssal zombies** every five days. If the characters have not defeated it, Morkiel Reborn joins the battle personally if the army of the living besieges Onadbyr, trusting its *clone* spell and *Rejuvenation* ability to survive. The lich planetar focuses its magical attacks on clerics and enemies with immunity to nonmagical weapons, like the Colossus or Cygnus if they are present. If the characters have destroyed Morkiel Reborn, **Shardarahaz** is given control of the undead by the Lich-Knight and the wight commander employs the same tactics, flying on the **zombie roc** if it can.

shardarahaz

Units of undead are positioned throughout the city and are commanded to converge on living targets en masse, surrounding them in a deadly ring. If the bulbous observer is slain, the units of undead remain without direct control and roam aimlessly, seeking life to consume. The Lich-Knight, Morkiel Reborn, or Shardarahaz can command a unit of undead if personally present. The units of undead are positioned at these strategic locations:

- Four **units of zombies** are positioned at the southern and northern end of Grankar's Chains (Onadbyr location 55.), two units at each end of the bridge.
- Four **units of abyssal zombies** are positioned at Dragon Plaza (Onadbyr location 111.).
- Four **units of zombies** are positioned at the northern end of the demolished Nine Arches (Onadbyr location 125.).
- Two **units of ghouls** are feasting on the dead, one at Deadwood Cemetery (Onadbyr location 23.) and the other at the Garden of the Sleepers (Onadbyr location 36.).
- Two **units of wights** move along Short and Long Road, patrolling the city in circles around the two main roads.

When the army of the living approaches Onadbyr, **Shardarahaz** mounts the **zombie roc** (see Onadbyr, City of the Dead section The Undead Crow) and flies above the city in circles to size up the enemy. It attacks any flying units or units engaged in combat on the ground. Shardarahaz can command units of undead if needed.

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Unit of Abyssal Zombies (CR 10, 5,900 XP). Use the **unit of zombies** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The unit of abyssal zombies has damage resistance against cold, fire, and lightning damage.
- ***Magic Weapons.*** The unit of abyssal zombie's weapon attacks are magical.

Shardarahaz. Use the **wight** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Shardarahaz has 90 hit points.
- It has AC 18 (plate)
- ***Multiattack.*** Shardarahaz makes makes three longsword or longbow attacks. It can use its *Life Drain* in place of one longsword or longbow attack.
- ***+1 Longsword.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.
- ***+1 Longbow.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.
- ***Commander's Orders (2/Day).*** As a bonus action, Shardarahaz can choose any number of creatures within 60 feet who can hear it. Those creatures gain a Commander's die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creatures can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check. The creatures can wait until after they roll the d20 before deciding to use the Commander's die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.
- ***Order of Charge.*** Shardarahaz can expend one use of its *Commander's Order* ability to double the movement speed of the creatures it chooses until the end of their next turn.
- Shardarahaz wears a *bracers of archery* and wields a *+1 longsword* and a *+1 longbow*.

Experience

Award the party 1,800 experience points if they defeat the army of the undead.

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Palace of the Lich-Knight

Background

Krasnar has been rejuvenated in undeath by the subterfuge of the Matrons of Malice, who had long ago planted half his soul into a phylactery, embedded into his iron statue in the Mausoleum of the Monarchs. Once the characters slay Krasnar in the Bleak Mire, the phylactery activates and raises the prince in the Mausoleum in the form of the Lich-Knight. As its first act of vengeance, the undead prince exhumed King Waldrann's corpse in the mausoleum and raised it as a wight, bestowing the former weapons of the king - the *spriggan shield* and the *spellbreaker crossbow* - to its new undead bodyguard.

There are two places of importance in the palace - the Mausoleum of the Monarchs where the Lich-Knight's phylactery is hidden, and the Throne Room where the Lich-Knight resides amongst swarms of animated dead even after the majority of the zombies have been slain to gain entry. The Lich-Knight sits on the throne with the wight form of the former king at its side and virtually closed off from the outside world by a mass of zombies that have infested all chambers of the Royal Palace from wall to wall.

Environment

An immense mound of thousands upon thousands of zombies covers the entire Royal Court, fed by the Ziggurat of Dread from above and raised by the Lich-Knight from the victims of its carnage in the city. The zombies pour forth from every opening of the buildings of the Royal Palace, threatening anyone moving into them. The groaning of the undead creates a cacophony of horror between the desolate halls of the palace.

Most rooms of the Royal Place have a height of 20 feet. The doors of most rooms are open, allowing the zombies to roam around on the premises freely. However, some doors are closed, and the rooms within have been undisturbed by the zombies. They can provide safe spaces to recuperate. These are areas 6; 13; some rooms in 17; 19; eastern 22; some rooms in 24 and 26; 29; 35; and 43. Use the description and map of the Royal Palace from Chapter 3. The *private sanctum* effect is still active and keyed to the Lich-Knight. Morkiel Reborn also knows the password to bypass the magical wards.

Scene

To enter the buildings of the Royal Palace and reach

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the Lich-knight, the characters first must destroy the mound of zombies under which it is buried. The only way to achieve this task is through a combined assault with potential for massive damage, which should be a cinematic scene once the legions of undead outside Onadbyr's walls have been defeated and key locations captured in the city. After gaining tactical advantages, the characters could encircle the Royal Court with army units, bombard it with the catapults and ballista on the Fists of Azennar or from the Wild Whale, point the Searing Mirror at the top of the Temple of Light and Darkness (area 4) onto it, or use high-level magic. Several NPCs can also aid in the effort, like Xeno the Rekindled Flame or Master Zaophas. When this barrage clears the covering of zombies that forms the mound over the Royal Court and the courtyard of the palace, the characters are free to enter the Lich-Knight's court in the Royal Palace.

Zombies cover almost every square inch of the Royal Palace. Each indoor numbered location on the map of the Royal Palace in Chapter 3 of the adventure contains a **unit of zombies** that don't overlap each other's spaces. Treat these as hazards that don't move but make attacks and use their abilities normally. Moving through the unit of zombies' spaces counts as difficult terrain. Each unit of zombies can be defeated individually. However, this is an almost impossible and tedious task for the characters, so other ways to bypass the dangers presented by such a horde would be the safest route. These could include flying over the zombies' heads, climbing the walls and breaking in through the windows, or divine powers to pass through the undead without harm.

Krasnar
The Lich-Knight

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THRONE OF THE UNDYING PRINCE

Background

Krasnar the Undying Prince, the Lich-Knight, sits on its throne in the Throne Room of the Royal Palace with its former father-turned-wight by its side and surrounded by hordes of zombies.

Environment

The Throne Room (area 39 of the Royal Palace) is filled with the living dead, overseen from its throne by the Lich-Knight, the undead form of the aberrant Prince Krasnar Azennar.

Scene

When the characters enter the Throne Room, **The Lich-Knight** stoically remains seated and telepathically hails them in a tone devoid of all emotion. It uses its spells and abilities from a sitting position and only rises when anyone draws within melee range. Meanwhile, King Waldrann's wight form, **King Wight,** activates the *spriggan shield* and starts shooting the characters with its *spellbreaker crossbow* before wading through the zombies to engage in melee.

"It matters not what has transpired before. I am death incarnate, more than I ever was. This body is a mere vessel, and even if you were to destroy it, I shall return eternally! Now, I finally have control over my soul. I am the Kingdom. I rule over the dead and need no crown! Now prepare to die so I might raise your corpses to serve me!"

The Lich-Knight telepathically assailing the characters.

King Wight (CR 6, 2,300 XP). Use the **wight** monster template with the following modifications:

- King Wight has 90 hit points.
- It has AC 21 (plate, *spriggan shield*)
- ***Multiattack.*** King Wight makes three longsword attacks or a crossbow attack. It can use its *Life Drain* in place of one longsword or crossbow attack.
- ***+1 Longsword.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 14 (2d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.
- ***Spellbreaker Crossbow.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) piercing damage. The item gains additional traits against spellcasters (see *spellbreaker crossbow*). This attack replaces the wight's longbow action.
- It wears ceremonial Azennar plate armor, holds the *spriggan shield,* and wields the *spellbreaker crossbow.*

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When the Lich-Knight is slain, its body crumbles to black dust and transforms into smoke. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check to realize that the Lich-Knights' soul has escaped its body, akin to the mechanics of a soul's return to a lich's phylactery.

Experience

Award the party 5,000 experience points for defeating the Lich-Knight and ending the plague of undeath infesting Onadbyr's heart.

THE LICH-KNIGHT'S PHYLACTERY

Background

The Matrons of Malice fashioned the Lich-Knight's phylactery into Prince Krasnar's iron statue in the palace's mausoleum, which was ready to receive Krasnar's soul upon his death and rejuvenate it as a Lich-Knight. Any time upon its death, the Lich-Knight's soul returns to the iron statue, and until its new physical form is rejuvenated, the Lich-Knight's soul inhabits and animates the statue.

Environment

The Mausoleum of the Monarchs (area 3 of the Royal Palace) is teeming with zombies between the tombs and statues of the royals of Aglarion. The lid of King Waldrann's tomb is open and empty within.

Scene

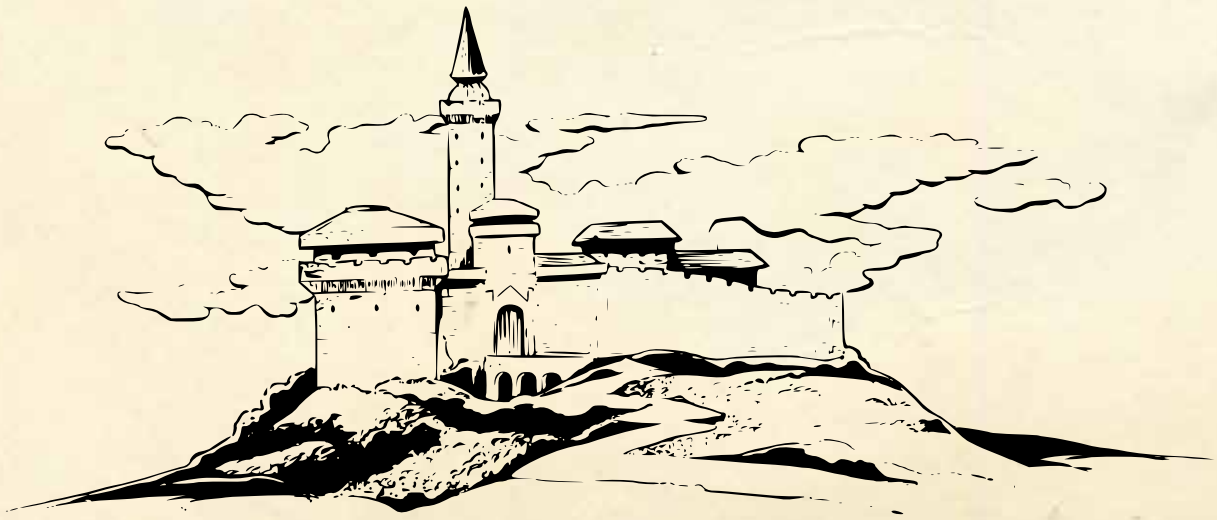
Krasnar's iron statue serves as the phylactery of the Lich-Knight. The iron statue regrows its glaive if it was destroyed during the king's funeral (see Funeral of the King in Chapter 1.) and animates when anyone enters the mausoleum, turning to attack the intruders, and uses its *Necrotic Breath* ability before engaging in melee. When the iron statue is destroyed, the Lich-Knight loses its *Rejuvenation* ability.

Krasnar's Iron Statue (CR 17, 18,000 XP). Use the **iron golem** monster entry with the following modifications:

- Krasnar's iron statue is Huge size and has 315 hit points.
- ***Necrotic Breath (Recharge 6).*** Krasnar's iron statue exhales necrotic gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 19 Constitution** saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This ability replaces the iron golem's *Poison Breath* ability.
- ***Glaive.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (3d12 + 7) slashing damage.

Experience

Award the party 1,800 experience points if they destroy the Lich-Knight's phylactery.



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The Dawn of a New Age

A Kingdom in Ruins

The Kingdom of Aglarion is a ravaged landscape, first torn by the Midnight Curse, then by the undead infestation spreading from the capital like a cancer upon the land. The city of Onadbyr lies in ruins, and the eastern part of the kingdom is a desolate wasteland with razed farmsteads, villages, and fields. Only about five percent of the population has survived the undead apocalypse, and masses of refugees have fled the kingdom to the south.

Rebuilding is a monumental endeavor. Pockets of undead still roam the deeper and more hidden portions of the realm. Also, trade has been nonexistent for some time, and the kingdom is short on almost all resources. Intact shops are empty of wares, markets are barren, and tradespeople cannot practice their crafts without raw materials.

As the undead infestation is brought under control, the rebuilding effort presents an excellent opportunity for many. Migrants start to arrive in Onadbyr from the Drayl City-States by the thousands, either former citizens returning to their homes or immigrants seeking a new beginning. Even Vordan is quick to move at the opportunity to settle some of its tribespeople in the northern reaches of the kingdom. Furthermore, a delegation from the Isles of Xantahros arrives at the capital on two ships captained by half-dragon spellcasters and their slave crews.

It will take long years, if not decades, to rebuild the kingdom. The characters can take prominent roles in this effort, as the heroes who saved the realm.

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Regency of Perseverance

Until a legitimate heir to the crown is announced, General Sundamar Stormbreaker declares martial law, and the forces under his command resume the functions of the state. He establishes headquarters at the Bastion of the Knights in the Royal Court, quickly has the House of Soldiers repaired to house the Royal Swords, and collects all surviving Red Cloak Lawgivers to regroup at the Halls of the Lawgiver. Law and order are rapidly restored. The general's first priority is rebuilding critical infrastructure, mainly bridges, walls, fortifications, and places of authority. All temples are reopened and populated by the clerics of their respective faiths. The repair of residential buildings, shops, and services are primarily private enterprises undertaken by returning or new residents. However, real estate prices are incredibly low, leading to a rapid boom in repairs. Trade slowly returns as the mines of Nangrath are opened and lumber starts pouring in from Gorso and the resettled Willow Creek. Romul's End is also reclaimed, and shipping resumes in time. The first harvest of the new age is a favorable one, with produce flowing across the realm from Harveston and the breadbasket of the realm on the Onadbyr Plains.

As hope for a new beginning rekindles in the capital, General Sundamar Stormbreaker calls the Council of Voices into session to discuss the future. Many council members have perished over the previous regimes, so new elections are held for the council members, The Twelve. The city is abuzz with the excitement of momentous changes in the social fabric of the realm. Many people step forward to attempt to fill the empty seats of The Twelve, leading to spirited political campaigns and maneuverings. Among the noble houses, the Domiren and Karramosa are quick to exploit the situation and secure their seats on the council, especially as the line of House Monder has died out. The Temples of Life, Competence, and Light and Darkness are favored by the populace to lead the rebuilding effort and offer comfort in these times of need. The most fervent politicizing is amongst the guilds and commoners, where door-to-door campaigning and sponsored events in the newly reopened places of hospitality become common.

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Long Live King Gren!

If Gren has survived the events of the adventure and has been recognized by General Sundamar Stormbreaker as a rightful heir to the Azennar crown, the young leader of the Uncanny Vagabonds demands to be legitimized through a coronation ceremony. Gren and his extended family move into the ruins of the Royal Palace and start to refashion it to their tastes with colorful tapestries, eclectic pieces of art, and furniture of mixed styles. The Uncanny Vagabonds also launch an aggressive and far-reaching propaganda campaign behind the new King, spread throughout the city and the countryside. They circulate incredible tall-tales of Gren's heroics in opposing the Midnight Curse and the armies of the dead, including the characters' exploits, but predominantly focusing on Gren as the leader of the effort. The coronation ceremony is immediately announced as a modest but lively event in the Royal Palace, which is currently a worksite under scaffolding. However, the city's entire population attends, and characters are rightfully celebrated throughout the festivities as the heroes they are. The new king offers them minor noble titles, along with land holdings and roles within his court.

KING GREN

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Appendix A

The Midnight Curse

The coronation of Queen Aphinah triggers the curse of the Matrons of Malice, and it rapidly engulfs the entire Kingdom of Aglarion. It is dubbed the Midnight Curse by those who endure its vile effects because of the storm's nature of raging the most at midnight. The curse affects the lives of everyone within the realm, corrupting and straining living and non-living matter equally. It changes people's everyday lives and shakes the structures of society in general, as work, travel, and living become strenuous and dangerous. The following examples are some of the more rare effects of the curse and represent the extremities of the new circumstances. Use them sparsely from time to time, separately or combined, to demonstrate the impact of the curse.

CURSED PHENOMENONS

The Midnight Curse is a form of concentrated malignity that aims to worsen life in the Kingdom of Aglarion. It carries the vile sadism of the Matrons of Malice, infused with their magical powers that manifest in various forms. Most of the time, these cursed phenomena hit those the hardest who oppose the hag coven's core mindset, like cheerful individuals, those who are dedicated to aiding others, or those who are the least vulnerable.

Rise of the Dead. The dead return to life and assault the living. This phenomenon usually raises loved ones and relatives as undead who then threaten the lives of those they loved in life and cause terrible trauma to them. The risen undead are usually skeletons, zombies or ghouls who seek out their families or closely related individuals.

Baleful Transformations. Some of those who would oppose the hateful ideology of the Matrons of Malice find themselves mutated in one form or another. For example, a limb of an athletic person could grow monstrous or weaken, or the face of a beautiful individual could turn hideous with horrid blisters, pimples, or even grow scales overnight. Those affected must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or gain disadvantage on either Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), or Charisma ability and related skill checks depending on the form of the curse. This effect can be ended by the use of a *remove curse* spell.

Terrifying Nightmares. The midnight hags are masters of nightmares and the Midnight Curse spreads their evil influence into dreams. A creature affected by the terrifying nightmares must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw. On a failed saving throw, these terrifying nightmares cause such a restless night that the target creature can't enjoy the benefits of a long rest and takes 3 (1d6) psychic damage after waking up.

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WEATHER

Dark purplish, unnaturally thick clouds appear all over the realm, and the weather turns gloomy, cold, and wet with continuous rain. The rain exhausts, weakens, and eventually kills people if exposed to it for too long. The debilitating liquid pours down in seemingly endless torrents, stopping for only a few hours before continuing with varied intensity until midnight, when it rages at its maximum potential. The soil is almost always wet, and landslides become frequent. The occasional bright green lightning strikes hit places and people, as if the storm knows where to cause the most damage. Those who survive become cursed, fumbling with their motions and always suffering the worst outcome in a situation. The winds are constantly changing intensity and seem to play tricks on people. They sometimes strengthen to express their will even more obviously, occasionally raging for days on end.

Choking Rain. The rains of the Everstorm seep into the Material Plane from the Bleak Mire and affect every humanoid creature. A creature affected by the choking rain must make a successful **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw every hour of being exposed to the choking rain or gain a level of exhaustion. Using makeshift covers or umbrellas offer minor protection, requiring saving throws to be made every two hours. Only a completely waterproof enclosure can protect against the effects of the choking rain. The runoff or collected rainwater itself doesn't convey the same curse effect.

Hex Lightning. A creature hit by hex lightning must make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw. A creature takes 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save, the creature must also succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw or become cursed for one day. While cursed, the creature has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws. Like the *call lightning* spell, spells that create lightning bolts from storm clouds include this additional curse effect on their targets. In addition, the hex lightning ignites flammable objects that aren't being worn or carried.

Devious Wind. Any medium or smaller creature affected by the harsh blast of wind must make a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw. On a failed save, the character might fall prone or drop any item held in one hand, depending on the DM's discretion.

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VEGETATION

The choking rain and the damp, cold, sunless weather drown the vegetation while also causing some species to grow and mutate unnaturally. Sometimes these strange mutations in the vegetation become seemingly intelligent or gain magical properties and seem always to be hostile to other creatures. The rotting and wet environment is fertile ground for mosses, lichen, molds, and fungi.

Bloodletting Thorns. A plant or tree grows sharp, triple-spiked barbs that cause 3 (1d6) slashing damage to anyone passing through or climbing on them. A creature taking damage from bloodletting thorns loses 1 hit point at the start of their turn from bleeding that doesn't stop naturally. A successful **DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine)** skill check, or a spell that causes the character to regain hit points, stops the bleeding.

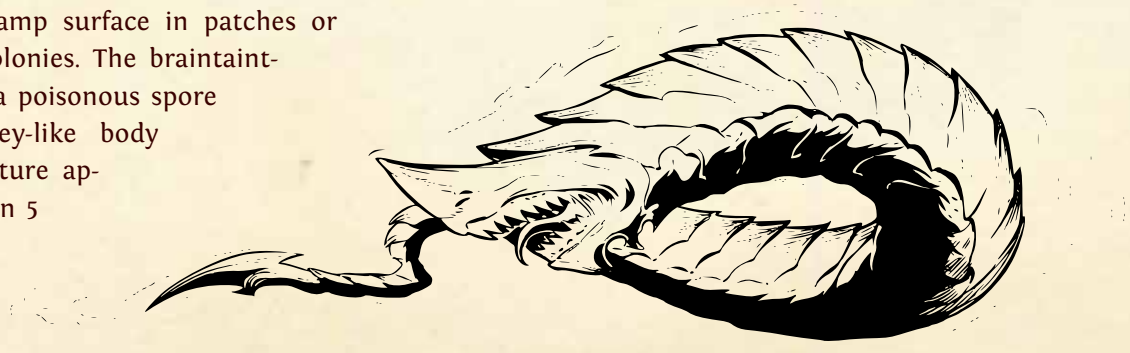
Stranglevine. A plant or tree grows several 10 feet or longer vines as thick as a rope. As an action, the stranglevine entangles any creature that comes into its reach. The target creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or be restrained by the stranglevine. As an action, the stranglevine can attempt to choke a restrained creature. The restrained target creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw or start to suffocate. The restrained or choked creature can use its action to break free by succeeding on a **DC 13 Strength** saving throw. An average stranglevine has AC 10, 12 hit points.

Braintainter Fungus. This pinkish tubular fungus grows on any damp surface in patches or even in larger colonies. The braintainter fungus emits a poisonous spore from its chimney-like body whenever a creature approaches it within 5 feet. The spore cloud spreads in a 5-foot radius around the mushroom and the braintainter fungus becomes inactive for 24 hours. A creature that inhales the spores of the braintainter fungus must succeed on a **DC 13 Intelligence** saving throw. On a failed save the creature is diseased. The diseased creature must roll a 1d6 each time they make an Intelligence or Wisdom ability check or saving throw and subtract the number rolled from the result. The effects of the disease end after the target creature takes a long rest.

FAUNA

Most wildlife is affected by the Midnight Curse through the changes in natural habitats and the scarcity of available nutritious resources. Most animals are hungry and distressed, often relentlessly seeking food wherever they can. Predators attack smaller creatures on sight, wander longer distances, and are often sick with infections or even mutated with ferocious bone spurs extruding from their mouths and claws. The carcasses of weakened and eventually deceased animals litter the wilderness.

Spasmodic Rabies. This brain infection causes uncontrollable spasms in the body of the infected creature. A beast or humanoid in physical contact with a diseased creature must succeed on a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or become infected by the disease. While diseased, the infected creature gains disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls,



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and saving throws. At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make a **DC 20 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the character remains diseased. On a successful save, the creature recovers from the infection.

Bone Augmentations. A beast or monstrosity grows additional teeth and fangs, or the original ones become larger, turning it into a disfigured, vicious-looking version of its original form. The damage die of the natural weapons of the creature increases by one die type.

Vile Intellect. A beast or monstrosity gains an unnaturally evil intellect, more cunningly pursuing goals that are different from those of its original kind. It can evaluate cause and effect relationships and operate simple mechanisms. The creature's intelligence ability score changes to 6, and it doesn't speak but understands Common.

THE KINGDOM OF AGLARION

It only takes the Midnight Curse a few weeks to drastically and dramatically change the lives of all creatures in the Kingdom of Aglarion. Life becomes strenuous and dangerous, turning almost every day into a struggle for survival for most. Nature mutates and rises against the living. The radical changes in ordinary life, the scarcity of food and resources, and the loss of comfort and safety have had effects on the land and the creatures that inhabit it. All of the magical effects and unprecedented occurrences are constrained to the territory of the Kingdom of Aglarion, making every other place outside the kingdom a desired destination for those who can reach them.

See Chapter 4. for a detailed description of changes at different encounter locations throughout the kingdom.

WEREHELLHOUND LYCANTHROPY

The rules for lycanthropy apply to the curse of werehellhound lycanthropy as outlined in the Lycanthropes section of the Monster Manual and the werehellhound monster template included in Appendix D: NPCs and Monsters. The curse of werehellhound lycanthropy is spread solely through the bite of afflicted werehellhounds. From time to time, the werehellhound knights of Queen Aphinah leave wounded victims only to cause suffering through their curse. News of afflicted individuals and their senseless rampages of fire spreads faster in the realm than the lycanthropic curse itself, to the utmost delight of the Queen. As a result, most households try to acquire some silver weapons and store large barrels of water, never leaving home on the night of a full moon.

ONADBYR

After a couple of days under the effects of the Midnight Curse, Onadbyr becomes a dirty, gloomy, and dangerous place. The streets are almost empty for most of the day and abandoned at night, especially during the choking rain. People hurry to reach their destinations and only venture onto the streets when absolutely necessary. The taverns and inns of the city stand empty, and get-togethers are entirely curtailed. The city reeks of death and chaos. The orderliness of the past is gone and replaced by the unknown and the unexpectable, under the oppression of Queen Aphinah that is tangible in every aspect of life. Her focus on causing distress and suffering, sadistic and cruel ways, and negligence towards the population, or towards anything in her kingdom in general, has shown its marks on the city, which is slowly crumbling to pieces.

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ECONOMY

Most shops continue to stay open in Aglarion, but all businesses struggle with resources and clients. Prices triple, and people hoard goods out of necessity. As a result, shelves stand empty, showing only a fraction of the previous stock before the Midnight Curse. Most services are also interrupted, especially entertainment and hospitality establishments, as everyone stays indoors and avoids gatherings. Inns and taverns are empty, except for the few regulars who would, in any case, spend their days there.

Agriculture and animal husbandry come to a standstill, as grazing becomes impossible and fields are inundated by the cursed rains. Surviving animals are moved into barns, and only greenhouses can provide a meager amount of produce to feed the populace. The result is famine and disease.

Existing taxes are raised and the freshly crowned Queen Aphinah institutes new taxes, some of them outlandish in nature, often changing daily at the whim of the Queen. The Royal Army is tasked with tax collection and collecting the fines that result from confusing edicts that cannot be followed, sometimes not even by the tax collectors.

Gold coins bearing the visage of King Waldrann are recalled and impounded without recompense if not deposited for melting at the King's Forge, which mints new gold pieces with the countenance of Queen Aphinah.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

There is a great upheaval in the social fabric of the realm as a result of the curse and the new power structure. Everything becomes centralized to the Royal Palace, which becomes the seat of ultimate authority in the realm. Guilds, clergy, and nobles are all stripped of their responsibilities, and related incomes as regiments of Royal Swords become the undertakers of all tasks related to commerce and infrastructure, mostly tax collection and enforcement in a centralized and militaristic fashion. Social programs are suspended as the Royal Palace abandons its charity work. Closeness to the new court becomes the primary arbitrator of status, and graces are given depending on the fickle whim of Queen Aphinah, which is chaotic, random, and malicious.

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LAWS

Among the first edicts of Queen Aphinah, after her interdict on the Knights of the Crown and the clergies, is the disbanding of the Court of Voices and the centralization of the judiciary in her royal personage. In addition, Queen Aphinah pronounces several new decrees, which are often quite personal and usually arbitrary, attesting to the malign and childish nature of the Queen. For example, the court outlaws and impounds all perfumes, while Queen Aphinah douses herself with the choicest fragrances. Loud laughter and playing in public become criminal offenses while Queen Aphinah cackles at the top of her voice. Articles of fashion, like tight dresses and especially tiaras, circlets, or crown-like headpieces, are confiscated, and sentences dealt to the offenders.

Blister oversees a vast web of informants through Mordio Delons, the leader of the Children of the Coven. The cult seeks out all sparks of resistance that threaten the crown and offer targets to the authorities for apprehension or execution by Royal Swords, Red Cloaks, or the werehellhound knights of the Queen. This network breeds corruption and injustice, as hordes of innocent people are eliminated in purges on the word of others for deeds they did not commit.

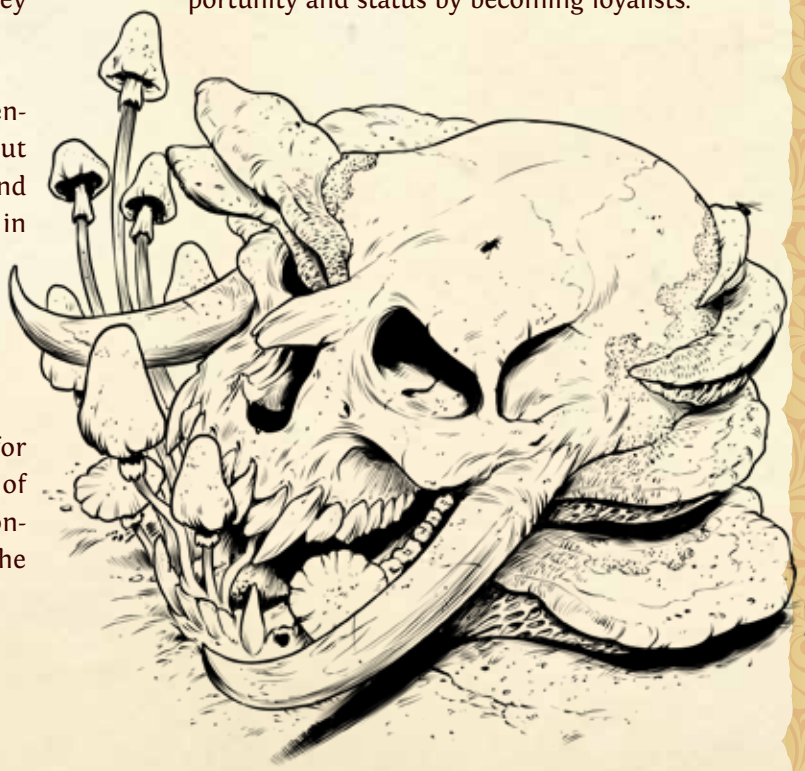
The Royal Swords and Red Cloak Lawgivers still enforce the new laws to the best of their abilities, but many abandon their duties and desert. Fines and penalties become more severe and are doubled in general. If one cannot pay the fines, long imprisonment and hard labor become the standard sentences. The Dungeon of Tears and the Sobruz Penitentiary are filled to the brim as more and more "deviants" are crammed into small cells. In cases of treason and blasphemy (for example the use of divine magic), the penalty of execution is always the chosen sentence and is conducted via public hangings on the spot around the city.

CITIZENS

Masses of people abandon their homes and livelihoods as they desperately brave the treacherous trip to escape Aglarion to the southern Drayl City-States or take to the open seas and head for the mythical and remote Isles of Xantharos in the hopes of reaching the legendary isles. The roads are scattered with migrants, pitifully lugging their few precious belongings and often abandoning them when they cannot carry them further from sheer exhaustion. Many perish on the way, their bodies rotting in the rain on the sides of the roads, which the Royal Swords no longer maintain.

NOBLES

The noble houses of Aglarion all react differently to the new regime of Queen Aphinah and the effects of the Midnight Curse. Some oppose the edits of the Queen, especially those that relate to the forcible acquisition of their property and resources by the crown. There are some that remain neutral and acquiesce to the demands of the new Queen, and some that seek opportunity and status by becoming loyalists.



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House Monder is stripped of its noble title, and unfortunately, the line of the Monders will end with the demise of Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder.

After refusing entry to the Royal Swords sent to Ronul's End by Queen Aphinah, the village is razed by Whoshinassh, the sea hag, who jumps at the occasion to fulfill its revenge, reinforced by a company of werehellhounds sent by Blister as a token of an alliance between the hags. As a result, the village lies in flames, the Boundless Pearl is reduced to ashes, and the slain bodies of the villagers and merfolk float rotting in the bay.

The members of House Nangrath regroup in their northern fort and fortify the town, ready to resist the crown from their distant location. However, an ill fate befalls the House, which is plagued by calamities on two fronts. Gargoyles from Fort Blackbell raid the town during the day, kidnapping victims to grow their brood, while Bakator and his duergar vampire spawn seize the opportunity to rise to the surface under cover of the night from Darkstone and feed on the blood of the town and steal its riches. They killed Arenbar Nangrath's eldest heir Yarik, and kidnapped his younger son Odryk, who had returned to his ancestral home from Onadbyr.

Houses Karramosa, Domiren, Goldtooth, and Wyltammer decide to play a waiting game, retreating to their mansions in Onadbyr and manors around the kingdom, opting to stay neutral in the troubled times. The quest of the Wyltammers for eternal life is interrupted, and the family grows anxious with the new regime, as their source of life essence at their famous balls is in jeopardy due to the curse. Yram and Taya are forced to seek alternative sources of life essence, mainly through Taya's warlock abilities, the purchase of slaves from Xantharos, or Yram's connections in the city like the Black Flags mercenary company.

House Gorso immediately swears allegiance to Queen Aphinah and is the foremost loyalist in the new political scene. However, the house is careful to maintain its independence and withdraws to Gorso village to revel in the new-spawned chaos from afar, seeing omens for the coming of their patron, the Elemental Chaos.

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KNIGHTS OF THE CROWN

The schism that has resulted in Queen Aphinah's ascendance to the throne split the sacred order in half. Only a dozen knights survived on the side of Lord Cyne Monder, holding onto their oaths to serve the kingdom and to protect it from threats. They realize that some malign effect has corrupted the crown and that Queen Aphinah no longer deserves their protection. On the other side, most of the Knight of the Crown have interpreted their vows in the most literal sense and have, as a result, become werehellhound knights who maintain their oaths to protect the sovereign above all.

ROYAL ARMY

The ranks of the Royal Swords swell as a result of the chaos of the new reign, as the army is singular in offering daily fare and some semblance of stability in these times of famine and uncertainty. While many flock to the army, most recruits are barely trained and have never held a weapon. The new recruits are used for menial tasks, like digging ditches, clearing rubble, and overseeing the transport of goods reserved for the Royal Treasury. General Sundamar Stormbreaker remains the only capable officer of the army who was not slain by the new Queen or has not abandoned the new monarch.

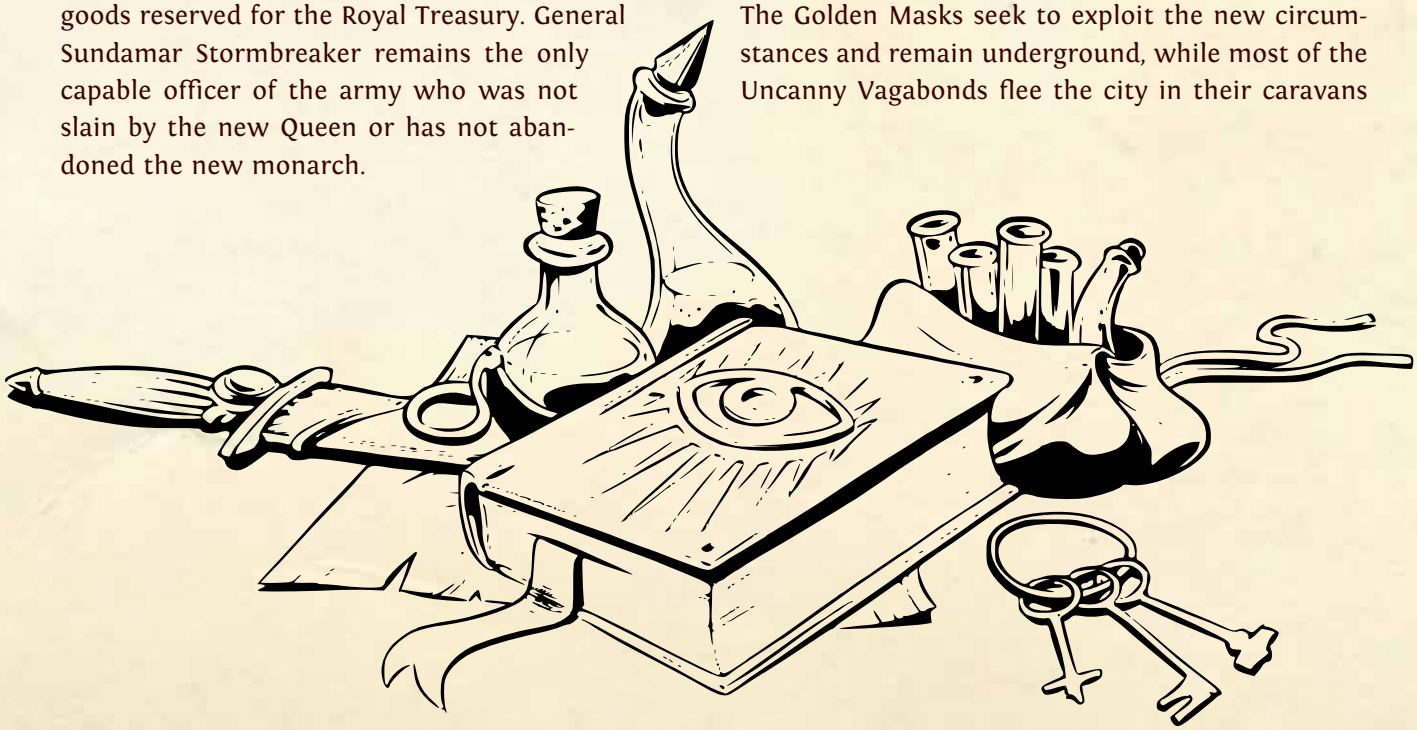
RED CLOAKS

The Red Cloaks struggle to maintain some semblance of order in the realm and work to enforce the new edicts of Queen Aphinah that grow more and more haphazard and cruel as the days and weeks pass. As a result, many Red Cloaks abandon the organization and their official posts to fend for themselves and brave the trip to the borders.

CRIMINALS

The chaos and lax oversight by the authorities is a boon to petty crime in the city, where many try to survive and get ahead in drastic times to the detriment and suffering of their peers. As a result, burglaries, armed robberies, and muggings are more frequent but are still curtailed to some degree by the Royal Swords and the remaining Red Cloaks.

The Midnight Curse is a huge blow to the city's criminal organizations, the Golden Masks and the Uncanny Vagabonds. They are both severely hampered by the detrimental effects of the cursed rain on the economy in general and their operations in turn. The Golden Masks seek to exploit the new circumstances and remain underground, while most of the Uncanny Vagabonds flee the city in their caravans



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in hopes of better chances for survival out west. Taris, the leader of the family, remains in Onadbyr in hiding and is weighing how best to exploit the situation in the family's interests.

TEMPLES

All temples of Aglarion are immediately raided by the Queen's Royal Swords and werehellhound knights and officially closed by the authorities. All clerics on the premises are slaughtered, and those that escape the carnage are hunted down by the Children of the Coven and then persecuted by the werehellhound commandos of the Queen. Anyone who uses divine magic is suspected, and unfortunately, the agents of the Queen and Blister comprise of a vast network of informants. Clerics of all faiths who were not present at the coronation and were not rooted out in the flash raids on all the temples in the city are in hiding, surviving by the grace of those who help them remain out of the clutches of the new regime. The sole exception is Beau Semias, a priest of the Temple of Magic and a warlock servitor of the hags who murders his superior and relishes in his newfound status within the cult of the Children of the Coven. Xeno of the Rekindled Flame escaped the purge by retreating to the secret Crypt of Rodnar the All-Seeing beneath the Temple of Light and Darkness after the authorities executed the former high priest.

NEIGHBORS

Trade and diplomacy with neighboring states come to a sudden halt. Foreign merchant caravans from Drayl to the south or Vordan in the north turn back at the borders at the sight of the cursed weather conditions. There is an exodus of ships from Onadbyr and Ronul's End, fleeing to southern waters or even on desperate voyages to find the legendary Isles of Xantharos.

The mass exodus of people from Aglarion also strains the neighboring powers. The Vordani tribes completely close the borders when the first refugees appear at their mountain passes. The Drayl City-States are laxer and more varied in their approach to the migrants depending on the respective city, generally seeing great opportunity in the masses of people who are now settling in their lands.

While the Midnight Curse only plagues the Kingdom of Aglarion, many of its effects seep into the surrounding lands. For example, mutated augmented beasts from the Ulden Forest or the Talnar Hills start to spread spasmodic rabies into Vordan and Drayl, and the weak and disabled refugees also bring many new diseases to these yet untainted lands.

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APPENDIX B

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Random encounters are divided into four sections based on their setting and timing in the adventure. The encounters represent the current atmosphere and are connected to the setting. You can use them to keep your players busy and spice up the world around them. The encounters will include events that allow the characters to find resources, meet NPCs or factions, face challenges, and fight monsters. If you roll an entry that has already happened or feels too unique to repeat, move to the next entry instead.

We suggest using the weather table on page 109 of the Dungeon Master's Guide daily with a +8 modifier on the roll for encounters in Onadbyr and Aglarion after the Midnight Curse.

ONADBYR BEFORE THE MIDNIGHT CURSE

Roll a d20 once every day for an encounter in Onadbyr before the Midnight Curse engulfs the realm. An encounter occurs on a roll of 16 or higher. On a roll of 20, two simultaneous encounters occur, roll twice on the encounter table.

Roll on a d100 to determine an encounter from the following table:

01 - 04	Tokens of Stuttering
05 - 08	Petty Street Scam
09 - 12	Happily Ever After
13 - 16	Goalie Needed
17 - 20	Bad Manners
21 - 24	Heads or Tails
25 - 28	Fire Hazard
29 - 32	Shady Figures
33 - 36	Shiny Things
37 - 40	Toxic Masculinity
41 - 44	Traffic Accident
45 - 48	Noble Duel
49 - 52	Secret Kiss
53 - 56	Click-Click-Crow
57 - 60	It's Raining Waste
61 - 64	Draylish Drunkards
65 - 68	Brutes From Gonshar
69 - 72	Hit and Run
73 - 76	Messy Exactors
77 - 80	Curious Exchange
81 - 84	Potion Addict
85 - 88	Shameful Knight
89 - 92	Not All Gold is the Same
93 - 96	Ominous Prophecy
97 - 00	Entourage of the Entropists

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Bad Manners. A drunken minor **noble** is harassing a servant on the street, shouting profanities, and on the verge of physical violence.

Brutes From Gonshar. Four **bugbears** pick on the characters, saying that they match the description of people who have badly beaten and injured one of their servants. They demand a compensation of 30 gold pieces and boast that they are agents of Lord Kabok Goldtooth from Gonshar.

Click-Click Crow. The characters find an overturned birdcage with a crow (use the **raven** monster entry) inside and red sashes on both of its feet. The crow is mimicing a clicking sound in a pattern. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence** ability check can identify the pattern as a safe's rotating lock clicking. There are four, seven, and then six clicks, which might be to the left or the right on a circular dial. The birdcage was stolen from the Goldtooth Villa by a servant who dropped it during the rooftop chase as he was pursued by the Goldtooth guards.

Curious Exchange. The characters spot a merchant (use the **expert** monster entry) handing over a bag of gold to a Royal Rider (use the **scout** monster entry). The bribed outrider has just sold information on the arrival of a shipment from somewhere that is going to get sabotaged by the merchant's four hirelings (use the **thug** monster entry).

Draylish Drunkards. A dozen drunken sailors (use the **bandit** monster entry) from the Drayl City-States are loudly and mockingly commenting on things and people they see on the streets, including the characters.

Entourage of the Entropists. Two **heirs of entropy** from Gorso are having a loud disagreement with a local about a cart they destroyed to make way for themselves. The young nobles from Gorso are accompanied by six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and ten servants (use the **commoner** monster entry).

Fire Hazard. A fire breaks out in a store or a residential building. Help is required to save valuables and residents alike. A character who helps must succeed on four **DC 12 Dexterity** saving throws or take 3 (1d6) fire damage on each failed save. Four Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and a Red Cloak Lawgiver named Nathael Wester (use the **veteran** monster entry) arrive at the scene within a few minutes and declare it an accident. Any character that helps in the rescue gains a valuable contact in the form of the Red Cloak.

Goalie Needed. Two groups of four people are playing a street sport with a ball. One of the teams is missing a goalie due to an injury and asks one of the characters to join. The character can attempt a successful **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** or **Dexterity (Acrobatics)** skill check to shine at the post, garnering praises and invitations from the team to join them for drinks and take part in their next match.

Happily Ever After. The characters witness a marriage proposal on the streets. A medium-sized crowd gathers to witness the event. Two pickpockets (use the **spy** monster entry) mingle with the guests and use their skills to steal valuables.

Heads or Tails. A dwarven fortune-teller named Drunnard the Lucky tosses a silver coin if one is offered to him. The character that gives the coin can bet on the outcome of the toss and will be declared lucky or unlucky by Dunnard, losing or gaining an inspiration, depending on the outcome.

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Hit and Run. Six pickpockets (use the **bandit** monster entry) jump on a character from nowhere, snatch what they can, and then run away.

It's Raining Waste. Someone empties a night pot onto the street from an opening on a higher level or a window. A character in the way of the waste must make a **DC 11 Dexterity** saving throw or become covered with excrement and urine.

Messy Exactors. A gang of six kids (use the **commoner** monster entry) from the Shanties pile up a massive amount of trash at the main entrance of a shop that did not pay the "cleaning fees" of the Golden Masks. The owner threatens them verbally from the inside but is afraid to confront them any other way.

Noble Duel. A formal duel to the death is about to start between two nobles who have a romantic dispute over a lady of the Queen's Orphanage named Olyana. Unknown to the brave challengers, Olyana is a Ringmaiden who purposefully provoked the fight. A character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion)** skill check can convince the nobles to abstain from the duel and settle the dispute in an alternative fashion.

Not All Gold is the Same. The characters find a gold coin with a mask depiction instead of the royal insignia. This is an identification token of the Golden Masks that was lost by one of the doppelgangers of the organization.

Ominous Prophecy. A dirty blind hermit with milky white eyes approaches the characters, grabs one of their arms, and declares a prophecy in a trance before stumbling away: "The fiendish cauldron brews, the Everstorm approaches. A fractured soul in two, the Bleak Mire encroaches."

Petty Street Scam. A young street urchin (use the **commoner** monster entry) named Lopak forces her shoe-cleaning services after her friend Marga splashes mud on the shoes of one of the characters. She asks for three copper pieces after halfheartedly smearing the mud away.

Potion Addict. A grizzled musician named Rabor wants to purchase magical potions from the characters. Rabor is a student at the College of Minstrels and has already secretly consumed some of the potion reserves of Master Conductor Fabian Ethlairn. He immediately drinks whatever potion they provide him and asks for more.

Secret Kiss. A person known to the characters is kissing a secret lover in the shadows.

Shady Figures. Two figures whisper to each other suspiciously in a dark corner or shaded alley. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice them exchanging a human finger. Both are cultists of the Children of the Coven with a mundane job in the city and bear the cult's sign as a tattoo on their hands. They drop the finger and act surprised when confronted, claiming they found the finger on the ground.

Shameful Knight. The characters find a severely drunk **Knight of the Crown** named Pollondrio Halris, in a secluded area where he has hidden in his shame. The knight has already depleted his *Lay on Hands* trait and asks the characters to help him sober up so he might return to the Bastion of the Knights to report for duty.

Shiny Things. One of the characters finds a valuable item worth 20 gold pieces. Roll a d20. On a roll of 15 or higher, the item is a personal belonging of one of the nobles from a major noble house of Onadbyr (see Onadbyr: Noble Houses for more information). The item bears the name of the noble, who would be happy to pay three times its value if returned.

Tokens of Stuttering. A blind gnome beggar with an overly long beard named Gulpagor gifts cursed tokens to those who give him alms. The creature who possesses the cursed token believes it brings good luck and must make a **DC 13 Wisdom** saving throw to part with the token. The cursed creature is unaware of the source of the curse and starts to stutter when speaking, taking a -2 penalty to Charisma ability checks. A *remove curse* spell breaks the enchantment on the creature and the token.

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Toxic Masculinity. Four drunken caravan handlers (use the **thug** monster entry) are harassing an old beggar and take the few coins, one silver piece and 7 copper pieces, from the beggar's collection hat.

Traffic Accident. An overturned carriage of a merchant lies on the street. People push it hard to get it back on its wheels. A character who succeeds on a **DC 18 Strength (Athletics)** skill check can swiftly get the carriage back on the road. The merchant thanks the character with a golden ring worth 5 gold pieces. The ring has an invisible dark Celestial inscription on its inside that says, "Praise Morkiel, Father of our Fears, And await Its Return!".

ONADBYR AFTER THE MIDNIGHT CURSE

Roll a d20 once every day for an encounter in Onadbyr after the Midnight Curse descends on the kingdom. An encounter occurs on a roll of 15 or higher. On a roll of 20 two simultaneous encounters occur, roll twice on the encounter table.

Roll on a d100 to determine an encounter from the following table:

01 - 03	Rebel Voices
04 - 06	A Mother in Distress
07 - 10	Tax Collectors
11 - 13	Mad Duchess
14 - 17	Hail of Vermin
18 - 20	Double Death Dog
21 - 23	Dryad Witches
24 - 26	Victims of the Queen
27 - 29	Masks in Disguise
30 - 32	Body Drop
33 - 36	Hungry are the Dead
37 - 40	Malicious Winds
41 - 43	Dangerous Berries
44 - 46	Apprentice in Trouble
47 - 49	Fine Print
50 - 52	Draylish Spy
53 - 56	Lycan Rampage
57 - 60	Corrupt Swords
61 - 63	By the Queen's Decree
64 - 67	Temorarily Closed
68 - 70	Children of the Coven
71 - 74	Witch Mold
75 - 77	Rebel Yell
78 - 81	Infectious Steed
81 - 84	Baphomet's Favorites
85 - 87	Death by Thorns
88 -90	Witch Curse
91 - 93	Collective Nightmare
94 - 96	Evil Lightning
97 - 00	Werehellhound Patrol

A Mother in Distress. A scared and confused-looking woman (use the **commoner** monster entry with the **werehellhound** template) with a broad blood-soaked bandage on her arm approaches the characters. She leaves an infant in a basket at their feet before running off. If captured, the woman apologizes vehemently and tries to break free. A

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character who succeeds on a **DC 17 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion)** skill check makes the woman divulge that a werehellhound knight bit her and her husband. She saw her husband turn into a werehellhound, and she left with the child immediately. She knows that the same fate awaits her as well. She begs the characters to keep the child safe. If pressed or pursued, she turns into hybrid form and attacks the characters.

Apprentice in Trouble. A heavily tattooed armored figure (use the **gladiator** monster entry) interrogates a young apprentice of the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities named Drinnur Baelguard (use the **arcane sentinel** monster entry) while two obviously foreign-looking wizards (use the **mage** monster entry) watch from behind. The soldier is threatening the young apprentice, demanding information about the secrets of Master Bertio Ranberd and the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities.

Baphomet's Favorites. A gang of nine **goats** have all gained **vile intellect** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) and are killing humanoids in hit-and-run ambushes to take revenge on the atrocities their humanoid owners committed against their herd. The characters see a lone goat struggling on the ground near an alley. When approached, the rest of the goats charge from the alley and bleat giddily if they successfully subdue a character.

Body Drop. The mutilated corpse of an armored half-orc crashes to the street from a great height. The half-orc wears a chain mail, has an empty scabbard for a longsword on his belt, and a *+1 dagger* tucked into one of his boots.

By the Queen's Decree. A young boy giggles and laughs on the street while his parents try to silence him. A patrol of six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) notices and arrests the parents for breaking the law that prohibits laughter by the decree of Queen Aphinah.

Children of the Coven. Six **witchservant cultists** pull a miserable man out of a building by his feet. Jarlin, a young cleric of the Temple of Competence (use the **doppelganger** monster entry with the *Spellcasting* trait from the **priest** monster entry), fights for his life but is weak and overpowered. The witchservants loudly claim to have caught a "charlatan" and throw bolts of energy at him until he faints, revealing him to be a doppelganger. If saved, Jarlin is happy to aid the characters but does not reveal his secret. He wants to escape to safety and is confident of surviving on his own.

Collective Nightmare. If they fall asleep, the characters suffer from a terrifying collective nightmare during their long rest. They dream of tortures, choking, cackling sounds, infernal curses, turning into frogs, or similar horrors (see **terrifying nightmares** in Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

Corrupt Swords. Six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) try to extort 27 gold pieces from a shopkeeper. They will try to arrest the characters if confronted.

Dangerous Berries. A young girl picks berries and flowers from bushes on the side of the street and starts eating them. A character who succeeds on a **DC 13 Intelligence (Nature)** skill check can identify one of the berries she just picked as deadly poisonous.

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Death by Thorns. When passing by a park or a bushy area, the characters notice a narrow trail of blood that leads to a dead body. The body is that of a craftsman who tried to hide into a bush full of **bloodletting thorns** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) to escape a threat. The corpse has 54 gold pieces in a pouch and a silver necklace worth 12 gold pieces. If a character investigates the body, three **stranglevines** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) lash out and try to pull the victim into the thorny bushes.

Double Death Dog. A siamese **death dog** with four heads, two at each end, tries to move along the street in an awkward struggle against itself, two heads at one end barking at the other two. It attacks any creature it sees on the streets. The death dog makes four bite attacks.

Draylish Spy. Two **werehellhound knights** are chasing a young elven girl named Myradriel (use the **spy** monster entry) down a street. The girl seems agile and fast, but the lycanthropes soon catch up with her and pin her onto the cobblestones, violently interrogating her about her background. Myradriel is a spy from the Domain of the Sovereign, a city-state in Drayl, on a mission issued directly by High King Alcemyr Drayl to gather information on the events in Aglarion.

Dryad Witches. Four hooded female figures watch a house as it is being entangled entirely by six extremely long **stranglevines** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse). The residents of the house scream for their lives while their neighbors shy away from the horrific incident. The figures are **dryad witches** in the employ of the Matrons of Malice. They each carry a sack with three **braintainter fungi** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) that they throw at anyone who tries to interfere with their sadist pastime and then charm their victims. The dryad witches send charmed creatures into the house to "help the residents" while they chuckle evilly.

Evil Lightning. The characters are struck by **hex lightning** in the worst possible situation, like climbing, jumping, standing in water, or engaging in a fight (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

Fine Print. A street vendor named Shandalos (use the **expert** monster entry) sells cheap trinkets on a "you touch it, you buy it" basis, which is displayed on a small illegible sign. If the characters inspect any of the items by hand, the vendor immediately asks for its price (2d4 silver pieces). If insulted, the vendor waves a fake wand of lightning bolt, threatening to use it.

Hail of Vermin. The **choking rain** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) suddenly changes into a shower of centipedes for an hour, forming 1d4 pockets of **swarms of insects** in the close vicinity of the characters. The swarms crawl into houses and attack people.

Hungry are the Dead. The characters look into a narrow alley and see four children bent over the corpse of a humanoid female, eating its flesh. The children are **ghouls**. They hurry to hide if confronted and attack if cornered.

Infectious Steed. A beautiful black steed walks down a street. Its head is shaking from one side to the other, and its legs barely capable of holding its weight. The war horse is infected with **spasmodic rabies** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

Lycan Rampage. Three afflicted werehellhounds (use the **thug** monster entry with the **werehellhound** monster template) are on a rampage on the streets in hybrid form. The residents and even four Royal Guards (use the **guard** monster entry) try to avoid them as best they can. The three cursed thugs kill anyone they see and set buildings on fire with their breath weapons in their mindless rage, which lasts for another hour.

Mad Duchess. Lady Zainda Domiren (use the **noble** monster entry), or another noble of House Domiren, dressed in sleeping garments, drags three terrified female servants through the streets, shouting profanities at them and calling them "misbehaving

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poodles." In a few minutes, her three chubby sons, Zajeer, Malo, and Korzen, arrive with four of their **guards** to take her home along with the servants.

Malicious Winds. Several pieces of cloth and trash are picked up by a whirling gust of wind that forms unnaturally in front of the characters - a gust of **devious wind** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse). A character can make a **DC 13 Dexterity** saving throw with disadvantage to evade the strangely whirling trash. A character touched by the garbage is at risk of contracting **filth fever**.

Masks in Disguise. Three cloaked humans pass by the characters. One of them accidentally bumps against one of the characters. The characters can make a **DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check to see through an illusory disguise that reveals a scarred-faced doppelganger, a member of the Golden Masks.

Rebel Voices. The characters find graffiti on a wall painted in red that reads "Off with her head!". Four Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) investigate the incident and soon start wiping off the paint.

Rebel Yell. A small protest erupts on the street against the new regime. The ringleader shouts the crimes of the new queen, and the crowd of about twenty people shouts back in support until the speaker is slashed into pieces by invisible claws, dropping dead. Queen Aphinah has dispatched an **invisible stalker** to silence him. It does not stop at this single victim and starts to murder crowd members.

Tax Collectors. An old couple (use the **commoner** monster entry) begs a squad of ten Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) in front of their home not to take their last 7 silver pieces. The inflexible soldiers press the issue and eventually enter the home to look for valuables. If confronted, the Royal Swords voice their personal displeasure about their duty but also add that they can't do anything about the new high taxes set by Queen Aphinah.

Temporarily Closed. The next shop the characters visit is closed. The owner fears for their life because of unpaid taxes owed to the Royal Treasury. The shopkeeper explains that the new taxes have almost bankrupted the business.

Victims of the Queen. A couple of sickly men and women, guarded by eight Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry), push a cart packed with a heap of dead bodies of recently executed prisoners. The characters spot a golden ring on the hand of one of the deceased, yet unnoticed by the guards. The ring is worth 50 gold pieces.

Werehellhound Patrol. Two **werehellhound knights** pass by the characters as people shy away from their path.

Witch Curse. One of the characters (choose randomly) is affected overnight by the **baleful transformation** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) curse. Roll a 1d3. The curse affects Strength (Athletics) on a roll of 1, Dexterity (Acrobatics) on a roll of 2, and all Charisma ability checks on a roll of 3.

Witch Mold. A character who succeeds on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can notice a strange yellow and purple mold growing in a regularly visited but dark place like a shaded alley, shady regions of a park, or inside a building in a pantry or basement. A creature that comes into contact with the **witch mold** must succeed on a **DC 17 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes blinded for 24 hours. Exposure to sunlight instantly destroys witch mold.

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AGLARION AFTER THE MIDNIGHT CURSE

Roll a d20 once for every hex traveled by the characters in the Kingdom of Aglarion if that hex does not have a set encounter location. An encounter occurs on a roll of 15 or higher. On a roll of 20, two simultaneous encounters occur, roll twice on the encounter table.

Roll on a d100 to determine an encounter from the following table:

01 - 04	Rain of Snakes
05 - 07	Hex Lightning
08 - 11	Devious Headwinds
12 - 15	Cursed Vegetation
16 - 18	Brain-tainted Rodents
19 - 22	Witch Curse
23 - 26	Collective Nightmare
27 - 29	Rabid Worgs
30 - 32	Vile Pride
33 - 35	Rise of the Dead
36 - 39	Inquisitors of the Queen
40 - 43	The Unfortunate Caravan
44 - 46	Feeding Wyvern
47 - 49	Happy Brothers
50 - 53	Rebel Soldiers
54 - 57	Undercover Migrants
58 - 60	Terror from Below
61 - 63	Revenants of Blackwood
64 - 66	The Black Unicorn
67 - 69	Ancient Carvings
70 - 72	Eerie Trumpets
73 - 75	Guardians of the Ancient Villa
76 - 79	Blackfur Bandits
80 - 82	Cursed Manticores
83 - 86	Merchant Caravan
97 -89	Escaped Miners
90 - 92	Drowning Stranglers
93 - 95	Entropist Entourage
96 -98	Clash of Enemies
99 - 00	Cackles in the Air

Ancient Carvings. A character can notice a stone slab with ancient dark Celestial writing from the time of the fallen angels by succeeding on a **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check. Anyone who reads it must succeed on a **DC 12 Wisdom** saving throw or become cursed. While cursed, the creature gains damage vulnerability to necrotic damage. On a successful save, the creature receives the **Boon of Vigor** and gains condition immunity to exhaustion for 7 days.

Blackfur Bandits. Twelve **bandits** from the group known as the Blackfur Bandits (see Kingdom of Aglarion location 42. Blackfur Bandit Hideout) have been sent out by their leader Ishnari to scout the kingdom and look for potential targets of banditry. The group will be quick to assault and rob the characters.

Brain-tainted Rodents. Swarms of rats have been attracted by the scent of braineater fungi growing on a log and can't seem to find their way due to the disease. The characters must succeed on a **DC 13 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the four **swarms of rats** dizzily circling a growth of **braintainter fungus** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse). On a failed check, the character walks near the log, the fungi release their spores, and the rat swarms move as a mass to engulf the character.

Cackles in the Air. The characters first hear and then see the Cackling Crow, the **roc** of the west, flying high above and searching for food (see Kingdom of Aglarion location 30. Nest of the Cackling Crow in Chapter 4). The characters can attempt a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check with disadvantage to evade the notice of the flying terror.

Clash of Enemies. Four **werehellhound knights** sent by Queen Aphinah to collect taxes from any town are engaged in a fierce battle with three **hill giants**. All combatants are at half their hit points, and the werehellhound knights have used up all their 2nd level spell slots. Even if the characters join the fight on the side of one of the forces, the victor will still turn upon them after the battle has concluded.

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Collective Nightmare. The characters suffer from a terrifying nightmare during their long rest if they fall asleep. They dream of tortures, choking, cackling sounds, infernal curses, turning into frogs, or similar horrors (see **terrifying nightmares** in Appendix A: The Midnight Curse).

Cursed Manticores. Three **manticores** in dire pain due to the effects of **bone augmentation** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) are madly growling curses and swoop down upon the characters from the air.

Cursed Vegetation. The plants surrounding the characters suddenly grow **bloodletting thorns** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) in a 100-foot radius. The smell of the character's blood draws a pack of six **wolves** led by a **seven thorn** druid named Librip Briarfriend in the form of a dire wolf. Tonk Wildwander sent the hunting pack out from the Thornwoods to gather information about the Midnight Curse.

Devious Headwinds. From one moment to the other, winds of hurricane strength burst against the characters from multiple directions. The winds seem to have intelligence and always blow from the direction towards which the characters travel. The cursed **devious wind** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) blows for 1d6 hours and makes travel almost impossible - for every hour traveled, characters or their steeds must make a **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw or suffer a level of exhaustion.

Drowning Stranglers. Two water weeds have transformed into **stranglevines** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) and prey upon any traveler approaching the small body of water where they lair - a stream, a pond, river, or shore. The vines attempt to pull targets into the water. Once a creature is restrained by a stranglevine, it must attempt a successful **DC 13 Strength** saving throw. On a failed check, the vines drag the creature 10 feet underwater and try to suffocate them at the end of the next turn.

Eerie Trumpets. The sounds of ghostly brass instruments suddenly reverberate from the surrounding area at a deafening volume. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 12 Constitution** saving throw to resist the ear-splitting noise. On a failed save, the character is deafened for 1d3 days.

Entropist Entourage. Two Gorso heirs, Thymo and Ribda Gorso (use the **heir of entropy** monster entry), were sent by their uncle Lord Ziademos Gorso in search of a node of chaos that the chaos wielder saw in a mad vision. The nobles are accompanied by six Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) and two servants (use the **commoned** monster entry). They try to interrogate the characters for information about the node.

Escaped Miners. Four miners (use the **expert** monster entry) have fled from the Smokestone Mines after their peers turned on the chief mining engineer Ilberd Serpentpike. The miners are out of rations and can relate the events at Smokestone for a bit of food (see Kingdom of Aglarion location 29. Smokestone Mine).

Feeding Wyvern. A **wyvern** is attacking a herd of animals prodded along by four herders on horseback (use the **commoner** monster entry) trying to fend off the flying monster. They appreciate help in driving the wyvern away, and if asked, explain that they are trying to herd the animals to escape the kingdom, which has been hard hit by the cursed weather.

Guardians of the Ancient Villa. Three **invisible stalkers** guard the remaining foundations of an overgrown, completely devastated ancient stone villa that belonged to one of the mortal exarchs of the fallen angels. Their orders remain - kill everyone who steps into the villa. Inside the villa's remains, a character who succeeds on a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception)** check can find some remaining valuables partially buried and overgrown by moss - two bronze vases worth 25 gold pieces, each filled with 50 gold pieces worth of platinum tokens with the emblem of the Dark Star.

Happy Brothers. A wagon carrying two large barrels of exquisite mead from the Spirited Leaf monastery is stranded, with the wheel broken and only one of the horses in reins. The two monks (use the

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acolyte monster entry) are highly spirited, drunk, and would pay anyone 50 gold pieces for helping them get to their destination.

Hex Lightning. Suddenly, the black clouds flare up with malice. Green bolts of **hex lightning** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) hit characters randomly or anyone traveling with them.

Inquisitors of the Queen. Two **witchservant Cultists** with eight Royal Riders (use the **scout** monster entry) are scouring the land on horseback for betrayers of Queen Aphinah and take all they need or want from whoever they meet.

Merchant Caravan. The characters encounter a company of weary merchants. If the characters befriend the group, their leader Blonko happily boasts about having an original Iliandro painting gifted to him by the master painter. The merchant also shares the information that Iliandro traveled towards the edge of the Mountainfall.

Rabid Worgs. Five **worgs** infected by the disease **spasmodic rabies** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) are attacking one of their own in a mad frenzy, foaming at the mouth and bodies contorted from spasms. If they notice the characters, they turn their bloody jaws towards them and growl curses in Goblin before attacking. The worgs' bites spread the disease.

Rain of Snakes. The air first grows still, then is filled with the sounds of animals retreating as the rain starts to drip. The **choking rain** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) suddenly changes into a rain of snakes for an hour, forming two pockets of **swarms of poisonous snakes** in the close vicinity of the characters.

Rebel Soldiers. A ragged patrol of ten Royal Swords (use the **guard** monster entry) has deserted the garrison at Southkeep and is trying to survive through banditry. The soldiers-turned-bandits demand "taxes" from the characters and try to rob them.

Revenants of Blackwood. Four **shadows** from the Blackwood Valley that look like soldiers in antique armor were disturbed by the Midnight Curse and are traveling through the area, snuffing out any life force in their paths.

Rise of the Dead. Four carts stand in a circle ladden with corpses. Some cloaked figures stand within the encircled area - a group of six **zombies** led by a **wight**, a risen Royal Sword intent on adding more troops to its squad of undead.

Terror from Below. Half-mad from starvation due to the Midnight Curse, a **bulette** bursts out to sate its hunger and attacks the characters.

The Black Unicorn. An adventurer lies dead on the ground, holding a small statue of a black unicorn worth 500 gold pieces. The statue is a cursed item that only functions in the vicinity of Cloud Peak. A character who touches or carries it while in an area that is one hex from Cloud Peak has to succeed on a **DC 10 Wisdom** saving throw or become cursed. While cursed, the creature suffers 1d3 Wisdom ability damage every day. Anyone whose Wisdom is reduced to 1 falls into a coma. A *remove curse* or similar spell is required to break the curse.

The Unfortunate Caravan. The characters come upon a migrant caravan with dead bodies scattered around a camp and inside the wagons. On closer examination, they seem to have died from some kind of illness and anyone investigating might be infected by the disease **sight rot**.

Undercover Migrants. The characters come upon a caravan of three wagons with six migrants traveling to Drayl. Two of the migrants are actually spies sent by the Uncanny Vagabonds (use the **spy** monster entry) trying to gather information about the city-states and any way to exploit the situation.

Vile Pride. A pack of six mountain **lions** cursed with **vile intellect** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) waits in hiding for their next meal. The pride has set

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a perfect ambush position, moving natural objects to herd potential victims into their trap. Characters can attempt a successful **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check with disadvantage to notice the lions before they pounce in a pack.

Witch Curse. One of the characters (choose randomly) is affected overnight by the **baleful transformation** (see Appendix A: The Midnight Curse) curse. Roll a 1d3. The curse affects Strength (Athletics) on a roll of 1, Dexterity (Acrobatics) on a roll of 2, and all Charisma ability checks on a roll of 3.

THE BLEAK MIRE

Roll a d20 once for every hex traveled by the characters in the Bleak Mire if that hex does not have a set encounter location. An encounter occurs on a roll of 15 or higher. On a roll of 20, two simultaneous encounters occur, roll twice on the encounter table.

Roll on a d100 to determine an encounter from the following table:

01- 04	Blighted Goats
05 - 08	The Fugitive Hagspawn
09 - 12	Spriggan Riders
13 - 15	Primal Tiger
16 - 19	Aberrant Crabs
20 - 23	Rotting Toads
24 -26	Bag of Souls
27 - 30	Stinking Gas
31 - 33	Frenzied Mutants
34 - 37	Gibbering Creep
38 - 41	Mudsink
42 - 44	The Hidden Figurine
45 - 47	Zombie Crocs
48 - 51	Majestic Giants
52 - 55	Ice Mephits
56 - 59	The Slashers
60 - 62	Fungoid Raid
63 - 66	Lightwood Disc
67 - 69	Blighted Anaconda
70 - 73	Night Rose Patch
74 - 76	Mumus Thorns
77 - 79	Skincrawler Stomper
80 - 82	Blister's Spies
83 - 86	Lotus amongst Nightmares
87 - 90	Flesh Homunculi
91 - 93	Magic from the Skies
94 - 96	Miraddin
96 - 97	Tipper's Tree
98 - 99	The Scaled Impostor
00	The Black Worm

Aberrant Crabs. A colony of eight giant mud crabs turned aberrant (use the **giant crab** monster entry with the **aberrant** monster template) by the taint from the Chasm hunt for prey with a newfound predatory viciousness.

Bag of Souls. Characters can make a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to find a large

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bag hidden in a niche. The bag was hidden by Blister and contains two soul worms for soul-binding magics. Each is one foot in length with the face of a blankly staring humanoid. Characters can make a successful **DC 12 Intelligence (Religion)** skill check to determine the nature of the worms and their role as a type of currency amongst fiends.

Blighted Anaconda. A **giant constrictor snake** contracted the cursed disease **blighted** (see Blightwoods region description in Chapter 5) and is highly agitated as a result. The snake hides in the trees or shallow waters. Characters can make a successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check to notice the diseased snake before it attacks. The snake looks sick and spreads the **blighted** disease on a hit.

Blighted Goats. Four **giant blighted iron goats** (see Bleak Mire location 18. Caprine Stables) roam the area, separated from the herd at the Caprine Stables and looking for grazing ground. The goats charge towards the characters with their diseased rams.

Blister's Spies. Three **dryad witches** have been sent on a scouting mission by Blister to find the hideout of the surviving fey at the Refuge. The witches get wind of the characters' approach by speaking to plants or beasts and track them from afar by jumping from tree to tree. The witches will assume the forms of feyrealm-born refugees and approach the characters, seeking their aid in locating the Refuge, a haven for the survivors of the terrible campaigns of Krasnar and Malzdreziret. Characters who make a successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** skill check can see through the dishonesty of the witches. If they are caught in their lies, the dryad witches will try to use enchantments to get the characters to reveal the location of the Refuge, if they know it, or their goals in the Bleak Mire. If reduced to half their hit points, the witches try to scatter and flee through their *Tree Stride* ability

Flesh Homunculi. Alsandr Murchadh, the feyrealm-born dwarven artificer, has constructed a group of five loyal **homunculi** made out of flesh that fly around the Bleak Mire and report to Alsandr about what they see (see Bleak Mire location 50. The Toy Factory).

Fungoid Raid. Six **fungoids** from Sporedark are on an expedition to harvest multiple types of fungi for cultivation. They are engaged in harvesting spores from a mushroom the size of a carriage. The fungoids are each armed with a sack of **basidiospores** (see Bleak Mire location 64. Sporedark) and will use them when attacking the characters.

Frenzied Mutants. Six **frenzied mutants** of House Ausstyl lead ten **grimlocks** and escort prisoners in chains - a sprite in a cage, a satyr, and a centaur - towards Quellar Ausstyl. The prisoners are haggard and cannot even guess the horrors that the Inheritors of the Unbegotten have planned for them. They will be grateful for their rescue and can lead the characters to the Refuge and Gemhaz (see Bleak Mire location 41. The Refuge).

Gibbering Creep. Six **gibbering mouthers** have taken to roaming the Bleak Mire after being spawned by Bwael Phindar, the Magnificent Beast. Their gibbering can be heard from afar. If the aberrations notice the characters, they crawl towards them, leaving aberrant ground in their wake.

Ice Mephits. A group of six **ice mephits** has left their haven in the Bloodrime Forest after being decimated by some winter wolves that claimed dominance over the mephits' territory. They have been stranded and only wish to return home. They will try to manipulate the characters to travel to the Bloodrime Forest and kill the wolves.

Lightwood Disc. The characters come across a curious phenomenon - a disc made out of wood that floats 3 feet above the ground, laden with three sacks. The disc is made out of lightwood and belonged to fey refugees before they hastily abandoned it at the approach of a band of spriggans. The disc functions as a *floating disc* spell, except it can be pushed or pulled as part of a move action. The sacks contain three explorer's packs with only three days of rations apiece, and three **swarms of insects**

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(centipede variant) that erupt out of the sacks if any of them are disturbed.

Lotus amongst Nightmares. Three **nightmare spiders** (see Bleak Mire location 58. Nightmare Spiders) lair in the foliage, hunting for prey. Characters can find the remains of some unfortunate victims in the area, one of whom has a dose of the **lotus of delight** pollen (see Bleak Mire location 73. Pool of Starlight) in a pouch.

Magic from the Skies. Ateroxx, the magic-wielding awakened giant owl, sometimes takes to the air currents to fly far and wide from its lair in the Mountains of Rust. The owl looks for targets to rob and will harass the characters if it spots them from above (see Bleak Mire location 23. Nest of Gilded Eggs).

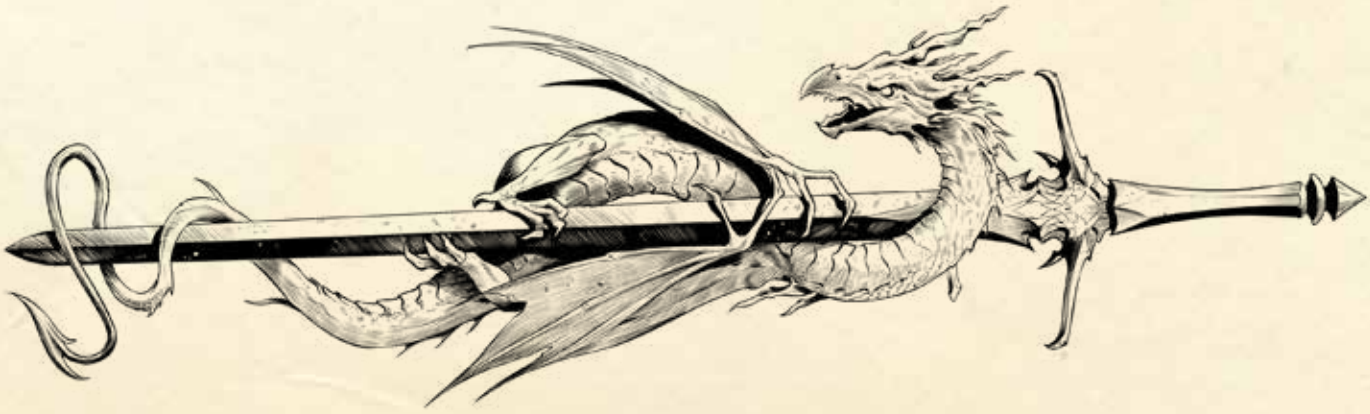
Majestic Giants. A mated pair of giant elks graze on the sparse foliage. Unless characters succeed on a **DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth)** skill check, the elks notice them and assume defensive stances, displaying their giant antlers and stomping their hooves. If characters approach within 100 feet of the elks, they attack.

Miraddin. When not at his usual spot in the Blightwoods, **Frumby Goldtooth** can be encountered anywhere in the Bleak Mire on his amphibious ship named Miraddin (see Bleak Mire location 2. Miraddin).

Mudsink. The characters stumble into an area of mudsinks (use the Quicksand hazard rules from page 110 of the Dungeon Master's Guide). The commotion attracts three **swarms of insects (wasp variant)** that buzz around a stranded character and those trying to help.

Mumus Thorns. The characters come across a circular hedge of thorns. They can hear the terrified wails of a baby from within, accompanied by high-pitched giggling and frightened screams. Four **mumus** lair in the center of the hedge composed of **razorvines** (see page 110 of the Dungeon Master's Guide). They keep a one-year-old satyr baby as a prisoner, reveling in the fear and cries of the baby.

Night Rose Patch. The characters come across a briar patch of **night roses**, whose sweet aroma fills the air. Several dead bodies of various fey and feyrealm-born creatures lie amongst the roses. If characters approach within 20 feet of the patch, they may succumb to the somnolent effects of the night rose and enter the Dreamrealm (see area 6 of the Arcane Tower in Chapter 4). Four **will-o'-wisps** haunt the area, feeding on unfortunate victims that fall into a stupor from the flowers. They will wait invisibly and attack either when the characters enter the patch or if they avoid the roses.



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Primal Tiger. A **saber-toothed tiger** was unfortunate enough to succumb to the **sapling roots** of the Primal Bloom (see Bleak Mire location 6. Primal Bloom) before it managed to escape. The creature is plantlike and covered by leaves and flowers sprouting from branch-like appendages and wooden skin. It moves slowly and is in pain. If it notices characters, it attempts to stalk them before pouncing on unwary targets. The sapling roots have infected the tiger for three weeks.

Rotting Toads. Four **giant toads** have been infected by a cursed **flesh rot** disease (see *contagion* spell). The toads are aggressive and will leap to attack the characters. Their bite attacks spread the disease, and on a hit, characters must succeed on a **DC 11 Constitution** saving throw to resist the disease. Otherwise, the effect functions as the *contagion* spell.

Skincrawler Stomper. A fierce **mammoth** (with the **feyrealm-born** monster template traits and currently with 96 hit points) has recently succumbed to the **skincrawler** disease (see Bleak Mire location 62. Skincrawler Vines). The animal has not been able to resist the disease but has not yet turned into a shambling mound. However, it is erratic and aggressive as a result, using its *druidcraft* spell to create all manner of strange effects in its surroundings, like leaving blossoming flowers in its wake or creating musky odors or the bellows of mammoths out of thin air. If it notices the characters, the mammoth will try to trample them, spreading the **skincrawler** disease on a hit.

Spriggan Riders. A gang of six **spriggan mercenaries** riding **giant badgers** is on a scouting mission from their warrens (see Bleak Mire location 2. Snaflewhopps) to survey the entirety of the Bleak Mire. When they spot the characters, the riders encircle them, dismount, grow to large size, and attack with their badgers at their sides.

Stinking Gas. A sickly yellow poison gas pocket erupts from below as the characters traverse the Bleak Mire. The cloud lingers in the air for one minute. All creatures in a sphere with a radius of 20 feet

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must make a **DC 16 Constitution** saving throw. On a failed save, the character suffers the effects of a *stinking cloud* spell with additional poison damage of 13 (2d12) each round.

The Black Worm. One of the most ancient beings in the Bleak Mire is the **Black Worm**. While the worm is usually found in its warrens under the Burrows of the Black Worm or the Burning Woods, it can surface anywhere in the Bleak Mire. The ground rumbles and shakes before the colossal dew worm bursts from under the ground and prepares to swallow the characters whole (see Bleak Mire location 57. The Black Worm).

The Fugitive Hagspawn. Grimthought, a fugitive hagspawn villager (use the **commoner** monster entry with the **hagspawn** monster template traits) from Perfidy (see Bleak Mire location 16. Perfidy), has fled the inquisitions in the village after he was caught committing a kind deed - healing his hen. The desperate hagspawn only wished to survive and have eggs to eat, but the Howler and the village thought otherwise. The desperate hagspawn seeks a place to hide from the horrors of the Bleak Mire and prove his wicked nature to himself and anyone he encounters.

The Hidden Figurine. The corpse of a feyrealm-born elf scout is buried by a huge mound of earth where the Black Worm erupted from beneath and swallowed the rest of the scout's company. The corpse is hard to notice, but characters who succeed on a **DC 16 Wisdom (Perception)** skill check can see a roughly humanoid-shaped indentation in the mound. When unearthed and searched, characters can find a *figurine of wondrous power* (*giant fly)* in a satchel.

The Scaled Impostor. The doppeldrake, **Maldreziret the Scaled Impostor**, flies above the domain of the Bleak Mire. The shapeshifting dragon revels in the fright of creatures that see it from the ground and looks for targets on which to feed. If the doppeldrake notices the characters, it swoops down and employs devious stratagems to lure them to Krasnar's lair at Bwael Phindar (see Bleak Mire location 12. King Dasmag's Court).

The Slashers. The band of feyrealm-born orc marauders known as The Slashers has been left without their leader when Azura Slasher was kidnapped and taken to Quellar Ausstyl. The group of eight marauders (use the **orc** monster entry with the **feyrealm-born** monster template) and camping and trying to decide on what to do with a lot of infighting and challenges to each other's authority. They are trying to find out where Azura Slasher has been taken and will seek to interrogate the characters for relevant information before disposing of them.

Tipper's Tree. The characters stumble upon Tipper's Tree as it moves around on the Bleak Mire (see Bleak Mire location 32. Tipper's Tree).

Zombie Crocs. Several giant crocodiles were turned into zombies by the Matrons of Malice and let loose in the Forest of Gloom. However, the **giant crocodile zombies** have roamed far and wide since then. One of these specimens attacks the characters from hiding.

Giant Crocodile Zombie. Use the **giant crocodile** monster entry with the following modifications:

- The giant crocodile zombie's type is undead.
- It has damage immunity to poison damage and condition immunity to poisoned.
- ***Undead Fortitude.*** If damage reduces the giant crocodile zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the giant crocodile zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

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Appendix C

Magic Items

This vast collection of magic items appears either as treasure or in the possession of various NPCs in the Crown of the Oathbreaker adventure. Many serve important plot elements and can aid the characters in their quest to break the Midnight Curse and restore the land of Aglarion. Only a few items are specifically unique to Aglarion, and all can be used in any other adventure as standalone options.

Amulet of Find the Path

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This magical amulet is carved from wood, depicting a forest of trees that shift about forming paths. Once per week as an action, you can activate the amulet to cast the *find the path* spell.

Amulet of Positive Energy

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

The amulet of positive energy contains condensed life essence that can be used to heal or keep undead creatures at bay. As an action, you can speak the command word of the amulet to create an immobile shimmering barrier that extends out from the amulet in a 200-foot radius, hedging out undead creatures. Undead already within the area are unaffected. The barrier lasts until dismissed and prevents undead from passing or reaching through. An affected creature can cast spells or make attacks with ranged or reach weapons through the barrier.

Once per day as an action, you can also choose a creature within 50 feet. A surge of positive energy washes through the creature, causing it to regain 70 hit points. This effect also ends blindness, deafness, and any disease affecting the target. If you choose a target that is an undead, the target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 49 (14d6) radiant damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. The damage can't reduce the target's hit points below 1. If the target fails the saving throw, its hit point maximum is reduced for 1 hour by an amount equal to the radiant damage dealt. Any effect that removes a disease allows a creature's hit point maximum to return to normal before that time passes.

Additionally, you can break the vial of the amulet to cast the *true resurrection* spell, and the amulet's magic is lost.

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AZURE BRIDGE CONTROL ROD

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

The azure bridge control rod was crafted by Master Arlen himself from the same azure stone of which the bridge was built. Once per day as an action, the rod's wielder can activate the magical defenses of the Azure Bridge to turn the surface of the bridge sticky. Once per day as an action, the effect can be ended.

Additionally, once per day, the wielder of the azure bridge control rod can cast the *web* spell, which conjures a goo-like substance that is inflammable. Once you use this ability of the rod, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

BARBED NET OF ENTANGLEMENT

Weapon (net), rare (requires attunement)

As an action, you can animate the net and command it to attack a single opponent of up to Large size. It flies towards a creature you can see within 20 feet of you. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained. A creature hit by the net is restrained until it is freed and suffers 4 (1d4 + 2) points of piercing damage at the start of its turn as long as it remains restrained. As a bonus action, you can direct the net to release any creature currently restrained in it and direct it at a new target that is no more than 20 feet away. The net remains animate for 1 minute or until you command it as a bonus action to turn inanimate. It has no effect on creatures that are Huge or larger. A creature can use its action to make a DC 16 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 25 slashing damage to the net (AC 16) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net. Using the leash attached to the net, you can drag or pull creatures restrained by the net towards you with a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you move while using the net this way, your speed is halved, unless the creature is two or more sizes smaller than you.

BLOWGUN OF PAIN

Weapon (blowgun), rare (requires attunement)

This vicious-looking blowgun is decorated with fetishes and necrotic runes. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Additionally, you can fire an additional needle each round as a bonus action. If a needle deals damage, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer 7 (2d6) points of necrotic damage as it is wracked with pain.

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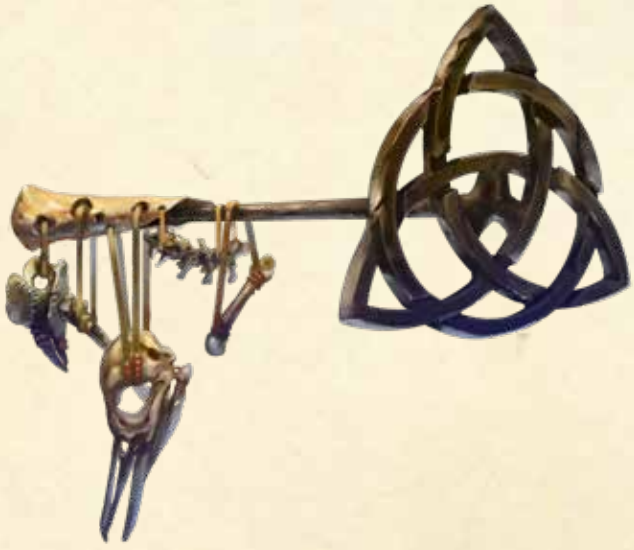
BOW OF THE NIGHT

Weapon (longbow), rare (requires attunement)

This ornately crafted longbow seems like an ordinary weapon until held in darkness when its magical energies awaken. While wielding the bow, you gain darkvision 120 ft. and can even see through magical darkness. You can also cast the *darkness* spell, but you can't cast the spell again until the next dawn. When you fire an arrow from the bow of the night under cover of darkness, your target gains no benefit from cover other than total cover. If your target is also in darkness, the bow of the night grants advantage on attack rolls made with it and deals an extra 7 (2d6) necrotic damage on each hit. When you have an arrow notched, the bow of the night also reduces all brightly lit areas to dim lit, and dimly lit areas to darkness in a 120 feet radius.



BRANDING IRON OF THE HAG QUEENS

Wondrous item, rare

Midnight hags use branding irons crafted in the fires of Hell to mark victims or even faithful servants to make them susceptible to scrying. The branding iron has 1d6 + 3 charges. You can expend one charge to brand a creature by touching its skin with the branding iron that has been heated over a fire. Once branded, the creature that placed the brand on the target automatically succeeds on scrying attempts made against the target. The brand can be removed with a *remove curse* or higher-level restorative spell. Once all charges of the branding iron are used up, it loses its magical power and its color grows dull.

CONTINGENT APPLICATOR

Wondrous item, uncommon

This cylindrical tube is made of glass and golden alloys with a carabiner that can attach to your belt or clothes. The applicator can house a single scroll or potion. As an action, you can remove the top cap of the applicator, load any potion of common or uncommon rarity or any scroll of 1st level into the device, and set a condition that will activate the item. You describe that condition when you insert the item into the applicator. For example, if the item is a *potion of animal friendship*, you might stipulate that the potion comes into effect when a beast attacks you. The item is used up immediately after the circumstance is met for the first time. The potion or scroll only affects you, even if it can normally target others. The applicator can hold only a single potion or scroll at a time, which disappears after use.

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CHEST OF MAGIC NULLIFICATION

Wondrous item, rare

The chest of magic nullification is a cubic chest, measuring 2 feet on a side, made of a strange reddish metal that is lighter than it looks. The corners of the chest are inlaid with large purple gemstones, its panels embossed with magical runes, and the centers of its sides fashioned into valves that seep and dissipate magical energies, all emanating a purplish glow. The chest can be opened with a simple latch on one of its edges. When closed, the inside of the chest is filled with an *antimagic field*. The chest of magic nullification is immune to magic and blocks all forms of divination magic regarding the contents of the chest and the chest itself.

CLOAK OF BLINKING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

When you wear this cloak, it makes you blink by temporarily making you vanish from your current plane of existence and appear on the Ethereal Plane. Roll a d20 at the end of each of your turns while you wear the cloak. On a roll of 11 or higher, you vanish from your current plane of existence and appear in the Ethereal Plane unless you were already on that plane. At the start of your next turn, or when you remove the cloak on the Ethereal Plane, you return to an unoccupied space of your choice that you can see within 10 feet of the space from where you vanished. If no unoccupied space is available within that range, you appear in the nearest unoccupied space (chosen at random if more than one space is equally near).

While on the Ethereal Plane, you can see and hear the plane you originated from, which is cast in shades of gray, and you can't see anything there more than 60 feet away. You can only affect and be affected by other creatures on the Ethereal Plane. Creatures that aren't there can't perceive you or interact with you, unless they have the ability to do so.

If you take damage, the property ceases to function until the start of your next turn. This property is suppressed while you are incapacitated, restrained, or otherwise unable to move.

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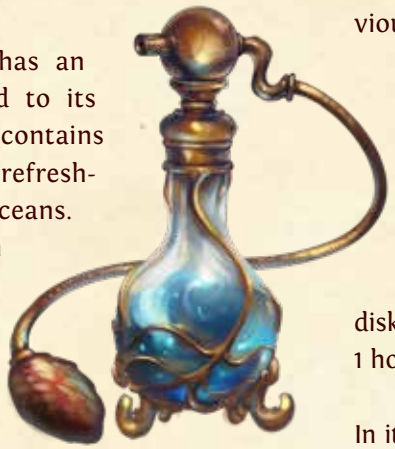
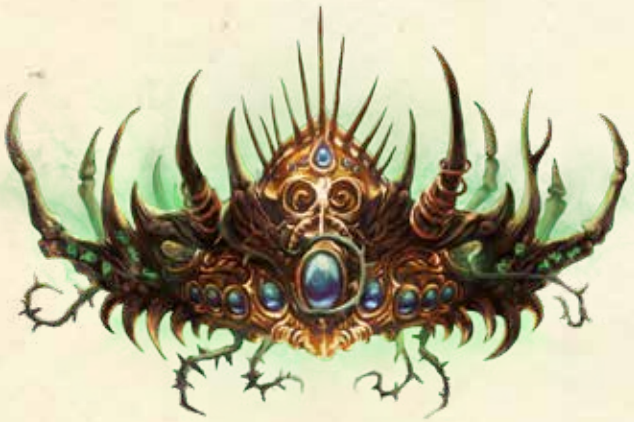
COLOGNE OF DISPELLING

Wondrous item, uncommon



This intricate glass vial has an atomizer pump connected to its sprayer at its top. The vial contains 10 doses of cologne with a refreshing smell of the blue oceans. When a dose is sprayed on an object or creature within 5 feet, it functions as a *dispel magic* spell. The cologne of dispelling ends spells of 3rd level or lower on the target if it succeeds on the check against the spell's DC using a modifier of +3. When all 10 doses have been expended, the vial loses its magic and functions as a simple spray bottle.



CROWN OF AGLARION

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Master Arlen created the crown of Aglarion to symbolize the integrity of the monarchy of Aglarion that was established hundreds of years ago by the first monarch, King Razmyrel Melkar the True. Its powers were designed to serve the first king in his campaign against the zealous Order of the Eternal Light.

The wearer of the crown of Aglarion gains a +1 bonus to ability checks, AC, and saving throws, and can cast the following spells once per day: *control weather, move earth, pass wall*. The crown of Aglarion is impervious to all types of damage.

The wearer of the crown of Aglarion can also create a *floating disk* that has a 50-foot diameter and can hold up to 20,000 pounds. The wearer of the crown of Aglarion and any other creature can stand on its surface. As an action, the wearer of the crown of Aglarion can move the floating disk with a fly speed of 30 ft. The disk disappears after 1 hour and cannot be recreated until the next dawn.

In its current state, the crown of Aglarion is cursed and was given vile sentience and personality when the Matrons of Malice bound the horned devil Kalanistophle to it. The devil's soul advises their hagspawn daughters, the triplet Queen Aphinahs, in their rule. It is a lawful evil sentient magic item with an Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma score of 15. It communicates by transmitting emotions to the creature carrying or wearing it. It has hearing and darkvision in a 120 ft. radius. The crown of Aglarion demands its wearer to maintain the rule of the Matrons of Malice over Aglarion, pursuing this goal to the exclusion of all other goals. If the crown's wearer refuses to comply with its wishes, the item can attempt to take control of its wearer. If the crown of Aglarion attempts to take control of its wearer, the wearer must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the wearer is charmed by the item for 1d12 hours. While charmed, the wearer must try to follow the commands of the crown of Aglarion. If the wearer takes damage, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. Whether the attempt to control its user succeeds or fails, the crown of Aglarion can't use this power again until the next dawn.

Once donned, the crown of Aglarion can only be removed after the use of a *remove curse* spell or similar magic, or if its wearer dies. The curse on the crown of Aglarion can only be removed by all three of the Matrons of Malice, and only if it is laid on a pyre made from the Hagtree where the true heir of the crown is burnt, while the dead King Dasmag plays a melody (see Chapter 5 for details).

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DOPPELGANGER MASK

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

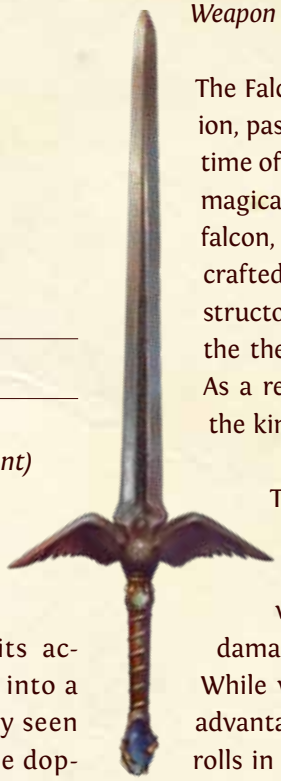
The doppelganger mask is crafted from the facial skin of a doppelganger, which has been surgically removed and treated with magic. The mask's wearer can use its action to cast the *polymorph* spell and change into a Small or Medium humanoid it has previously seen or back into its original form. The user of the doppelganger mask can change between these two forms for the next hour. The transformation ends if the mask is removed. Once used, the magical property of the doppelganger mask can't be used again until the next dawn.

DUST OF ODORLESSNESS

Wondrous item, uncommon

This small packet contains 1d6 + 4 pinches of yellow, very fine, odorless dust. You can use an action to sprinkle a pinch of it over a single creature, 5 ft. square, or an item. The dust immediately extinguishes all odors from the target for one hour. If sprinkled on a creature, it gains advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks against creatures that rely on smell to detect other creatures for 1 hour.

FALCON BLADE



Weapon (longsword), legendary (requires attunement)

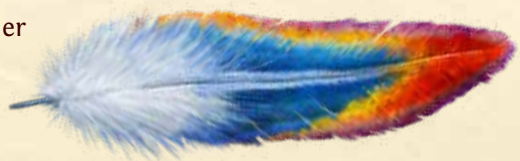
The Falcon Blade is the legendary sword of Aglarion, passed down through the dynasties from the time of King Razmyrel Melkar. The pommel of the magical longsword is in the shape of a soaring falcon, the crest of House Melkar. The sword was crafted by none other than Master Arlen the Constructor to aid the first king in his battle against the theocracy of the Order of the Eternal Light. As a result, the sword has become a symbol of the kingdom and the person of the Monarch.

The Falcon Blade has 3 charges and holds magical energies of the highest order that can bend time to the will of its wielder. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. While wielding the Falcon Blade, you also gain advantage on Initiative checks and on all attack rolls in the round if you have a higher initiative than the creature you attack with the Falcon Blade. You can expend 1 charge per turn to gain an additional action. This action can only be used to take the attack action with the Falcon Blade. The Falcon Blade regains all of its charges daily at dawn.

FEATHER OF DETECTION

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The tail feathers of the most legendary couatls sometimes permanently hold the magical traits of the feathered serpents of wonder. The feather functions as a divining rod, pointing towards effects sought by its wielder. The feather has 3 charges. By extending 1 charge, you can cast any of these spells: *detect evil and good, detect magic, detect thoughts.* The feather regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.



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GLOVES OF THE SATYR KING

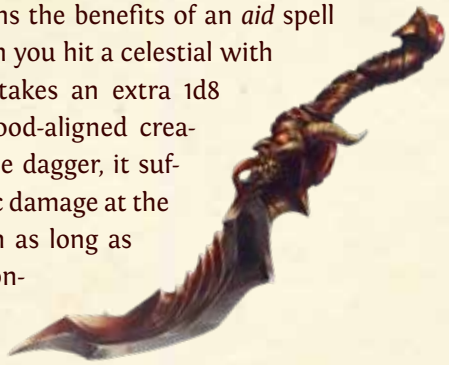
Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

The famed gloves of King Dasmag, the satyr lord, were the favorite garments of the late king and were stolen by the Matrons of Malice when they slew him. The gloves bestow impossible grace in combat to those who wear them. While wearing these gloves and being attuned to them, your speed increases by 10 feet, you gain a +1 bonus to your AC, and proficiency in the Performance skill. Additionally, you can take the Dodge or Disengage action as a bonus action.

HELLISH SACRIFICIAL DAGGER

Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement)

This curved and serrated magical dagger is made in the furnaces in Hell and crafted from steel hardened by blood from the sacrifices of mortals. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. If you use it against a creature with 0 hit points or kill a creature using the dagger, it automatically dies, its soul sent to Hell. Creatures slain in such a manner cannot be brought back to life, except by a spell like *resurrection* or *wish*. When killing a creature with an Intelligence score of 6 or more with this weapon, the wielder gains the benefits of an *aid* spell for 1 hour. When you hit a celestial with it, that target takes an extra 1d8 damage. If a good-aligned creature touches the dagger, it suffers 1d8 necrotic damage at the start of its turn as long as it remains in contact with it.



IMPLEMENT OF CONSTRUCT CONTROL

Wondrous item, rare

This small metal box fits in one hand and automatically attaches itself to any construct creature if pressed against its body. You gain control of the construct to which you attached the box. The construct follows only your orders as if you had created it. The box can be removed by anyone with ease and it has AC 19, 5 hit points, a damage threshold of 10, damage resistance against slashing and piercing damage, and damage immunity against poison and psychic damage. The implement of construct control has five charges. Attaching it to a construct removes one charge. When all charges are lost, the implement of construct control falls to pieces and is rendered useless.

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INSTANT TREBUCHET

Wondrous item, rare

You can use an action to place this hand-sized wooden statuette of a trebuchet on the ground and speak its command word to make the statuette rapidly grow into a life-sized trebuchet.

The trebuchet is 20 feet on a side and 30 feet high. Each creature in the area where the trebuchet appears must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. In either case, the creature is pushed to an unoccupied space outside but next to the trebuchet. Objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried take this damage and are pushed automatically.

The statuette can become a trebuchet for up to 6 hours. Once it has been used, it can't be used again until 2 days have passed. The trebuchet reverts to its statuette form at the end of the duration. It reverts to a statuette early if it drops to 0 hit points or if you use an action to repeat the command word while touching it.

Trebuchet. See page 256 of the Dungeon Master's Guide.

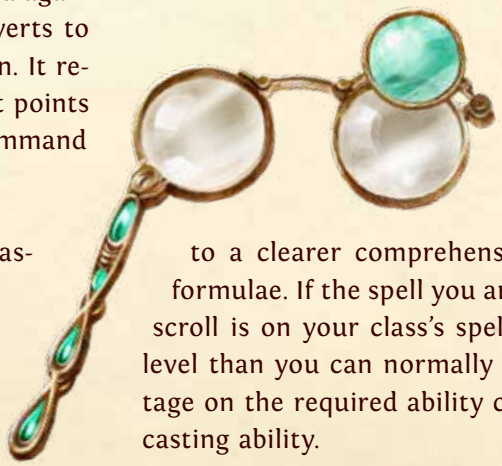
LEASH OF THE BEAST TAMER

Wondrous item, rare

This object is a pommel featuring the visages of savage beasts and a metal wire extending from the mouth of one of the beasts with a clasp at its end. The wire can be extended up to 50 feet. As an action, you extend or retract the full length of the wire, which is 50 feet long. If the leash is placed around the neck of a beast or monstrosity with an Intelligence score of 4 or lower, it must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the beast or monstrosity is under the effect of an *animal friendship* spell as if cast by you. Once used, the magical property of the leash of the beast tamer can't be used again until the next dawn.

LORGNETTES OF THE MASTER SCRIBE

Wondrous item, rare



The lorgnettes of the master scribe highlight and emphasize specific passages of spell scrolls, leading spellcasters to a clearer comprehension of their complex formulae. If the spell you are casting from a spell scroll is on your class's spell list, but of a higher level than you can normally cast, you gain advantage on the required ability check with your spellcasting ability.

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MANUAL OF THE ARCHMAGE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This thick tome with over a 1,000 pages is an encyclopedia covering topics of the highest complexity related to academic studies and magic. The manual entries are connected in webs of cross-reference and automatically shift their appearance to list the corresponding entries, making research fast and comprehensive. If you study a topic for 10 minutes, your newfound understanding grants you advantage on one Intelligence (Arcana) skill check within the next one hour.

MASTER KEY

Wondrous item, rare

The Master Key opens any lock, even those protected by magical means, and suppresses any mundane or magical traps on the object that would activate when opening it. You can use the Master Key to cast a *knock* spell, which is silent without any audible effects and which suppresses *alarm* or other protective spells like glyphs or symbols on the object for 10 minutes. Once used, the magical property of the master key can't be used again until the next dawn.

POWDER OF TRUE FORM

Wondrous item, uncommon

A brass decanter holds a fine powder with a golden sheen. There is enough for 6 doses. When you use an action to throw a dose of powder into the air, the true forms of all creatures that are within 10 feet from you are revealed for 1d4 minutes. The duration is the same for all subjects, and the powder is consumed when its magic takes effect. The powder shows the original form of a shapechanger or a creature that is transformed by magic into another form. However, it does not force the subjects to revert to their original forms.

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PRACTICE MIRROR

Wondrous item, uncommon

This magical mirror is 5 feet high and decorated with silver filigree, showing various musical instruments in the tracery. The mirror reflects the image of any creature that stands before it, however, the background shows the animated illusion of a crowd of spectators of all races and cultures. The mirror has four command words that create various effects:

"Light" causes the mirror to shed bright light in a 15-foot cone and dim light for an additional 30 feet. It lasts until you use a bonus action to repeat the command word.

"Cheers" causes the mirrors to emit the sounds of cheers and laughter and creates the illusion of the spectators cheering in the background. The cheers last for 1 round.

"Costume" causes the mirror to change the costume of the reflection of any creature that stands in front of it. As a bonus action, you can use the command word to generate a random costume with an infinite number of combinations. Stepping out of the reflection of the mirror ends the effect.

"Stage" causes the mirror to change the reflection of the stage around the reflected creatures. As a bonus action, you can use the command word to generate a random set of stage props with an infinite number of combinations. Stepping out of the reflection of the mirror ends the effect.

RAPIER OF SMELTING

Weapon (rapier), rare (requires attunement)

This magical rapier is always warm to the touch. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The rapier has 3 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge as part of a melee attack with the rapier. If the attack hits, the rapier causes the target to become affected by a *heat metal* spell with a duration of 3 rounds. As an action, you can also expend a charge to smelt through an unattended metal object, causing 21 (6d6) fire damage that bypasses the object's damage threshold. The rapier regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

RING OF MENTAL STABILITY

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

This golden ring is crafted in the form of a brain, held in fanglike spikes, and decorated with amethyst gems. While wearing this ring, you gain immunity to madness and have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

RING OF PRESTIDIGITATION

Ring, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you can cast the *prestidigitation* spell at will.

RING OF SHADOW MANIPULATION

Ring, common (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you can use a bonus action to change the shape of your shadow into any form and up to two size categories larger than your size.

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ROBE OF THE WARDROBE

Wondrous item, common

While wearing this robe, you can use a bonus action to transform the robe into any piece of clothing of any style, color, or appearance, including accessories like jewelry, head-pieces, and footwear. The robe can also emit smells to match your outfit.

SEED OF THE HAGTREE

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

The seed of the Hagtree holds a fragment of a hag's soul and resembles a monstrous eye, covered by a thick seed coat and prickly thorns. The seed has 3 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge to cast the *tree stride* spell. The seed of the Hagtree regains 1d3 expended charges at midnight.

SLIME SLINGER

Weapon (sling), uncommon

This staff sling is usually crafted by shamans of wild tribes, clerics who venerate deities of oozes, or warlocks dedicated to ooze patrons. When you speak a command word, the slinger generates globules of corrosive slime that you can sling at your opponents. The slinger can generate 5 globules per day. After all 5 daily globules have been slung, the sling functions as a regular sling. On a hit, the corrosive slime deals 7 (2d6) points of acid damage, and if the target is wearing nonmagical metal armor, its armor is partly corroded. The target takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to its AC on each hit. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

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SPELLBREAKER CROSSBOW

Weapon (heavy crossbow), rare (requires attunement)

King Waldrann is famous for mistrusting spellcasters. He has always feared their powers and been cautious when dealing with magic users. The Spellbreaker crossbow was gifted to King Daerios by the neighboring tribe of Vordani barbarians who live high up in the mountains north of Aglarion. The savage tribes revere physical aptitude and despise magic, which they deem as a sin, and eradicate it where they can. The only form of magic their clan chieftains have accepted for centuries was that which could be used against spellcasters. This mighty heavy crossbow was traded to them a century ago by sailors from afar, in exchange for protection of their inland caravan routes. Later, the weapon was given to King Daerios as a reward for helping in defeating the doppeldrake Malzdreziret, otherwise known as the Scaled Impostor. The heavy crossbow deals tremendous pain to those who are able to cast spells or call forth innate magic in any form. The pain is so intensely nerve-racking that most casters immediately fail to concentrate on maintaining their spells.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, while you are attuned to it, the bonus increases to +3 if you use it against a target that has the *Spellcasting* trait. If you deal damage with the crossbow to a creature that is maintaining concentration on a spell, that creature makes its Constitution saving throw with disadvantage to maintain its spell. Additionally, the crossbow deals an additional 3 (1d6) force damage to creatures with the spellcasting trait.

SPELL FOCUS OF THE SHADOWCASTER

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This item that bears the raw energies of the Shadowrealm can be utilized to heighten the effects of illusion spells. The spell focus can function as a material component of up to 100 gold pieces in value that doesn't need to be expended. The spell focus of the shadowcaster has 3 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge to make an illusion spell you cast harder to disbelieve, granting disadvantage on Intelligence (Investigation) skill checks to disbelieve the illusion. Additionally, you can expend 1 charge to add +1 DC to an illusion spell you cast. You can expend multiple charges to use both effects on your spell. The spell focus of the shadowcaster regains all expended charges at dawn.

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SPRIGGAN SHIELD

Armor (shield), uncommon (requires attunement)

King Waldrann Azennar received the Spriggan Shield as a gift from the Matrons of Malice, who posed as the late satyr lord King Dasmag, the previous lord of the Feyrealm now known as the Bleak Mire. This large steel shield depicts the screaming faces of fey creatures named spriggans that can grow in size from small to large. The shield has 3 charges. You can expend a charge to enlarge your form and anything you are wearing or carrying for 1 minute. While enlarged, your size becomes Large, your damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks is doubled, you make Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage, and you gain a +1 bonus to AC while you wield the shield. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC. If you lack the room to become large, you attain the maximum size possible in the space available. The shield regains 1d3 of its expended charges daily at dawn.

SPYGLASS OF DEVILISH REVEALING

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This magic spyglass has the functioning eye of a bone devil bound to it. Objects viewed through the spyglass are magnified to four times their size. While viewing through the spyglass, the item confers *darkvision* that is not impeded by magical darkness.

In addition, once per day as an action, the user of the spyglass can activate it to gain Truesight for 10 minutes.

TABLE OF CORNUCOPIA

Wondrous item, rare

This simple-looking magical table is made out of wood. Once per day, you can cause the table to become filled with the food and drink you desire the most. If uneaten, the food remains until dawn, at which point it disappears. It takes 1 hour to consume the food and drink on the table. A single creature who eats everything from the table is completely nourished for one day and benefits from the effects of a *heroes' feast* spell.

TOMBSTONE AMULET

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

The tombstone amulet was crafted by the followers of the god of Life from the tombstone of Sarath, the legendary high priest of the Shining Light who banished the Dark Star. It grants you protection from the powers of the undead and death itself. You gain the following benefits:

- If damage reduces you to 0 hit points, you can make a Constitution saving throw unless the damage is from a critical hit. The DC equals 10 or half the damage you take, whichever number is higher. On a success, you drop to 1 hit point instead.

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- You are automatically stable when reduced to 0 hit points.
- You gain advantage on saving throws against effects that would kill you instantly or reduce you to 0 hit points.
- You gain advantage on saving throws against necromancy spells and the special abilities of undead creatures.
- If you die, the tombstone amulet immediately restores your life as per the *raise dead* spell. This ability can't be used again until the next dawn.

TORCS OF THE TOWER

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Created by Master Arlen the Constructor at the order of King Razmyrel Melkar the True, the six Torcs of the Tower were crafted to provide a counter to the powers of the magical academy and as a failsafe mechanism so the Arcane Tower could be recalled from the Astral Plane if needed. Each bracelet was entrusted to one of the six founders of the Red Cloak Lawgivers to be arbiters of their rightful use. Over the past centuries, the true function of the torcs has become shrouded in the past. Some have been handed down through the generations, some have become lost, and some have turned up in the hands of those who have no inkling of their true natures.

The torcs are keyed to one another, and their wearers can sense the direction to a nearby torc of the tower's location, as long as that object is within 1 hex distance in any direction on the map of the Kingdom of Aglarion. If the object is in motion, the wearer knows the direction of its movement.

The torcs each have unique properties, but they can be used together in conjunction to recall the Arcane Tower to the Material Plane from the Astral plane. This use of the torcs does not require attunement.

Adamantine. Once per day as a reaction, you can activate the torc and gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from attacks that aren't adamantine for 3 rounds.

Mithral. Once per day as a reaction, you can activate the torc to grant you AC. For 3 rounds, your AC can't be less than 21, regardless of what kinds of armor you are wearing.

Silver. Once per day as a reaction, you can activate the torc and gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from attacks that aren't silver for 3 rounds.

Iron. Once per day as a reaction, you can activate the torc and gain fire absorption for 1 round. Whenever you are subjected to fire damage, you take no damage and instead regain a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.

Clay. Once per day as a reaction, you can activate the torc and gain lightning absorption for 1 round. Whenever you are subjected to lightning damage, you take no damage and instead regain a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Stone. Once per day as a reaction, you can activate the torc and gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks for 3 rounds.

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UNICORN HORN CUDGEL

Weapon (club), rare (requires attunement)

The horn of a unicorn that has been fashioned into a weapon retains some of the magical properties of the legendary celestial. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

The cudgel has 3 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge to heal 11 (2d8 + 2) hit points, cure a disease, or neutralize a poison. You can expend multiple charges to heal and/or remove multiple conditions affecting the target. You can expend 2 charges to teleport a willing creature you touch up to 1 mile away to a space that is familiar to you. Additionally, while attuned to the cudgel, on a critical hit, you can choose to *teleport* the target up to 30 ft. from you to a space that is familiar to you. This ability does not expend a charge. The unicorn horn cudgel regains 1d3 expended charges at dawn.

WAND OF FIRE MANIPULATION

Wand, rare

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to deal 3 (1d6) fire damage in a 15-foot cone for every charge expended. Each creature in the area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes the damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The wand can siphon fire. While holding it, you can use your reaction to draw in fire effects or damage from spells targeted at you to charge the wand. The wand regains 1 charge for every dice of fire damage siphoned in such a way and negates 1 dice of fire damage per charge regained. The wand cannot have more than 7 charges.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WAND OF THE MIMIC

Wand, rare

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to turn an inanimate object into a mimic. You can expend 1 charge to animate a Tiny or Small mimic, 2 charges to animate a Medium mimic, and 3 charges to animate a Large mimic, and 5 charges to animate a Huge mimic. The wand functions as an *animate object* spell with respect to statistics and rules. However, the object turns into a mimic of the appropriate size, remains animated for 1 hour, and does not require concentration. It is a monstrosity (shapechanger) rather than a construct and can make a bite attack that deals piercing damage with an additional 1d4 acid damage, instead of a slam attack and bludgeoning damage. It also gains the Adhesive and False Appearance traits of a mimic.

The wand regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

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WAND OF THE SLEEPING FAERIE

Wand, uncommon

This wand has 7 charges. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast the *sleep* spell from it that only affects fey creatures, even if they are immune to sleep. For 1 charge, you cast the 1st-level version of the spell. You can cast the spell at higher levels by expending additional charges for each spell slot level above 1st.

The wand regains 1d6 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the wand's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the wand crumbles into ashes and is destroyed.

WHIP OF TENTACLES

Weapon (whip), uncommon

These whips are crafted from dried medusa tentacles that have been infused with magic to retain the poisoning effect of their stings. The whip of tentacles counts as a magic weapon for the purposes of overcoming damage resistance or vulnerability. Additionally, on a hit, the target of the weapon must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution save or become poisoned for one minute. The target can attempt a new save at the end of its turn. A successful save ends the poisoned condition.

ZOMBIE MASK

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

A zombie mask is crafted from the skin that has been removed from the face of a zombie. The decayed flesh smells putrid, and wearing the mask can easily make you nauseated. While attuned to the mask and wearing it, you gain darkvision 60 ft., and you become invisible to zombies as if you were under the effects of an *invisibility* spell. When you don the mask and while wearing it, you must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against poison every hour or become poisoned for one hour.

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APPENDIX D

NPCS AND MONSTERS

ABERRANT TEMPLATE

The drow of House Ausstyl grafts aberrant flesh into the bodies of their children to infuse them with the essence of their unfathomable masters. These creatures become aberrations in part as the unnatural implant spreads and takes over their bodies. They gain new abilities, which they inherit from the aberrations they serve. Their mindset changes to that of an otherworldly creature, and they live out their lives almost as if they were in a dreamlike state controlled by the unspeakable horrors that are now part of them.

ABERRANT TEMPLATE

Alignment. An aberrant creature is always evil.

Senses. An aberrant creature gains darkvision with a radius of 60 feet.

Languages. An aberrant creature speaks or understands Deep Speech in addition to any other languages it knows.

Limited Telepathy. An aberrant creature can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Alien Mind. An aberrant creature has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, or having its thoughts read. Aberrant creatures are immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as confusion).

Unsettling Appearance. An aberrant creature becomes proficient with the Charisma (Intimidation) skill and has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

Alien Anatomy. An aberrant creature is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

ACADEMICIAN OF THE ARCANE TOWER

Academicians are masters of magic and spell casting techniques unique to the Arcane Tower. They are professors and specialist wizards who continue to optimize spellcasting techniques as set by Master Arlen and the first academicians hundreds of years ago. Rarely, when there is an opening in academic seats, some of the brightest graduating apprentices, distinguished by their mastery and progress in their studies, are offered a position to become an academician of the Arcane Tower.

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ACADEMICIAN OF THE ARCANE TOWER

Medium or small humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)
Hit Points 45 (10d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common and two other
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The academician of the Arcane Tower is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The academician of the Arcane Tower has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor*, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision, locate object, magic mouth*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, major image, tongues*
- 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, locate creature*
- 5th level (2 slots): *legend lore, telekinesis*

*The academician of the Arcane Tower casts these spells on itself before combat.

Efficient Spell Recovery. The academician of the Arcane Tower can recover an additional spell slot when using your arcane recovery class ability.

Elevated Spell Power. Spells cast by the academician of the Arcane Tower are considered to be one spell slot level higher than their actual spell slot level.

Expedient Spell Preparation. The academician of the Arcane Tower can prepare a new spell taking 1 round per spell level instead of the usual 1 minute per spell level.

Simplified Spell Rituals. The academician of the Arcane Tower can cast the ritual version of a spell, taking 1 minute longer to cast it than normal instead of the usual 10 minutes.

ACTIONS

Chill Touch. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. Target can't regain hit points until the start of the academician of the Arcane Tower's next turn. If the target is an undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the academician of the Arcane Tower until the end of the academician of the Arcane Tower's next turn.

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APPRENTICE OF THE ARCANE TOWER

Those who wish to study the higher arts of magic have to either find a personal master or apply for apprenticeship at the Arcane Tower, the largest such institution in Aglarion or the Drayl City States. The rigorous admissions process requires a certain level of understanding of magic and eliminates most applicants. Those who are accepted by the academicians can make sure that they have stepped on a path of progress and arcane advancement. An apprentice has already acquired enough knowledge about the special spell methodologies unique to the academy and learned simplified shortcuts to enhance their spellcasting abilities. Apprentices graduate after a minimum of twelve years.

APPRENTICE OF THE ARCANE TOWER

Medium or small humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +5, History +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common and one other
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The apprentice of the Arcane Tower is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The apprentice of the Arcane Tower has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *darkvision, locate object, magic mouth*
- 3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, tongues*

Efficient Spell Recovery. The apprentice of the Arcane Tower can recover an additional spell slot when using the arcane recovery class ability.

Simplified Spell Rituals. The apprentice of the Arcane Tower can cast the ritual version of a spell taking 1 minutes longer to cast than normal instead of the usual 10 minutes.

ACTIONS

Chill Touch. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. Target can't regain hit points until the start of the apprentice of the Arcane Tower's next turn. If the target is an undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the apprentice of the Arcane Tower until the end of the apprentice of the Arcane Tower's next turn.

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ARCANE SENTINEL

Trained guards and magic using security personnel, the arcane sentinels focus their arcane knowledge on abjuration spells and practices. They are loyal to their employers and are dedicated to protecting what they have been entrusted with. The arcane sentinel's responsibilities extend beyond just layering abjuration spells and include detecting suspicious individuals and holding back criminals until reinforcements arrive.

ARCANE SENTINEL

Medium or small humanoid (any race), any lawful

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Insight +4, Perception +4,
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The arcane sentinel casts spells as a 4th level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The arcane sentinel has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, message, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *alarm, detect magic, identify, mage armor*, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, hold person, scorching ray*

*The arcane sentinel casts these spells before combat.

Advanced Alarm. The duration of an *alarm* spell cast by the arcane sentinel becomes 24 hours and it is both mental and audible. The arcane sentinel can also designate other willing creatures to be alerted by its alarm spell's mental alert.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

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ASTRAL SPIDER

The astral spider is a formidable predator that roams the Astral Plane in invisibility, searching for rare mates and grounded locations in the void to lay its eggs within invisible strands of spider silk. The spider can shift between the Astral and Material Planes, sometimes venturing to the Material Plane, where prey is more abundant, to hunt or breed. Most astral spiders display vibrant and prismatic hues, which are rarely seen or recounted, as the spider is almost always invisible, and few live to describe an encounter with it.

ASTRAL SPIDER

Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d12 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	2(-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The astral spider's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spell, requiring no material components:

- At will: *invisibility*
- 3/day: *see invisibility*

Astral Jaunt. As a bonus action, the astral spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Astral Plane, or vice versa.

Magic Resistance. The astral spider has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The astral spider's weapon attacks are magical.

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

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

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage. The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes the poison damage, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Invisible Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 30/60 ft., one creature. The target is restrained by invisible webbing. The restrained target can make a DC 13 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked with disadvantage and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

AZAERESH

The Raider of Hearts, as the succubus fiend is called by those who know of its reputation, is a daring pirate captain who rebelled against its former succubus queen master and broke away from its rule with a dozen of its kind. The renegade succubi and incu-

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bi stole one of the flying ships of the succubus queen's armada, the Last Kiss, and escaped to the Astral Plane through a portal Azaeresh discovered earlier. From there, the demonic pirates raid other planes and retreat to deposit their treasures in their secret hideout. Azaeresh is a calculating and self-centered fiend who makes no allowances.

AZAERESH

Medium fiend (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Deception +13, Insight +9, Perception +9, Persuasion +13, Stealth +13
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. Azaeresh can use its action to polymorph into a small or medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Without wings, the fiend loses its flying speed. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Evasion. Azaeresh can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects. When it is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Azaeresh instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Azaeresh deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is

within 5 ft. of an ally of his that isn't incapacitated and Azaeresh doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Telepathic Bond. Azaeresh ignores the range restriction on its telepathy when communicating with a creature it has charmed. The two don't even need to be on the same plane of existence.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Azaeresh makes two melee attacks with its +1 rapier or claws.

+1 Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Claw (Fiend Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Charm. One humanoid Azaeresh can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys Azaeresh's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target suffers any harm or receives a suicidal command, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to Azaeresh's charm for the next 24 hours. Azaeresh can have only one target charmed at a time. If it charms another, the effect on the previous target ends.

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Draining Kiss. Azaeresh kisses a creature charmed by it or a willing creature. The target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Etherealness. As a bonus action, Azaeresh magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

EQUIPMENT

Azaeresh has a mix of gems looted from Master Zaophas' quarters worth 1,000 gold pieces in total. The succubus carries the withered right hand of a witchservant cultist of the Children of the Coven that bears the tattoo of the cult and functions as a *wand of magic detection*. It was given to Azaeresh as a downpayment from Blister. The fiend pirate captain also has a *+1 rapier and a spyglass of devilish revealing in its possession.*

BAENDRETARIXUS, THE ETERNAL HIVE

Baendretarixus is a young black dragon, a sentient carcass that has retained only the basic hoarding instinct of its proud ancestors. It was killed at a relatively young age for a dragon by three adventurers, who sought out his lair on the Shadowrealm. Baendretarixus has become a new creature since the death bugs have taken over its physical and mental remains. Its sentience is a mix of the original dragon and the body-snatching death bug hive mind. Its undead form has given it eternal life, which it uses to grow its power.

BAENDRETARIXUS, THE ETERNAL HIVE

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +6, Cha +6
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The Baendretarixus is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma, (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks), and it needs only verbal components to cast its spells. Baendretarixus knows the following cleric, druid, paladin, ranger, warlock and wizard spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, mage hand, guidance, produce flame*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, color spray, entangle, identify*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blur, enlarge/reduce*, heat metal*
- 3rd level (2 slots): *call lightning, haste*

*Baendretarixus casts these spells on itself before combat.

Amphibious. Baendretarixus can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Baendretarixus makes three attacks, one with its bite and two with its claws.

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Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Corpse Eater. Baendretarixus can consume the dead remains of a small or small size category creature to regain 30 hit points. If the consumed dead creature was a spellcaster, Baendretarixus also regains a used spell slot of the lowest spell level it has already used.

Death Bug Breath (Recharge 5-6). Baendretarixus exhales a swarm of death bugs in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that cone must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The death bug breath creates a swarm of insects within the affected area that attacks any creature except for Baendretarixus.

BAKATOR THE ONYX

Bakator lived the life of a duergar raider in the caverns of his people under Vordan until one day, the fortress of the duergar was destroyed by a demonic horde. The demons slaughtered most but left the most resilient defenders alive, only to transport them to the Abyss as slaves. Despite the odds, and thanks to his black heart, Bakator survived and even caught the eye of a servant of Faeryl Myrryn in the soul markets of the Abyss. Led in front of the Blood Queen herself, Bakator swore allegiance to the drow conjurer vampire lord and accepted her blood. Since his transformation into a vampire spawn, Bakator has served Faeryl Myrryn's whim wholeheartedly in the Abyss and the Material Plane. He has received direction from his patron to scout the lands of Aglarion and investigate the Midnight Curse. Bakator is a cold and heartless individual whose soul is pure evil.

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BAKATOR THE ONYX

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (demon armor)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 25 ft.,

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +3
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Duergar Resilience. Bakator has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Regeneration. Bakator regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Bakator takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Bakator's next turn.

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

Vampire Weaknesses. Bakator has the following flaws:

- *Forbiddance.* Bakator can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
- *Harmed by Running Water.* Bakator takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.
- *Stake to the Heart.* Bakator is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.
- *Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* Bakator takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

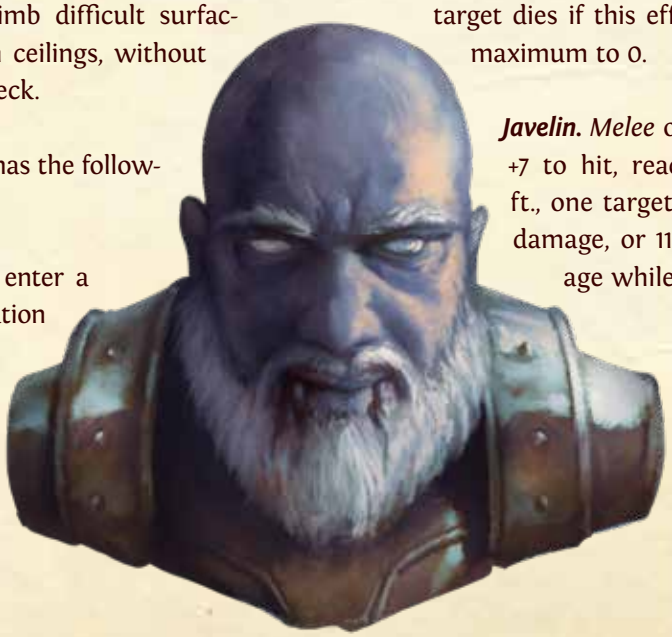
ACTIONS

Multiattack. Bakator makes three attacks: two with its war pick or gauntlets and one with its bite attack.

+1 War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage, or 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage while enlarged.

Clawed Gauntlets. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, or 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage while enlarged.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage while enlarged. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Bakator regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.



Javelin. *Melee* or *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged.

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, Bakator magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or

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carrying. While enlarged, Bakator is large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If Bakator lacks the room to become Large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Bakator magically turns invisible until it attacks, casts a spell, or uses its enlarge ability, or until its concentration is broken, up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Bakator wears or carries is invisible with it.

EQUIPMENT

Bakator carries a *+1 war pick*. He wears a suit *of demon armor* and the *stone torc of the tower*.

BATTLE SNAIL

This gigantic snail is native to the Feyrealm only. Its body is covered in a metallic shell where it can withdraw with blinding speed. It is a powerful predator that disables its prey by spraying it with a slimy spray that prevents it from fleeing.

BATTLE SNAIL

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)
Speed 20 ft. climb 10 ft.,

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages -
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Retract to Shell. As an action, the battle snail can retract into its shell. As long as it is retracted into its shell, it gains a +4 bonus to AC, it is prone, its speed is 0 and can't increase, it has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, it can't take reactions, and the only action it can take is a bonus action to emerge from its shell.

Slime Slide. As a move action, the battle snail can move double its normal speed in the area covered by its slippery slime.

Trampling Charge. If the battle snail moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the battle snail can make one trample attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Trample. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit*: 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Slippery Slime Spray (Recharge 5-6). The battle snail spits slip-

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pery slime in a 40 feet line. Each creature in that cone must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target creature becomes prone.

BATTLE SNAIL UPGRADES

Crafting. It requires one creature 1 hour per 5 gold pieces of resources to craft the appropriate item, requiring the necessary crafting proficiencies and tools. On the DM's discretion, some upgrades can be broken down into resources and reused when crafting new upgrades.

Feeding. Some upgrades require specific feed and Wisdom (Medicine) skill checks to be applied regularly to the battle snail. These treatments can slightly modify the biology of the battle snail.

Upgrade	Proficiencies	Resources/Cost	Ability
Chain Mail Barding	Smith's tools	225 gp of materials	AC 16
Splint Mail Barding	Smith's tools	600 gp of materials	AC 17
Plate Barding	Smith's tools	4,500 gp of materials	AC 18
Saddle	Leatherworker's tools	80 gp of materials	Able to seat 1-2 medium creatures
Battle Platform	Carpenter's tools	120 gp of materials	Able to seat 1-4 medium creatures
Howdah	Carpenter's tools	360 gp of materials	***Requires Battle Platform upgrade.*** Able to seat 1-4 medium creatures, provides half cover.
Spiked Chains	Carpenter's, Leatherworker's, or Smith's tools	100 gp of materials	Deals 1d6 piercing damage if a creature attempts to climb the battlesnail or attack if with a natural weapon.
Armor Spikes	Carpenter's, Leatherworker's, or Smith's tools	250 gp of materials	Deals 2d6 piercing damage if a creature attempts to climb the battlesnail or attack if with a natural weapon.

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Upgrade	Proficiencies	Resources/Cost	Ability
Ballista Turrets	Carpenter's, Smith's and Tinker's tools	500 gp of materials	***Requires Battle Platform upgrade.*** ***Heavy Ballista.*** A heavy ballista is a large object that has AC 17, 75 hit points, damage immunity to poison, psychic damage. It is a ranged weapon that fires heavy bolts with a range of 150/600 ft. that deal 22 (5d8) piercing damage. It takes one action to load the weapon, one action to aim it, and one action to fire it. A heavy ballista can be aimed and fired in the same round if two creatures perform these two actions at the same time.
Harpoon Bolt	Carpenter's, Smith's and Tinker's tools	750 gp of materials	***Requires Ballista Turrets upgrade.*** ***Harpoon.*** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* Reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (5d8) piercing damage. If the target is a huge or smaller creature, it must succeed on a Strength contest or be pulled up to 20 feet toward the ballista.
Incinerating Bolt	Alchemist's tools	1,250 gp of materials	***Requires Ballista Turrets upgrade.*** On a hit, the target takes 1d4 fire damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature can end this damage by using its action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to extinguish the flames.
Radula Spear	DC 15 Medicine	10 gp of raw materials. Must succeed on the Wisdom (Medicine) skill check to upkeep the effect for one day.	The battle snail's radula hardens to a sharp point. Add 1d10 piercing damage to the battle snail's damage on a bite attack.
Caustic Slime	DC 17 Medicine	10 gp of raw materials. Must succeed on the Wisdom (Medicine) skill check to upkeep the effect for one day.	The battle snail's slime becomes acidic. On a failed save against the Slippery Slime Spray attack of the battle snail, targets take 10 (3d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
Acidic Slime	DC 20 Medicine	20 gp of raw materials. Must succeed on the Wisdom (Medicine) skill check to upkeep the effect for one day.	***Requires Caustic Slime upgrade.*** The battle snail's slime becomes more acidic. On a failed save against the Slippery Slime Spray attack of the battle snail, targets take 20 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
Slippery Slime	DC 20 Medicine	20 gp of raw materials. Must succeed on the Wisdom (Medicine) skill check to upkeep the effect for one day.	The battle snail's Slippery Slime becomes more slippery. Each creature in that cone must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.

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BILLIE BLIND

Blessed with the spirit and intelligence of a sprite and the wisdom of a dryad, the billie blind is a wise being in a child's body. Billie blinds are enthusiastic and dedicated about a single thing in life. They analyze their chosen subject with meticulous accuracy and learn everything they can about it. These subjects of interest may vary for each individual. One billie blind might be an expert on history, arcane or religious matters, while the other might be an enthusiast of training dogs or making tea. They are rarely encountered and live solitary lives, but sometimes they serve as advisors to noble fey. They are usually reserved and kind but can be easily angered by questioning their expertise on their favorite subject.

BILLIE BLIND

Small fey, neutral good

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)
Hit Points 31 (9d6)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Skills History +7 Nature +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The billie blind's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *augury, invisibility*
- 3/day: *dimension door, levitate*

Magic Resistance. The billie blind has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Restless. The billie blind does not need to sleep and is immune to nonmagical and magical effects that cause the target to be paralyzed and restrained. The billie blind can spend 5 feet of movement to automatically escape from nonmagical and magical restraints, such as manacles or a creature that has it grappled.

ACTIONS

Slingshot. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

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BLUECAP

Sometimes weary adventurers and even experienced miners find themselves in a deserted part of the Dark Below. Some lose all hope and wander aimlessly in the dark, and others trust their experience with underground locations. Still, some who are lucky enough to encounter a bluecap can hopefully survive and find a way in the endless caverns. These generally elusive fey help miners find hidden ore deposits, and in exchange for an honest wage, they do what they can to assist.

BLUECAP

Small fey, lawful neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d6 + 12)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +2, Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Sylvan, Terran, Undecommon
Challenge 2 (200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The bluecap's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

- At will: *meld into stone, shatter*
- 3/day each: *stoneshape, stoneskin, wall of stone*
- 1/day: *plane shift* (self only, only when underground)

ACTIONS

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

Gem Sense. The bluecap can sense the presence of gemstones or ores within 30 feet of it. If it senses a gemstone or ore in this way, it can use its action to learn its type and value. This ability can penetrate any barrier.

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BULBOUS OBSERVER

Spawned in the Abyss by Orcus, these colossal bloated undead are made from the flayed skin of gigantic gibbering mouthers and those of giants. These floating undead spheres fly slowly over the domain of the Demon Lord of the Undead, looking for enemies and alerting lesser minions to any threat they encounter. Their favorite tactic involves lifting their opponents from the ground and dropping them from a great height, or breaking off parts of buildings or natural formations to drop them onto their enemies.

BULBOUS OBSERVER

Gargantuan undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 217 (15d20 + 60)
Speed fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +11
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses truesight 240 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Can't speak but understands Common, telepathy 1,000 ft.
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The bulbous observer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Undead Telepathy. All undead within 1,000 feet of the bulbous observer can hear its telepathy, regardless of any obstacle. This ability does not need line of sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bulbous observer makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). The bulbous observer has four arms, each of which can grapple one target.

Drop Heavy Load. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 60/240 ft., 20 ft. radius area. *Hit*: 66 (12d10) bludgeoning damage. Once the bulbous observer drops its load, it must spend three rounds to acquire a new heavy load before it can use this feature again.

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CAPTAIN ICK FORGE-N-HAMMER

Always disheveled and shabby-looking, smoking smelly cigars, and quite nihilistic in nature, Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer is still regarded with respect by the Royal Swords he commands at Nangrath under Lord Arenbar Nangrath. The longtime friend and ex-adventuring companion of Thermerson the Wise is almost impossible to best both in battle and drinking.

CAPTAIN ICK FORGE-N-HAMMER

Medium humanoid (dwarf), neutral good

Armor Class 19 (chain mail, shield, defense)
Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6
Skills Athletics +6, Perception +5
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Action Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer can take one additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Alert on Duty. Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer can designate a 10 square foot area. If he stays in this area for 10 minutes, he gains advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks made to notice creatures.

Coordinated Strike. Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer can use his combat training to coordinate his attacks with his allies. Once per turn, Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer gains advantage on his first melee attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.

Coordinated Shot. Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer can spot the exact moment to release a shot while his ally occupies his target. Once per turn, Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer gains advantage on his first ranged attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.

Defense. When Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer wears armor, he gains a +1 bonus to AC.

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Dwarven Resilience. Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer has advantage on saving throws against poison, and resistance against poison damage.

Indomitable (Recharges after a Long Rest). Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 16 (1d10 + 11).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer makes three melee attacks.

+1 Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

EQUIPMENT

Captain Ick Forge-n-hammer carries a *+1 battleaxe* and wears a torn patchwork *cloak of protection*. He smokes good quality cigars worth 5 gold pieces each, that he always carries six of. He has a magic cigar that when lit can emulate the effects of a *stinking cloud* spell affecting everyone but the smoker in the area.

COMMANDER PRICKLETHRUST

Daring and fearless, Commander Pricklethrust has always been a model to the members of King Dasmag's armed forces. The veteran sprite warrior was on the satyr king's side long before they defeated the forces of Faeryl Myrryn, the demon conjurer drow vampire, and served as his chief army officer until the death of his king. The no-nonsense faerie was always apprehensive about the debaucheries of his lord but always served him loyally. Commander Pricklethrust is an expert tactician, a master combatant, and a versatile leader who has seen many forms of enemies and has led countless successful war campaigns.

COMMANDER PRICKLETHRUST

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class 18 (+1 studded leather)
Hit Points 81 (18d4 + 36)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +11
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Action Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). On his turn, Commander Pricklethrust can take one additional action.

Diving Charge. If Commander Pricklethrust moves at least 20 feet straight down toward a creature and then hits it with an attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (3d4) piercing damage.

Improved Critical. Commander Pricklethrust scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Commander Pricklethrust deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Commander Pricklethrust that isn't incapacitated and Commander Pricklethrust doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

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ACTIONS

Multiattack. Commander Pricklethrust makes three attacks: two with his *+1 scimitar* and one with his *+1 dagger*.

+1 Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 slashing damage.

+1 Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 piercing damage.

+1 Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. If its saving throw result is 5 or lower, the poisoned target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Heart Sight. Commander Pricklethrust touches a creature and magically knows the creature's current emotional state. If the target fails a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, Commander Pricklethrust also knows the creature's alignment. Celestials, fiends, and undead automatically fail the saving throw.

Invisibility. Commander Pricklethrust magically turns invisible until it attacks, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment Commander Pricklethrust wears or carries is invisible with it.

EQUIPMENT

Commander Pricklethrust carries a *+1 scimitar*, a *+1 dagger*, a *+1 light crossbow*, and wears *+1 leather armor*.

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CYGNUS

Cygnus has worn numerous guises over the millennium to hide its immortal nature. Currently, the couatl is in human form, wearing exotic clothes and armor, and wielding a strange toothed club. The celestial serpent was sent to the Material Plane by Shining Light as its champion to monitor the Dark Star. It did so from hiding, biding its time until it noticed the spark that Sarath inflamed into a beacon of hope that would overthrow the rule of the dark angels. However, the Order of the Eternal Light that came to rule the land was too radical for Cygnus, and it once again found itself on the side of mortals - Master Arlen and Razmyrel Melkar - against the Order that twisted its faith in the Shining Light. Cygnus has remained in Aglarion since and established the Lodge of Wanderlust - an adventuring guild to find and eradicate traces of the Dark Star on its fallen angels.

CYGNUS

Medium celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 19 (natural armor, or plate armor in human form, defense)
Hit Points 142 (19d8 + 57)
Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +7, Wis +9, Cha +8 (+4 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Athletics +8, Insight +9,
Damage Resistances psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Cygnus' spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

- At will: *detect evil and good, detect magic, detect thoughts*
- 3/day each: *bless, create food and water, cure wounds, lesser restoration, protection from poison, sanctuary, shield*
- 1/day each: *dream, greater restoration, scrying*

Spellcasting. Cygnus is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Cygnus has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, divine favor, heroism, protection from evil and good, purify food and drink, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (2 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon*, warding bond*, zone of truth*

*Cygnus casts these spells on itself before combat.

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Defense. When Cygnus is wearing armor, he gains a +1 bonus to AC.

Magic Weapons. Cygnus' weapon attacks are magical.

Shielded Mind. Cygnus is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense its emotions, read its thoughts, or detect its location.

Divine Health. Cygnus is immune to disease.

Divine Smite. When Cygnus hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, or 13 (3d8) for a 2nd-level spell slot. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 24 hours. Until this poison ends, the target is unconscious. Another creature can use an action to shake the target awake.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one medium or smaller creature. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Cygnus can't constrict another target.

Change Shape. Cygnus magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating equal to or less than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Cygnus' choice).

In a new form, the Cygnus otherwise retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength, Dexterity, and other actions are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any statistics and capabilities (except class features, legendary actions, and lair actions) that the new form has but that it lacks. If the new form has a bite attack, Cygnus can use its bite in that form.

Divine Sense (5/Day). Cygnus can detect evil forces. Until the end of its next turn, Cygnus knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of it that is not behind total cover. It knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence it senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, Cygnus also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Lay on Hands (Recharges after a Long Rest). Cygnus can touch a creature and draw power from its pool of 30 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in its pool. Alternatively,Cygnus can expend 5 hit points from its pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. Cygnus can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Oath of Devotion (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Cygnus can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects.

Sacred Weapon. Cygnus can imbue one weapon that it is holding with positive energy, using Channel Divinity. For 1 minute, it adds its Charisma modifier to attack rolls made with that weapon (+4). The weapon also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light 20 feet beyond that. If the weapon is not already magical, it becomes magical for the duration.

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Cygnus can end this effect on its turn as part of any other action. If it is no longer holding or carrying this weapon, or if it falls unconscious, this effect ends.

Turn the Unholy. Cygnus presents its holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring fiends and undead, using its Channel Divinity. Each fiend or undead that can see or hear Cygnus within 30 feet of it must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Cygnus as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of it. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

DAEDAL WRIGHT

The daedal wright is a multifunction construction and production golem invented by Master Arlen. It is equipped with multiple smaller and larger mechanical arms with different appendages for digging, drilling, fine and bulk manipulation, and many more tasks. The archmage's routines imprinted in the daedal wrights allow it to find the most optimal solution to any given problem.

DAEDAL WRIGHT

Large construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 161 (17d10 + 68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Understands commands given in any language but can't speak except for stating its current activity in Master Arlen's voice
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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Damage Optimization. The daedal wright deals a cumulative additional 2 (1d4) damage against a target with every new successive hit after the first.

Malfunction. When taking a critical hit, the daedal wright must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or malfunction as if it was under the effects of a *confusion* spell for 3 rounds. At the end of its turns, it can make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw to end the effect.

Siege Monster. The daedal wright deals double damage to objects and structures.

Specialized Tools. The damage caused by the multifunctional appendages of the daedal wright are considered bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing at the same time.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The daedal wright can make two attacks with its multifunctional appendages, or one attack with its multifunctional appendage and one with its stabilizer arm.

Heavy Drill. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 22 (5d6 + 5) piercing damage. The damage caused by the heavy drill bypasses the damage threshold of objects.

Multifunctional Appendages. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d4 + 5) bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage.

Stabilizer Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the daedal wright can't use its stabilizer arm on another target.

DAG'DRIRATH

The Blood Queen, Faeryl Myrryn, a drow conjurer vampire servant of Orcus, infected Dag'drirath, a vrock, with vampirism during the early years of her experiments. The demon gained new powers and rose above its demonkin but it soon found out that it also acquired new weaknesses. The Blood Queen tasked Dag'drirath with a mission on the Material Plane. However, the undead demon failed and soon found itself trapped in a ruby in the dwarven mining caverns of Darkstone. Some dwarven miners unearthed the treasure that was its prison and have inadvertently released Dag'drirath, but it is still bound by the ruby and confined to the area of the mine. Its most coveted goal is becoming free again and returning to the Abyss.

DAG'DRIRATH

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural)
Hit Points 161 (17d10 + 68)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Perception +7, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

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Shapechanger. If Dag'drirath isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its action to polymorph into a Tiny bat or a Large cloud of mist, or back into its true form. While in bat form, Dag'drirath can't speak, its walking speed is 5 feet, and it has a flying speed of 30 feet. Its statistics, other than its size and speed, are unchanged. Anything it is wearing transforms with it, but nothing it is carrying does. It reverts to its true form if it dies. While in mist form, Dag'drirath can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless, has a flying speed of 20 feet, can hover, and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. It has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws, and it is immune to all nonmagical damage, except the damage it takes from sunlight.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Dag'drirath fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Dag'drirath has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Misty Escape. When it drops to 0 hit points outside its resting place, Dag'drirath transforms into a cloud of mist (as in the Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious, provided that it isn't in sunlight or running water. If it can't transform, it is destroyed. While it has 0 hit points in mist form, it can't revert to its vrock form, and it must reach its resting place, the Blood Red Ruby (see area 6 of Darkstone Mines in Chapter 6) within 2 hours or be destroyed. After spending 1 hour in the Blood Red Ruby with 0 hit points, it regains 1 hit point.

Regeneration. Dag'drirath regains 20 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Dag'drirath takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Dag'drirath's next turn.

Spider Climb. Dag'drirath can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Vampire Weaknesses. Dag'drirath has the following flaws:

- *Forbiddance.* Dag'drirath can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.
- *Harmed by Running Water.* Dag'drirath takes 20 acid damage if it ends its turn in running water.
- *Sunlight Hypersensitivity.* Dag'drirath takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dag'drirath makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak (Vrock Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Dag'drirath regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Dag'drirath's control.

Talons (Vrock Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (2d10 + 4) slash-

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ing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Dag'drirath can grapple the target (escape DC 18).

Bite (Bat Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Dag'drirath, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Dag'drirath regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the Dag'drirath's control.

Spores (Recharge 6, Vrock Form Only). A 15-foot-radius cloud of toxic spores extends out from Dag'drirath. The spores spread around corners. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, a target takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Emptying a vial of holy water on the target also ends the effect on it.

Stunning Screech (1/Day, Vrock Form Only). Dag'drirath emits a horrific screech. Each creature within 20 feet of it that can hear it and that isn't a demon must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the Dag'drirath's next turn.

Charm. Dag'drirath targets one humanoid it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see Dag'drirath, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Dag'drirath. The charmed target regards Dag'drirath as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Dag'drirath's control, it takes the Dag'drirath's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Dag'drirath's beak or bite attack. Each time Dag'drirath or its companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Dag'drirath is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

Children of the Night (1/Day). Dag'drirath magically calls 2d4 swarms of bats or rats, provided that the sun isn't up. While outdoors, Dag'drirath can call 3d6 wolves instead. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Dag'drirath and obeying its spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Dag'drirath dies, or until Dag'drirath dismisses them as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Move. Dag'drirath moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Dag'drirath makes one talon attack.

Bite or Beak (Costs 2 Actions). Dag'drirath makes one bite or beak attack.

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DESPAIR GIANT

These emotionless and sluggish giants are descendants of a primitive hill giant tribe that ventured into the plane of shadows many thousands of years ago. The despair giants have adapted to the dark and empty environment of the Shadowrealm over the millennia. Their haggardness and dreariness are so apparent that they engulf the spirit of anyone in their close vicinity.

DESPAIR GIANT

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 115 (11d12 + 44)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	9 (-1)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Giant
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Aura of Despair. The despair giant is constantly surrounded by a 10-foot radius aura of despair. A creature within the aura must make a DC 13 Charisma saving throw at the beginning of its turn. On a failed save, the creature suffers disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its turn. On a successful save, the creature is unaffected.

Devoid of Emotions. The despair giant is immune to effects that would alter or modify its emotions.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The despair giant makes two melee attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

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DRYAD WITCH

These dryads were the first to abandon King Dasmag due to the corruption of the Matrons of Malice. The dryad witches cultivate the malicious plant life of the Bleak Mire and serve their midnight hag patrons as informants. They communicate with the plants and beasts of the Feyrealm regularly and prey on those they can charm or lure into a trap.

DRYAD WITCH

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)
Hit Points 36 (8d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The dryad witch's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dryad witch can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *druidcraft, detect magic*
- 3/day each: *entangle, goodberry*
- 1/day each: *barkskin*, pass without trace, shillelagh*

Spellcasting. The dryad witch is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, poison spray*
- 1st-2nd level (2 2nd level slots): *comprehend languages, hellish rebuke, hold person, suggestion*

*The dryad witch casts these spells on itself before combat.

Agonizing Blast. When the dryad witch casts eldritch blast, it adds its Charisma modifier (+4) to the damage it deals on a hit.

Dark Devotion. The dryad witch has advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Hag's form (Recharges after a Long Rest). The dryad witch can magically polymorph into a small or medium humanoid for one hour. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Magic Resistance. The dryad witch has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Speak with Beasts and Plants. The dryad witch can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language.

Tree Stride. Once on her turn, the dryad witch can use 10 ft. of her movement to step magically into one living tree within her reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 ft. of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the second tree. Both trees must be large or bigger.

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ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +2 to hit (+6 to hit with shillelagh), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

Fey Charm. The dryad witch targets one humanoid or beast that she can see within 30 feet of her as an action. If the target can see the dryad witch, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards the dryad witch as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the dryad witch's control, it takes the dryad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. Each time the dryad witch or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the dryad witch dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target, or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the dryad witch's fey charm for the next 24 hours. The dryad witch can have no more than one humanoid and up to three beasts charmed at a time.

ELDER CORTEX

Elder cortices are masterminds of the aberrations of the Farrealm and emissaries of the god-like entities that rule over the realm of madness. These otherworldly abominations are manifestations of the power of the mind itself. The elder cortex drains every piece of information it can from its victims along with their intellects on which it feeds. It assimilates unimaginable amounts of information and uses it to the best effect. They are master manipulators and negotiators, knowledgeable in academic lore and the art of magic.

ELDER CORTEX

Huge aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 210 (20d12 + 80)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	25 (+7)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +12, Wis +10, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +12, Deception +10, Intimidation +10, Insight +10, Perception +10, Persuasion +10
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, prone
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Can't speak but understands Common, Undercommon, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The elder cortex's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

- At will: *detect thoughts, modify memory, fly, suggestion, telekinesis*
- 1/day each: *dominate monster, mass suggestion, plane shift*

- 1/day each (powered by the cortex pods): *contagion, earthquake, fire storm, insect plague, spike growth, sunbeam*

Detect Intellect. The elder cortex can sense the presence and location of any creature within 120 feet of it that has an Intelligence of 1 or higher, regardless of interposing barriers, unless the creature is protected by a *mind blank* spell. The elder cortex can detect if a creature has an Intelligence of 10 or higher.

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Exploit Thoughts. If a creature fails a saving throw against a *detect thoughts* spell cast by the elder cortex, for the duration of the spell, the elder cortex can't be surprised by the creature and has advantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws made against the creature. Additionally, the target creature has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws against the elder cortex for the duration of the *detect thoughts* spell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the elder cortex fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The elder cortex has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Probing Telepathy. If a creature communicates telepathically with the elder cortex, the elder cortex learns the creature's greatest desires if the elder cortex can see the creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elder cortex makes three tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The elder cortex has six tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Intellect Drain. The elder cortex can target a creature within 120 feet and force it to make a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target creature's Intelligence score is reduced by 1d6. The target dies if this reduces its Intelligence to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. For each 1 point of Intelligence reduced this way, the elder cortex regains 10 hit points.

Psychic Assault (Recharge 5-6). Each creature in a 60-foot cone must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. A creature takes 45 (10d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Tentacle. The elder cortex makes a tentacle attack.

Detect Thoughts. The elder cortex casts the *detect thoughts* spell.

Psychic Crush (Costs 2 Actions). The elder cortex emanates a psychic aura that causes an intense headache to creatures with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher. All creatures within a 60 feet radius must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls until the end of its next turn. Spellcasters who maintain concentration on a spell, must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw to maintain their concentration.

ELDON LOBO

Eldon Lobo is a member of an elite monastery dedicated to focusing on the laws and power of Hell through an ancient tradition known as the Way of the Nine Seals. The bearded devil monk was recruited from its masters by the Matrons of Malice to serve for soulbound magical weapons donated to the monastery by the hags.

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ELDON LOBO

Medium fiend (devil, bearded), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5, Wis +5
Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +6
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede Eldon Lobo's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. Eldon Lobo has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Steadfast. Eldon Lobo can't be frightened while it can see an allied creature within 30 feet of it.

Martial Arts. When Eldon Lobo uses the Attack action with an unarmed strike or its dagger on its turn, it can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Ki Points (Recharges after a Long Rest). Eldon Lobo has 3 ki points.

Flurry of Blows. Immediately after Eldon Lobo takes the Multiattack action on its turn, it can spend 1 ki point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.

Hellfire Fist. Eldon Lobo can spend 1 ki point as an action to inflame a melee weapon it touches with hellish fire for 1 minute. Melee attacks made with the weapon deal an extra 1d4 fire damage.

Patient Defense. Eldon Lobo can spend 1 ki point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on its turn.

Step of the Wind. Eldon Lobo can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on its turn, and its jump distance is doubled for the turn

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Eldon Lobo makes two attacks: one with its beard and one with its dagger.

Beard. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving

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throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target can't regain hit points. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Hellish sacrificial dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or lose 5 (1d10) hit points at the start of each of its turns due to an infernal wound. Each time Eldon Lobo hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 5 (1d10). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. Eldon Lobo can use its reaction to deflect or catch the missile when it is hit by a ranged weapon Attack. When it does so, the damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 11 (1d10 + 6). If the damage is reduced to 0, Eldon Lobo can catch the missile if it is small enough for it to hold in one hand and if it has at least one hand free. If it catches a missile in this way, Eldon Lobo can spend 1 ki point to make a ranged attack (range 20 feet/60 feet) with the weapon or piece of ammunition it has just caught, as part of the same reaction. (+6 to hit, range 20 ft./60 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.)

EQUIPMENT

Eldon Logo wields a *hellish sacrificial dagger*.

EXPERT

A person with extensive training and experience in a particular profession is considered to be an expert in its field. Therefore, people come to them for assistance and respect them greatly.

EXPERT

Medium or small humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

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Skill Expert. The expert makes ability checks related to the tools it is proficient with with +6 modifier.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

FEYREALM-BORN

The ancestry of a feyrealm-born creature can be traced back to some kind of fey roots. They are either born on the Feyrealm or have powerful ties to it. A feyrealm-born creature has larger than usual eyes of strikingly light color and long pointy ears. It is an emotional creature that expresses its feelings and is prone to sudden mood changes. Feyrealm-born creatures love nature and animals and feel at home in the wilderness.

A humanoid or giant can become a feyrealm-born creature . It keeps its statistics, except as follows.

FEYREALM-BORN TEMPLATE

Alignment. Feyrealm-born creatures love freedom, variety, and self-expression, so they lean strongly toward the gentler aspects of chaos. They value and protect others' freedom as well as their own, and they are more often good than not.

Languages. The feyrealm-born creature speaks Elvish and Sylvan in addition to any other languages it knows.

Fey Blood. The feyrealm-born creature has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the feyrealm-born to sleep. It is considered a fey type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Innate Spellcasting. The feyrealm-born creatutre's spellcasting ability is Charisma (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

- At will: *druidcraft*
- 1/day each: *faerie fire, invisibility, misty step*

FRENZIED MUTANT

The newborn of House Ausstyl deemed to become flesh-ripping mutant berserkers by Inheritors of the Unbegotten are raised like vicious animals. They are forcefully infused with the alien life forms venerated by their druidic masters and taught how to enhance the otherworldly symbionts in their bodies. The frenzied mutants are bred to be furious and mindless war machines that terrorize and rip their enemies apart. These barbarians don't resemble a humanoid anymore, neither in appearance nor way of life.

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FRENZIED MUTANT

Medium humanoid (drow), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (unarmored defense, grafted appendage)
Hit Points 68 (9d8 + 18 + 10 grafted appendage)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5
Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +3, Survival +3
Damage Resistances psychic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Elvish, Undercommon, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The frenzied mutant's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dancing lights*
- 1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*

Alien Anatomy. The frenzied mutant is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Alien Mind. The frenzied mutant has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened. The frenzied mutant is immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

Fey Ancestry. Magic can't put the frenzied mutant to sleep.

Danger Sense. The frenzied mutant has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that it can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, it can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Grafted Appendages (Recharges after a Long Rest). The frenzied mutant has an additional 10 temporary hit points and +1 bonus to AC while it has at least 1 of these temporary hit points (both included in its statistics). It regains these temporary hit points after a long rest.

Limited Telepathy. The frenzied mutant can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Reckless Attack. When the frenzied mutant makes its first attack on its turn, it can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives it advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during its turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until its next turn.

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Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the frenzied mutant has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Telepathic Terror. The frenzied mutant can telepathically project its rage into the mind of its enemies causing them immense pain. As a bonus action, the frenzied mutant can expend one use of its Rage feature to assault the mind of a target creature. The target creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed. A creature charmed this way has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the effect ends on the target.

Unsettling Appearance. The frenzied mutant has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The frenzied mutant makes two attacks with its bone claw or handaxe.

Bone Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

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

Rage (4/day). The frenzied mutant can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, the frenzied mutant gains the following benefits if it isn't wearing heavy armor:

- It has advantage on Strength checks and Strength Saving Throws.
- When it makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, it gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll.
- It has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

The frenzied mutant's rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if it is knocked unconscious or its turn ends and it hasn't attacked a hostile creature since its last turn or taken damage since then. It can also end the rage on its turn as a bonus action. Once it has raged four times, the frenzied mutant must finish a long rest before it can rage again.

FRUMBY GOLDTOOTH

Frumby Goldtooth is a notorious goblin warlock, a master crafter and purveyor of wands, and secretly dedicated to the drow vampire lord and archmage conjurer Faeryl Myrryn with the ultimate goal of becoming a vampire one day. He has been exiled from Gonshar by his cousin Lord Kabok Goldtooth, who is Frumby's greatest rival and most bitter competition. Frumby specializes in crafting magic items

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and casting enchantments to enslave all manner of beings, whom he sells for hard gold to the right bidder or uses as servants to do his bidding. The goblin warlock has served the Matrons of Malice on many occasions but secretly plots to overtake the realm from them. However, he is wise enough to know that he lacks the power to accomplish this alone, so he is recruiting and tricking powerful allies into joining him in his goal to "liberate" the Bleak Mire.

FRUMBY GOLDTOOTH

Small humanoid (goblin), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (glamoured studded leather)
Hit Points 67 (15d6 + 15)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +8, Deception +10, History +8, Persuasion +10, Stealth +13
Senses darkvision 60 Ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Goblin, Sylvan
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Frumby is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, guidance, mage hand, mending, minor illusion, resistance, true strike*
- 1st-5th level (3 5th level slots): *banishment, charm person, contact other plane, dimension door, dispel magic, fly, gaseous form, hold monster, protection from evil and good, spider climb, suggestion, tongues, vampiric touch*

Children of the Night (Recharges after a Long Rest). Frumby magically calls d4 swarms of bats or rats, provided that the sun isn't up. The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Frumby and obeying his spoken commands. The beasts remain for 1 hour, until Frumby dies, or until he dismisses them as a bonus action.

Bewitching Whispers (Recharges after a Long rest). Frumby can cast *compulsion* once using a warlock spell slot.

Dreadful Word (Recharges after a Long rest). Frumby can cast *confusion* once using a warlock spell slot.

Mystic Arcanum (Recharges after a Long Rest). Frumby can cast *mass suggestion* and *finger of death* once without expending a spell slot.

Nimble Escape. Frumby can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

One with Shadows. When Frumby is in an area of dim light or darkness, he can use his action to become invisible until he moves or takes an action or a reaction.

Regeneration. Frumby regains 1 hit point at the start of each of its turns if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If Frumby takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of Frumby's next turn.

Uninterruptible Movement. Frumby can move up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Vampire Lord's Blessing. When Frumby reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, he gains temporary 20 hit points.

Whispers of the Grave. Frumby can cast *speak with dead* at will, without expending a spell slot.

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ACTIONS

Multiattack. Frumby can create three beams of eldritch blast.

Eldritch Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) force damage.

EQUIPMENT

Frumby wears an assortment of golden jewelry worth 564 gold pieces, a +1 *glamoured studded leather armor*, a *ring of spell storing* (with a *stoneskin* spell stored in it), and carries a *wand of the mimic* at all times.

FUNGOID

Fungoids are semi-intelligent genderless mushroom creatures with humanoid-like anatomy, organizing their savage colonies into tribal units without leaders or any form of hierarchy. They feed on their own kind, which they cultivate on the flesh of their victims. The weakest and most deformed specimens are consumed first, allowing the tribe to survive even in the harshest conditions. Besides growing their own species, they also cultivate various types of mushrooms with a wide variety of magical effects.

FUNGOID

Medium plant, lawful evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Resistances piercing
Damage immunities poison
Condition immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages -
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Communication Spores. As a bonus action, a fungoid within 30 feet distance of another fungoid can emit a cloud of communication spores that allow them to transfer basic messages between themselves. These spores numb the vocal system of other creatures, preventing them from communicating via speech. A creature within this spore cloud must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature loses the ability to speak for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Parasitic Spore Discharge. When the fungoid dies, it releases its consciousness in a cloud of spores

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that covers a 30 feet radius area. One creature within the spore clud's area must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the creature is diseased. A creature diseased this way is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The fungoid now controls the body and uses the diseased target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The disease lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, or the spores are removed by a spell or effect that can remove diseases. When the disease ends, the fungoid's consciousness ceases to exist.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fungoid makes two attacks: one with its spear and one with its bite.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

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

Spore Blower (Recharge 6). The fungoid can blow a cloud of fungal spores in a 15 feet cone with the use of a special spore blower tool similar to a blowgun. The special spore ammunition is stored inside the body of the fungoid and are nonmagical and can emulate any of the following spell effects that target all creatures within the area of the cone: *color spray, faerie fire, sleep*.

GENERAL SUNDAMAR STORMBREAKER

Born into generations of loyal noble warriors, Sundamar Stormbreaker is the symbol of stability and a true pillar of the Kingdom of Aglarion. Rejected from the Arcane Tower, the young lord followed family tradition by joining the Royal Army. After years of battle training, service, and rapid military progress, the noble rose to a high rank. Upon his ascension to the rank of general, Sundamar Stormbreaker took an oath to the Wondermaker, and serves the god of Magic as a holy warrior and protector. The general is an organized strategist who knows his options and makes his choices carefully, while inspiring his troops.

GENERAL SUNDAMAR STORMBREAKER

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 23 (*+1 plate, +1 shield,* defense)
Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +7 (+3 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Athletics +8, Insight +7
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Spellcasting. General Sundamar Stormbreaker is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). General Sundamar Stormbreaker has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, detect evil and good, expeditious retreat, shield, shield of faith**
- 2nd level (2 slots): *blur, branding smite, darkvision, lesser restoration*

*General Sundamar Stormbreaker casts these spells on himself before combat.

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Action Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can take one additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Aura of Protection. Whenever General Sundamar Stormbreaker or a friendly creature within 10 feet of him must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to General Sundamar Stormbreaker's Charisma modifier (+3). General Sundamar Stormbreaker must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Commander's Orders (3/Day). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can inspire others through the power of his commands. As a bonus action, on his turn General Sundamar Stormbreaker can choose any number of creatures other than himself within 60 feet of him who can hear him. Those creatures gain one Command die, a d10. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Command die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Command die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Command die at a time. General Sundamar Stormbreaker regains any expended uses when he finishes a long rest.

- ***Order of Charge.*** General Sundamar Stormbreaker can expend one use of his Commander's Order ability to double the movement speed of the creatures he chooses until the end of their next turn.

- ***Order of Defense.*** General Sundamar Stormbreaker can expend one use of his Commander's Orders to allow the creatures he chooses gain and roll the Command die and add the number rolled to one saving throw.

Defense. When General Sundamar Stormbreaker is wearing armor, he gains a +1 bonus to AC.

Divine Health. General Sundamar Stormbreaker is immune to disease.

Divine Smite. When General Sundamar Stormbreaker hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, 13 (3d8) for a 2nd-level spell slot, or 18 (4d8) for a 3rd-level spell slot. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Indomitable (Recharges after a Long Rest). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

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Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 15 (1d10 + 10).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. General Sundamar Stormbreaker makes three melee attacks.

+2 Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Divine Sense (4/Day). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can detect evil forces. Until the end of its next turn, he knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. He knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, General Sundamar Stormbreaker also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Lay on Hands (Recharges after a Long Rest). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can touch a creature and draw power from his pool of 25 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in his pool. Alternatively, General Sundamar Stormbreaker can expend 5 hit points from his pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. General Sundamar Stormbreaker can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Oath of Devotion (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). General Sundamar Stormbreaker can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects:

- ***Sacred Weapon.*** General Sundamar Stormbreaker can imbue one weapon that he is holding with positive energy, using his Channel Divinity. For 1 minute, he can add +3 to attack rolls made with that weapon. The weapon also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light 20 feet beyond that. If the weapon is not already magical, it becomes magical for the duration. General Sundamar Stormbreaker can end this effect on his turn as part of any other action. If he is no longer holding or carrying this weapon, or if he falls unconscious, this effect ends.

- ***Turn the Unholy.*** General Sundamar Stormbreaker presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring fiends and undead, using his Channel Divinity. Each fiend or undead that can see or hear him within 30 feet of him must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from him as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of him. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

EQUIPMENT

General Sundamar Stormbreaker wields a *+2 longsword*, a *+1 shield*, and wears *+1 plate armor*.

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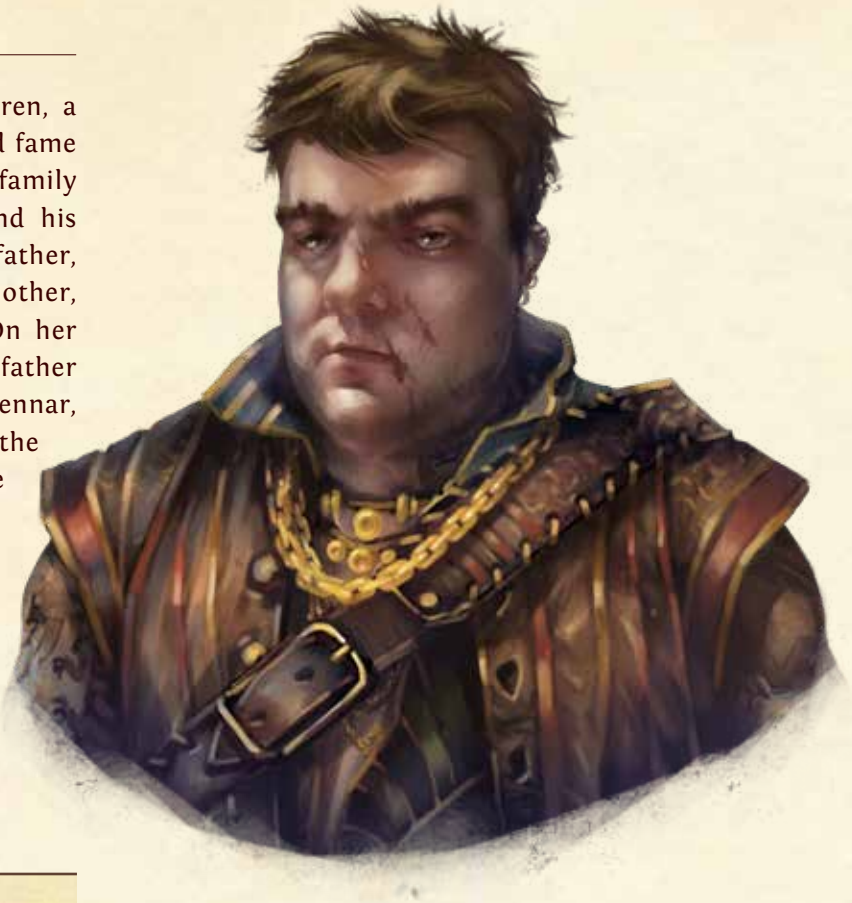
GREN

The largest of the Uncanny Vagabonds, Gren, a serious but cheerful young man, has gained fame and reputation within the ranks of his family with his daring approach to problems and his skills as an entertainer. He never knew his father, and he was only a young boy when his mother, an exceptionally beautiful woman, died. On her deathbed, she told the family that Gren's father was none other than King Waldrann Azennar, and she proved it with a love letter that the king wrote to her almost a decade ago. The letter proved genuine, but it only proves that Gren's mother and the king had an affair. The Uncanny Vagabonds couldn't care less, and they know that whatever proof they had would never be enough to turn Gren into royalty. They consider the option as one of their amusing stories and keep calling Gren "Your highness" for the fun of it.



GREN

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Deception +5, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Thieves' cant (Vagabond)
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Gren is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Gren has the following bard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *message, true strike*
- 1st level (3 slots): *bane, charm person, cure wounds, heroism*, sleep*

*Gren casts these spells before combat.

Bardic Inspiration (Recharges after a Long Rest). Gren has 2 bardic inspirations (d6).

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Gren can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If Gren is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Fast hands. On each of his turns, Gren can use a bonus action to make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)

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check, use his thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock, or take the Use and Object action.

Jack of All Trades. Gren can add +1 to any ability checks he makes that doesn't already include his proficiency bonus.

Second-Story Work. Gren can climb at his normal speed. When Gren makes a running jump, the distance he can cover is increased by 2 feet.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Gren deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Gren's that isn't incapacitated and Gren doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Song of Rest. Gren can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any hit dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. Gren can confer this benefit on itself as well.

Vagabond Bloodline. Gren can cast *guidance* without any components. Once Gren uses this feature, he can't use it again until finishing a long rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gren makes two melee attacks.

+1 Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 24 (7d6) poison damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 24 (7d6) poison damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Gren can see hits him with an attack, he can use his reaction to halve the attack's damage against him.

EQUIPMENT

Gren has 13 copper pieces, 3 silver pieces, 21 gold pieces, a *+1 longsword*, and a *potion of healing* on his person.

GRORRARR

Upon his death at old age, Kalymorr the Gorgon Rider, the solitary druid of the King's Forest, has reincarnated as an owlbear. The Eternal Mother gifted the venerable druid with a young body of a monstrosity and allowed him to continue his work by retaining his memories and knowledge. The owlbear knows who it was in its past life, re-named itself Grorrarr, and continued with its duties.

GRORRARR

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)

Skills Medicine +7, Perception +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Druidic
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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Spellcasting. Grorrarr is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, guidance, poison spray, produce flame*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, jump, speak with animals*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, gust of wind, heat metal, spider climb*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, plant growth, speak with plants*
- 4th level (3 slots):, *divination, dominate beast, freedom of movement*, ice storm*
- 5th level (1 slots): *awaken, commune with nature, tree stride*

* Grorrarr casts these spells on itself before combat.

Keen Sight and Smell. Grorrarr has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Land's Stride. Moving through nonmagical difficult terrain costs no extra movement for Grorrarr. It can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard. In addition, Grorrarr has advantage on saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement, such those created by the *entangle* spell.

Natural Recovery. (Recharges after a Long Rest). During a short rest, Grorrarr can choose five expended spell slots to recover.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Grorrarr makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Wild Shape (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Twice per day, Grorrarr can use its action to magically assume the shape of a beast. The beast can be CR 1 or less, with a fly or swimming speed. Grorrarr can stay in a beast shape for four hours. This ability otherwise functions as the wild shape ability of the druid class.

GYGOR

Gygor, the despair giant, took over its tribe after defeating the preceding chieftain, Hymmir, who went mad. The Matrons of Malice soon visited the giant in its dreams and offered it magical powers in return for its servitude. Gygor accepted its new patrons in the hope of protecting itself against the magical powers it found so hard to comprehend. It learned what it could from the witchcraft taught by the hags during his vivid dreams, but it still struggles to utilize them effectively.

GYGOR

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 178 (17d12 + 68)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +1
Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Giant
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

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Spellcasting. Gygor is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 9, +1 to hit with spell attacks). Gygor knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, eldritch blast, true strike*
- 1st-3rd level (2 3rd level slots): *expeditious retreat, fear, fly, hellish rebuke, mirror image*, misty step, protection from evil and good*

*Gygor casts these spells on itself before combat.

Aura of Despair. The despair giant is constantly surrounded by a 10-foot radius aura of despair. A creature within the aura must make a DC 9 Charisma saving throw at the beginning of its turn. On a failed save, the creature suffers disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its turn. On a successful save, the creature is unaffected.

Dark Devotion. Gygor has advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Devil's Sight. Gygor can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 120 feet.

Devoid of Emotions. The despair giant is immune to effects that would alter or modify its emotions.

Hag's Form (Recharges after a Long Rest). As a bonus action, Gygor can magically polymorph into a small or medium humanoid for one hour. Gygor's statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment Gygor is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Gygor reverts to its true form if it dies.

One with Shadows. When Gygor is in an area of dim light or darkness, it can use its action to become *invisible* until it moves or takes an action or a reaction.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The despair giant makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (3d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (3d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Sign of Ill Omen (Recharges after a Long Rest). Gygor can cast *bestow curse* once using a warlock spell slot.

Painful Incantation (Recharges after a Long Rest). As a bonus action, Gygor can choose to use painful incantation when it rolls damage for a spell and force the damaged creature to make a DC 9 Constitution saving throw. On a fail save, the target creature's speed is halved, it has disadvantage on attacks, skill checks, Strength, Dexterity saving throws for 1 minute, and if the target tries to cast a spell during this time, it must first succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or the casting fails and the spell is wasted. A target suffering from this pain can make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, the pain ends.

HAGSPAWN TEMPLATE

Hagspawns are either born to hags or women who mated with a hag that took on a male form. These women usually die during birthing the ugly and physically disfigured hagspawn. If they survive the fear and ire of the community, these children are often abandoned, left to survive on their own, or kept hidden from society. They are usually evil individuals who keep their powers secret and find it hard to fit into their despised societies.

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HAGSPAWN TEMPLATE

Only a humanoid can become a hagspawn. It otherwise retains its statistics, except as follows.

Alignment. A hagspawn is always evil.

Blessing of the Hagmother's Milk. Hagspawn are immune to the charmed and poisoned condition.

Claws. The hagspawn is proficient with its unarmed strikes, which deal 1d4 slashing damage on a hit.

False Appearance. The hagspawn can cast the *alter self* spell. A hagspawn can't use this feature again until it finishes a long rest.

Unnatural Strength. A hagspawn has a minimum Strength score of 16.

Senses. The hagspawn gains darkvision with a radius of 60 feet.

Regeneration. The hagspawn regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the hagspawn takes radiant damage or damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the hagspawn's next turn. The hagspawn dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

HAGTREE

The ancient sentient tree created by the Seven Flowers thousands of years ago was corrupted by the Matrons of Malice upon their rise to power. They imprisoned the souls of the hags who resisted their rule or challenged them into the tree, thereby creating the Hagtree. The midnight hag coven closed the planar entries to their newly conquered Feyrealm domain and narrowed down the option to enter from any of the coexistent planes only through the Hagtree itself. The devious and vile hags bound to the tree allow passage to the other planes only if one sacrifices a virtue to them, which they request rather greedily.

HAGTREE

Huge plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)

Skills Deception +11, Insight +7, Perception +11
Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Abyssal, Common, Druidic, Infernal, Sylvan, but can't speak, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

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Innate Spellcasting. The Hagtree's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *detect magic, detect evil and good, magic missile, see invisibility*

All-around Vision. The Hagtree can not be surprised and has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Magic Resistance. The Hagtree has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Planar Coexistence. The Hagtree exists simultaneously on all of the coexistent planes, namely the Ethereal, Feyrealm, Material Plane, the Shadowrealm. It can see through and affect creatures on these planes with its spells and attacks.

Regeneration. The Hagtree regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the hagtree takes fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the hagtree's next turn. The Hagtree dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Siege Monster. The Hagtree deals double damage to objects and structures.

Soul Burst. When the Hagtree dies, it explodes with the souls of the hags and victims imprisoned inside it, their souls bursting through any creatures in the area of effect. Each creature within 30 feet of it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, taking (15d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Any creature who has sacrificed a virtue to the Hagtree while passing through it to another plane immediately recovers its sacrifice.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Hagtree makes two slam attacks.
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. The target creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become cursed. While cursed, the target must make a Wisdom saving throw at the start of each of its turns. If it fails, it wastes its action that turn doing nothing. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Animate Trees (1/Day). The Hagtree magically animates three trees it can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the same statistics as a treant, except they have Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Slam action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of the Hagtree. The tree remains animate for 1 day or until it dies; until the treant dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until the hagtree takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The tree then takes root if possible.

HAURIS

Hauris is a crafty doppelganger agent of the Golden Masks, overseeing the gambling operations of the organization. He runs the Triple Nine Gambling Hall, the primary source of gambling income for the criminal organization. Heuris also masterminds and undertakes daring cons and heists in Onadbyr under the guise of multiple personalities and its lies bolstered by bardic abilities. Hauris will not pause to bend opponents to its will and is a vengeful creature if anyone should dare to interfere in its schemes.

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HAURIS

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger, doppelganger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +5
Skills Deception +7, Insight +3, Intimidation +7, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +7
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Thieves' cant
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shapechanger. Hauris can use its action to polymorph into a small or medium humanoid it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Spellcasting. Hauris is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Hauris has the following bard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *message, minor illusion*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, heroism*, hideous laughter, illusory script*
- 2nd level (2 slots): *invisibility, suggestion*

*Hauris casts these spells on itself before combat.

Ambusher. In the first round of a combat, Hauris has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Battle Feint (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Hauris can attack with a feint, choosing one creature within 5 feet of it as the target. The target must attempt a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check. On a failed check, Hauris has advantage on its melee attack rolls against that creature and the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of Hauris' next turn.

Jack of All Trades. Hauris can add +1 to any ability checks he makes that doesn't already include his proficiency bonus.

Surprise Attack. If Hauris surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage from the attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hauris makes two melee attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Captivating Monologue (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If Hauris talks to an audience for at least 1 minute, it can attempt to captivate them with style and colorful phrases. At the end of the performance, Hauris can choose 3 humanoids within 60 feet of it who watched and listened to the monologue. Each target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. While charmed in this way, the target has disadvantage on all Wisdom (Insight) checks against Hauris. This effect ends on the target after 1 hour, if it takes any damage, if Hauris attacks it, or if it witnesses Hauris attacking or damaging any of its allies. If a target succeeds on its saving throw, the target has no hint that Hauris tried to charm it.

Read Thoughts. Hauris magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 ft. of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 ft. of wood or dirt, 2 ft. of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, Hauris can continue reading the target's thoughts, as long

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as its concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, Hauris has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

HEIR OF ENTROPY

As inheritors of the bloodline of chaos, these sorcerers are true manifestations of entropy, bending the natural order of reality around them and destroying matter with their touch. These entropists are true believers in the power of their heritage and fanatically strive to bring about the eventual ruin of everything into chaos. In Aglarion, the heirs of entropy share the bloodline of Lord Ziademos Gorso, which grants them the sorcerous powers of the Elemental Chaos.

HEIR OF ENTROPY

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)
Hit Points 13 (3d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +2, Cha +4
Skills Arcana +3, Religion +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common and two other
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Spellcasting. The heir of entropy is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The heir of entropy has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, message, shocking grasp, true strike*

- 1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, magic missile*
- 2nd level (2 slots): *misty step, shatter*

*The heir of entropy casts these spells on itself before combat.

Aura of Entropy. The heir of entropy emanates an aura of entropy that interferes with the natural order of reality. The radius of the aura is 5 feet. Within this area, objects cannot be repaired (ex.: by *mending* spell) Additionally, all healing effects are hampered by the aura and require a DC 10 Constitution saving throw to function.

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Careful Spell. When the heir of entropy casts a spell that forces other creatures to make a saving throw, it can protect some of those creatures from the spell's full force. To do so, it can spend 1 sorcery point and choose two of those creatures. A chosen creature automatically succeeds on its saving throw against the spell.

Empowered Spell. When the heir of entropy rolls damage for a spell, you can spend 1 sorcery point to reroll two of the damage dice. The heir of entropy must use the new rolls. The heir of entropy can use empowered spell even if it has already used a different metamagic option during the casting of the spell.

Font of Magic (Recharges after a Long Rest). The heir of entropy has three sorcery points. As a bonus action the heir of entropy can transform unexpended sorcery points into one spell slot on its turn, a 1st level spell slot for 2 points and a 2nd level spell slot for 3 slots. Alternatively, the heir of entropy can expend one spell slot and gain a number of sorcery points equal to the slot's level.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Touch of Entropy. The heir of entropy can destroy objects with its touch. If the object isn't being worn or carried, the touch of the heir of entropy destroys a tiny object. If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, the creature can make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid the touch of the heir of entropy. If the object touched is a non-magical weapon being carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. If the object touched is either a nonmagical armor or a nonmagical shield being worn or carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed.

IARA

These creatures are the cursed offspring of hags that mated with intelligent aquatic creatures. The iara hunt small bodies of water and feed on intelligent lifeforms that fall prey to their luring scent or spells. These creatures naturally feel inferior to hags and act subserviently towards them, offering their slaves and even their treasure to them.

IARA

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 49 (9d8 + 9)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Damage immunities poison
Condition immunities poisoned
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Aquan, Common, Sylvan
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The iara's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

- At will: *bane, vicious mockery*
- 1/day each: *charm person, hideous laughter*

Amphibious. The iara can breathe air and water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The iara makes two attacks with its claw.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage and 3 (1d6) poison damage.

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Luring Scent. The iara emits a mesmerizing scent. Every creature within 300 feet of the iara that can smell its luring scent must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed. The scent ends if the iara is incapacitated. While charmed by the iara, a target is incapacitated, ignores the scent of other iara, and perceives the iara as a beautiful woman of its own race and regards it as its true love. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the iara, the target must move on its turn toward the iara by the most direct route, trying to get within 5 feet. It doesn't avoid opportunity attacks, but before moving into damaging terrain, such as lava or a pit, and whenever it takes damage from a source other than the iara, the target can repeat the saving throw. A charmed target can also repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. If the saving throw is successful, the effect ends on it. A target that successfully saves is immune to this iara's song for the next 24 hours.

INCUBUS PIRATE

Incubus pirates pillage the coasts of the Styx, the multiverse, or even the Material Plane for loot and slaves. They often serve as crews on planar vessels captained by greater fiends. They are hardened sailors who employ roguish tactics in addition to the guiles ebbing from their fiendish natures. They are masters of infiltration and often break down their targets' defenses before storming them in full force.

INCUBUS PIRATE

Medium fiend (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +11, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +11, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

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Shapechanger. The incubus pirate can use its action to polymorph into a small or medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Without wings, the fiend loses its flying speed. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Evasion. The incubus pirate can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects. When it is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the incubus pirate instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The incubus pirate deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of his that isn't incapacitated and the incubus pirate doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Telepathic Bond. The incubus pirate ignores the range restriction on its telepathy when communicating with a creature it has charmed. The two don't even need to be on the same plane of existence.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The incubus pirate makes two melee attacks with its scimitar or claw.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Claw (Fiend Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Charm. One humanoid the incubus pirate can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the incubus pirate's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target suffers any harm or receives a suicidal command, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to the incubus pirate's charm for the next 24 hours. The incubus pirate can have only one target charmed at a time. If it charms another, the effect on the previous target ends.

Draining Kiss. The incubus pirate kisses a creature charmed by it or a willing creature. The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Etherealness. As a bonus action, the incubus pirate magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

EQUIPMENT

An incubus pirate has thieves' tools, a *potion of healing*, and 75 gold pieces on its person.

INHERITOR OF THE UNBEGOTTEN

Inheritors of the Unbegotten are nobles of the drow House Ausstyl. They have been, since the dawn of the Feyrealm, venerating unimaginable aberrations that have infused both their bodies and minds. These druids are fanatically dedicated to the fleshwarping traditions of their circle and nurture such aberrant implants as regular druids grow plants or raise animals. Their secrets and incomprehensible agenda originate from the Farrealm and drive them with a sadistic and cruel desire to conquer the world.

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INHERITOR OF THE UNBEGOTTEN

Medium humanoid (drow), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (chuul carapace breast plate)
Hit Points 45 (10d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +8
Skills Intimidation +5, Nature +5, Perception +8, Religion +5, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Elvish, Undercommon, Deep Speech, Druidic, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dancing lights*
- 1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*

Spellcasting. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, druidcraft, poison spray, resistance, shillelagh*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, goodberry*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, detect thoughts, heat metal, hold person, lesser restoration, spider climb*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, gaseous form, spirit guardians, water breathing, wind wall*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, black tentacles, confusion, freedom of movement**
- 5th level (2 slots): *antilife shell, contact other plane, hallow, mass cure wounds*

*The Inheritor of the Unbegotten casts these spells on itself before combat.

Alien Anatomy. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Alien Mind. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being frightened. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten are immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

Fey Ancestry. Magic can't put the Inheritor of the Unbegotten to sleep.

Incomprehensible Intellect. The thoughts of the Inheritor of the Unbegotten can't be read by magical means and it is immune to being charmed.

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Limited Telepathy. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Unsettling Appearance. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the Inheritor of the Unbegotten has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight

Voice of the Void. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten can make itself understood with aberrations that don't speak Dark Speech or are not capable of speech.

ACTIONS

Whip of Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on DC 11 Constitution save or become poisoned for one minute. The target can attempt a new save at the end of its turn. A successful save ends the poisoned condition.

Enslave (Recharges after a Long Rest). The Inheritor of the Unbegotten can cast the *dominate person* spell without expending a spell slot or material components.

Wild Shape (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Twice per day, the Inheritor of the Unbegotten can use its action to magically assume the shape of a beast. The beast can be CR 1 or less, with a fly or swimming speed. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten can stay in beast shape for five hours. This ability otherwise functions as the wild shape ability of the druid class.

Manifest Aberrant Trait. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten can expend one use of its Wild Shape feature to emulate one special trait of any aberration type creature of CR 3 or lower for one minute. If there is a saving throw associated with the special trait then the saving throw is made against DC 16.

EQUIPMENT

An Inheritor of the Unbegotten carries a *whip of tentacles*.

INTERDIMENSIONAL STRANGLER

These abominations are the hunters of the aberrations from the Farrealm. No creature can escape their interdimensional receptacles and tentacles that both know no boundaries. Once in the paralyzing grasp of the interdimensional strangler, the victim is prevented from escaping. Interdimensional stranglers are known to hold such victims for eternity on the Farrealm where time and space have no meaning.

INTERDIMENSIONAL STRANGLER

Huge aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 12 (natural)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +7, Wis +8
Skills Intimidation +10, Insight +8,
Condition Immunities charmed, prone
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Can't speak but understands Common, Undercommon, Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

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Innate Spellcasting. The interdimensional strangler's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

- At will: *detect thoughts, dimension door, plane shift, ray of enfeeblement, scrying*

Dimensional Tethering. A creature grappled by the tentacles of the interdimensional strangler is prevented from changing its location by using any means of dimensional movement, teleportation, or planar travel.

Interdimensional Scrying. The interdimensional strangler can see and hear a particular creature that it is targeting with a *scrying* spell even if the target creature is not on the same plane as the interdimensional strangler.

Interdimensional Tentacles. The interdimensional strangler can extend its tentacles into any location that it has already seen. This location can be on any plane of existence. The interdimensional strangler can attempt to drag a huge size or smaller creature that it has grappled over to the place it currently inhabits, even if the target is on anoth-

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er plane of existence. A creature pulled through the dimensions this way must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is pulled from the other dimension and appears within 20 feet of the interdimensional strangler. When reaching to another plane and being separated from its body, a tentacle has AC 12 and 20 hit points. Any nondamaging spell or effect that targets the tentacle also targets the interdimensional strangler. Whenever a tentacle's hit points reach 0 hit points it is severed and the interdimensional strangler takes 10 hit points of damage. At the end of its turn, the interdimensional strangler grows a tentacle to replace the tentacle that was severed since its last turn. The interdimensional strangler regains 10 hit points for a tentacle regrown this way.

Magic Resistance. The interdimensional strangler has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The interdimensional strangler makes three tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. The target creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. The interdimensional strangler has six tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

JASMIN JOHANDULC

Born in Eldorn in the Drayl City-States, Jasmin Johandulc was the adventuring partner of Jorar Drayl, the lord of Eldorn, a famed monster hunter. Once she distanced herself from her lord, Jasmin Johandulc founded a mercenary company called the Ravens of Winter and has been leading them for countless years. The mercenary captain seems ageless, however, her prowess on the battlefield speaks of lifetimes of battles. She values loyalty above all and handles disloyal members of his company with a firm hand, and immediate expulsion.

JASMIN JOHANDULC

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +7
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +7
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Jasmin Johandulc is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Jasmin Johandulc has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, shocking grasp*
- 1st level (4 slots): *feather fall, jump, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow, scorching ray*
- 3rd level (2 slots): *fireball, lightning bolt*

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Action Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Jasmin Johandulc can take one additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action. Jasmin Johandulc can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that she can see when using Action Surge.

Iron Will. Jasmin Johandulc has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened.

Ready For Anything. At the start of her turn, Jasmin Johandulc can use an action to gain advantage on her next saving throw. She loses this advantage at the end of her next turn.

Battlecaster (1/Turn). Jasmin Johandulc can choose to cast a cantrip instead of an attack as part of an attack action.

Indomitable (2/Day, Recharges after a Long Rest). Jasmin Johandulc can reroll a saving throw that she fails. If she does so, she must use the new roll.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Jasmin Johandulc can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 20 (1d10 + 15).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Jasmin Johandulc makes three melee attacks with Susano and one attack with Sunna.

+1 Longsword (Susano). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) lightning damage.

+1 Longsword (Sunna). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

EQUIPMENT

Jasmin Johandulc wields two identical *+1 longswords* with two different gems inserted into their pommels - a deep blue one that seems to have a storm inside and a burning red one that is warm to the touch and seems to sparkle with a flame inside - infusing them with the elemental energies of lightning and fire.

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KELZAR

Kelzar the troll has molded a pair of one of its family members' arms to its torso, the eyes of some beasts to the back of its head, and the gills of a merrow on its neck to enhance an already menacing body. The mutated troll considers the Ulden Swamps its kingdom and loathes all who enter its domain.

KELZAR

Huge giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Giant
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

All-around Vision. Kelzar can not be surprised and has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Amphibious. Kelzar can breathe air and water.

Keen Smell. Kelzar has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. Kelzar regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If Kelzar takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of Kelzar's next turn. Kelzar dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kelzar makes five attacks: one with its bite and four with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

KNIGHT OF THE CROWN

One of a few dozen, these pious paladin champions of the realm swear a lifelong Oath of Protection to the crown and the kingdom. Knights of the Crown are held in the highest esteem throughout the realm, serve in the front lines in times of war, and act as personal guards to the royal family and the royal palace.

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KNIGHT OF THE CROWN

Medium humanoid (human), any lawful

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +5 (+2 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Athletics +6, Insight +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. The Knight of the Crown is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The Knight of the Crown has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, divine favor, heroism, protection from evil and good, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (2 slots): *magic weapon*, protection from poison, warding bond**

*The knight of the crown casts these spells on itself before combat.

Aura of Protection. Whenever the Knight of the Crown or a friendly creature within 10 feet of it must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to the knight of the Crown's Charisma modifier (+2). The Knight of the Crown must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Divine Health. The Knight of the Crown is immune to disease.

Divine Smite. When the Knight of the Crown hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, or 13 (3d8) for a 2nd-level spell slot. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Knight of the Crown makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

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Divine Sense (3/Day). The Knight of the Crown can detect evil forces. Until the end of its next turn, the Knight of the Crown knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of it that is not behind total cover. It knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence it senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, the Knight of the Crown also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Lay on Hands (Recharges after a Long Rest). The Knight of the Crown can touch a creature and draw power from its pool of 30 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in its pool. Alternatively, the Knight of the Crown can expend 5 hit points from its pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. The Knight of the Crown can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Oath of Protection (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). The Knight of the Crown can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects.

- ***Vow of Protection***. The Knight of the Crown can use its Oath of Protection to bolster its defenses. As a bonus action, it can utter a vow of protection against a creature that it can see within 30 feet. That creature gains disadvantage on attack rolls against the Knight of the Crown for 1 minute or until the Knight of the Crown drops to 0 hit points or falls unconscious.

- ***Divine Ward.*** The Knight of the Crown can use its Oath of Protection to offer protection to those around it. It can present its holy symbol and each creature of its choice that it can see within 30 feet becomes warded for 1 minute. Any creature who targets a warded creature with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This effect doesn't protect the warded creature from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball. If the warded creature makes an attack or casts a spell that affects an enemy creature, this effect ends. This effect ends on the creature if the Knight is incapacitated or dies or if the warded creature is more than 30 feet away from it.

REACTIONS

Protection. When a creature the Knight of the Crown can see attacks a target other than the Knight of the Crown that is within 5 feet of the Knight, the Knight of the Crown can use its reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. The Knight of the Crown must be wielding a shield to use this feature.

KRASNAR AZENNAR

Krasnar Azennar, the first son of King Waldrann Azennar has a dark and tormented past. His selfish father betrayed him at an early age, and his hatred and thirst for revenge led him into the arms of the Matrons of Malice. The ex-paladin turned hexblade died when he confronted his father on the Feyrealm and soon found himself as the risen slave of his own warlock patrons who had torn away half of his soul. When the drow of House Ausstyl invaded the hags, they captured the tormented boy and turned him into a half-aberration by infusing his body with a being from beyond reality. They offered him a chance to take revenge on the midnight hags and to ravage the surface of the Feyrealm as he pleases. The once prince, now mutated monster Krasnar Azennar has the remaining half of his soul filled with anger, hatred, and an uncontrollable desire to destroy everything that was once either his ally or enemy.

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KRASNAR AZENNAR

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (+1 plate)
Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +7 (+3 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +7, Perception +5
Damage Resistances psychic
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Spellcasting. Krasnar Azennar is a 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Krasnar Azennar has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, divine favor, shield of faith**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *aid**, *branding smite, lesser restoration,*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*

Krasnar Azennar is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Krasnar Azennar knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, true strike*
- 1st-2th level (2 2nd level slots): *blindness/deafness, mirror image**, *protection from evil and good, ray of enfeeblement*

*Krasnar Azennar casts these spells on himself before combat.

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Agile Tentacles. Krasnar Azennar has two additional tentacle limbs that he can use to manipulate objects within a reach of 5 feet. He is considered to be proficient with these tentacles when making unarmed attacks with them. He can attack with both tentacles as a bonus action. Each hit with a tentacle causes 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Alien Anatomy. Krasnar Azennar is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains his original creature type.

Alien Mind. Krasnar Azennar has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being charmed. Krasnar Azennar is immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

Aura of Menace. Each creature of Krasnar Azennar's choice that is within 10 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Aura of Protection. Whenever Krasnar Azennar or a friendly creature within 10 feet of him must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to Krasnar Azennar's Charisma modifier of +2. Krasnar Azennar must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Divine Health. Krasnar Azennar is immune to disease.

Great Weapon Fighting. When Krasnar Azennar rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Hag's Form (Recharges after a Long Rest). Krasnar Azennar can magically polymorph into a small or medium humanoid for one hour. His statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.

Limited Telepathy. Krasnar Azennar can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of him that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Unholy Smite. When Krasnar Azennar hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal necrotic damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 4 (1d8) for each spell level higher than 1st. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is a paladin or celestial.

Unsettling Appearance. Krasnar Azennar has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Krasnar Azennar makes two attacks with his glaive and two attacks with his tentacles, or two attacks with his glaive and casts a spell.

+2 Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d10 + 7) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

+1 Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Divine Sense (4/Day). Krasnar Azennar can detect evil forces. Until the end of its next turn, Krasnar Azennar knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of it that is not behind total cover. It knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, Krasnar Azennar also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

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Hand of Doom. Krasnar Azennar can touch a creature and draw power from his pool of 55 hit points to cause necrotic damage to a creature touched, up to the maximum amount remaining in its pool. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

REACTIONS

Deflection. When another creature damages Krasnar Azennar or his ally within 5 feet with a melee attack, he can use his reaction to reduce the damage by 6 (1d6 + 3) points.

Protection. When a creature Krasnar Azennar can see attacks a target other than Krasnar Azennar that is within 5 feet of Krasnar Azennar, he can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

EQUIPMENT

Karnar Azennar wields a *+2 glaive*, carries a *+1 heavy crossbow*, and wears a *+1 plate armor*.

LORD CYNE MONDER

The current high commander of the Knights of the Crown, Crownwarden Lord Cyne Monder is an aging paladin of great renown, a noble of an ancient lineage of dwarves with a sordid past, the Monders. As a result of his forebear's folly in attacking the Isles of Xantharos, the family pledged every firstborn of the line to protect the crown, and Lord Cyne Monder is the latest to serve. He is doing his best to rebuild the reputation of his house, his oath binding him to protect the crown, his sovereign, and realm.

LORD CYNE MONDER

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful good

Armor Class 21 (plate, *animated shield*; 22 if there are allies within 5 ft., defense)
Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +6 (+2 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Insight +6, Persuasion +6
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Lord Cyne Monder is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Lord Cyne Monder has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, heroism, protection from evil and good, shield of faith**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *aid, branding smite, lesser restoration, protection from poison**
- 3rd level (2 slots): *magic circle, protection from energy, remove curse, revivify*

*Lord Cyne Monder casts these spells on himself before combat.

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Aura of Protection. Whenever Lord Cyne Monder or a friendly creature within 10 feet of him must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to Lord Cyne Monder's Charisma modifier (+2). Lord Cyne Monder must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Defense. When Lord Cyne Monder is wearing armor, he gains a +1 bonus to AC.

Divine Health. Lord Cyne Monder is immune to disease.

Divine Smite. When Lord Cyne Monder hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal radiant damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, 13 (3d8) for a 2nd-level spell slot, or 18 (4d8) for a 3rd-level spell slot. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.

Dwarven Resilience. Lord Cyne Monder has advantage on saving throws against poison, and resistance against poison damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lord Cyne Monder makes two melee attacks.

+1 Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Divine Sense (3/Day). Lord Cyne Monder can detect evil forces. Until the end of its next turn, he knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of him that is not behind total cover. He knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, Lord Cyne Monder also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Lay on Hands (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Cyne Monder can touch a creature and draw power from his pool of 45 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in his pool. Alternatively, Lord Cyne Monder can expend 5 hit points from his pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. Lord Cyne Monder can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Oath of Protection (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Lord Cyne Monder can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects.

- ***Vow of Protection***. Lord Cyne Monder can use his Oath of Protection to bolster his defenses. As a bonus action, he can utter a vow of protection against a creature that it can see within 30 feet. That creature gains disadvantage on attack rolls against the Lord Cyne Monder for 1 minute or until the Lord Cyne Monder drops to 0 hit points or falls unconscious.

- ***Divine Ward.*** Lord Cyne Monder can use his Oath of Protection to ward off threat to those around him. He can present his holy symbol and each creature of his choice that he can see within 30 feet becomes warded for 1 minute. Any creature who targets a warded creature with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This effect doesn't protect the warded creature from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball. If the warded creature makes an attack or casts a spell that affects an enemy creature, this effect ends. This effect ends on the creature if Lord Cyne Monder is incapacitated or dies or if the warded creature is more than 30 feet away from it.

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REACTIONS

Dedicated Defender. Lord Cyne Monder can deflect attacks against those whom he protects. When another creature damages Lord Cyne Monder or an ally within 5 feet of him with a melee attack, Lord Cyne Monder can use his reaction to reduce the damage by 1d6 + 2.

Guardian. Lord Cyne Monder can protect his allies and sense danger before it happens. He gain the following benefits:

- As a reaction, Lord Cyne Monder can protect an ally within 5 feet from him from an attack of opportunity. If he uses this action, the attack automatically misses.
- When an ally who is within 5 feet of Lord Cyne Monder is attacked, he can shield them with his body. As a reaction, Lord Cyne Monder can switch the target of the attack to himself, using his own AC to determine if the attack hits and taking damage if it does.

Protection. When a creature Lord Cyne Monder can see attacks a target other than him that is within 5 feet, the Lord Cyne Monder can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. Lord Cyne Monder must be wielding a shield to use this feature.

EQUIPMENT

Lord Cyne Monder has 12 copper pieces, 15 silver pieces, 63 gold pieces, a *+1 maul*, an *animated shield*, his plate armor, and his ivory holy symbol worth 50 gold pieces on his person.

LORD ZIADEMOS GORSO

After the death of his wife, the late Highlady Urmissa, Lord Ziademos Gorso fell apart and escaped to total seclusion in his chambers for several years, refusing to accept food, aid, or contact from anyone, including his daughter and numerous sons. It was a mystery how he sustained himself, but one day he emerged from his room stinking, naked, covered in strange sigils, and a crazed look in his eyes. The lord's mad contemplations led him in the service of the entity he refers to as the Elemental Chaos. The crazed noble struck a pact with his patron, which gave him warlock powers and the ability to sire a bloodline with sorcerous powers of chaos. His numerous children and grandchildren are all born with these magical powers that help them spread chaos in the world and the village is filled with the children of the Gorsos, who all carry the chaotic bloodline of their progenitors.

LORD ZIADEMOS GORSO

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +5, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +5, Religion +5
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

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Spellcasting. Lord Ziademos Gorso is an 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, mage hand, message, minor illusion, poison spray, true strike, vicious mockery*
- 1st-5th level (3 5th level slots): *bane, bless*, blink, confusion, contact other plane, hold monster, hypnotic pattern, infuse with entropy, mirror image, polymorph, shatter*

*Lord Ziademos Gorso casts these spells on itself before combat.

Agonizing Blast. When Lord Ziademos Gorso casts *eldritch blast*, he adds his Charisma modifier (+4) to the damage he deals on a hit.

Minions of Chaos (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso can cast *conjure elemental* once using a warlock spell slot.

Mystic Arcanum (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso can cast *eyebite* once without expending a spell slot.

Misty Visions. Lord Ziademos Gorsocan cast *silent image* at will, without expending a spell slot or material components.

Order in Chaos (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso can manipulate the energies of his spells for optimal effect. For any spell that requires a dice roll, he can roll twice and take the desired roll. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Sign of Ill Omen (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso can cast *bestow curse* once using a warlock spell slot.

Visions of Distant Realms (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso can cast *arcane eye* at will, without expending a spell slot.

Wild Magic (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso's spells can have unforeseen consequences. Five times per day, he can choose to apply a Wild Magic Surge effect immediately after he casts the spell. Roll for a random effect on the Wild Magic Surge table on page 104 of the Player's Handbook.

ACTIONS

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

REACTIONS

Flows of Chaos (Recharges after a Long Rest). Lord Ziademos Gorso can manipulate fate using the power of chaos. Four times per day, when any creature makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can use his reaction to roll 1d6 and apply the number rolled as a bonus or penalty to the creature's roll. He can do so after the creature rolls but before any effects of the roll occur.

EQUIPMENT

Lord Ziademos Gorso wears the *silver torc of the tower* and wields a *unicorn horn cudgel*.

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MALZDREZIRET, THE SCALED IMPOSTOR

Malzdreziret, the Scaled Impostor, is a shape-changing dragon that hails from the Bleak Mire. It was tricked by the Matrons of Malice to attack Aglarion a century ago when it ravaged the capital, to be finally driven off by King Daerios Azennar, father of King Waldrann Azennar. In its defeat, it plotted vengeance against the Matrons of Malice, who promised easy prey and treasure, and joined the aberrant drow house Ausstyl in their plans against the hags. Later, when Krasnar was inducted into House Ausstyl, the Inheritors of the Unbegotten arranged an alliance between Malzdreziret and Krasnar where the doppeldrake accepted the aberrant prince as its rider. It serves Krasnar in this capacity, exultant at the opportunity to get back at the hags.

MALZDREZIRET, THE SCALED IMPOSTOR

Huge dragon, neutral evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +10, Wis +8, Cha +10
Skills Deception +15, Insight +8, Perception +13
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

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Shapechanger. Malzdreziret can use its action to polymorph into a huge dragon it has seen, or back into its true form. Malzdreziret's game statistics are replaced by the statistics of the chosen creature, though it otherwise retains its alignment and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Malzdreziret also otherwise retains all its skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature. If the creature has the same proficiency as Malzdreziret, and the bonus listed in its statistics is higher than its bonus, use the creature's bonus in place of Malzdreziret's. Malzdreziret otherwise retains its own hit points, hit dice, and legendary actions in the new form.

Ambusher. Malzdreziret has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Malzdreziret fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Surprise Attack. If Malzdreziret surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 17 (5d6) damage from the attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Malzdreziret can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 18 (2d10 + 7) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) lightning damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 16 (2d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Malzdreziret's choice that is within 120 feet of Malzdreziret and aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Malzdreziret's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Read Thoughts. Malzdreziret magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, Malzdreziret can continue reading its thoughts, as long as Malzdreziret's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, Malzdreziret has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Detect. Malzdreziret makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Tail Attack. Malzdreziret makes a tail attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Malzdreziret beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of Malzdreziret must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (2d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. Malzdreziret can then fly up to half its flying speed.

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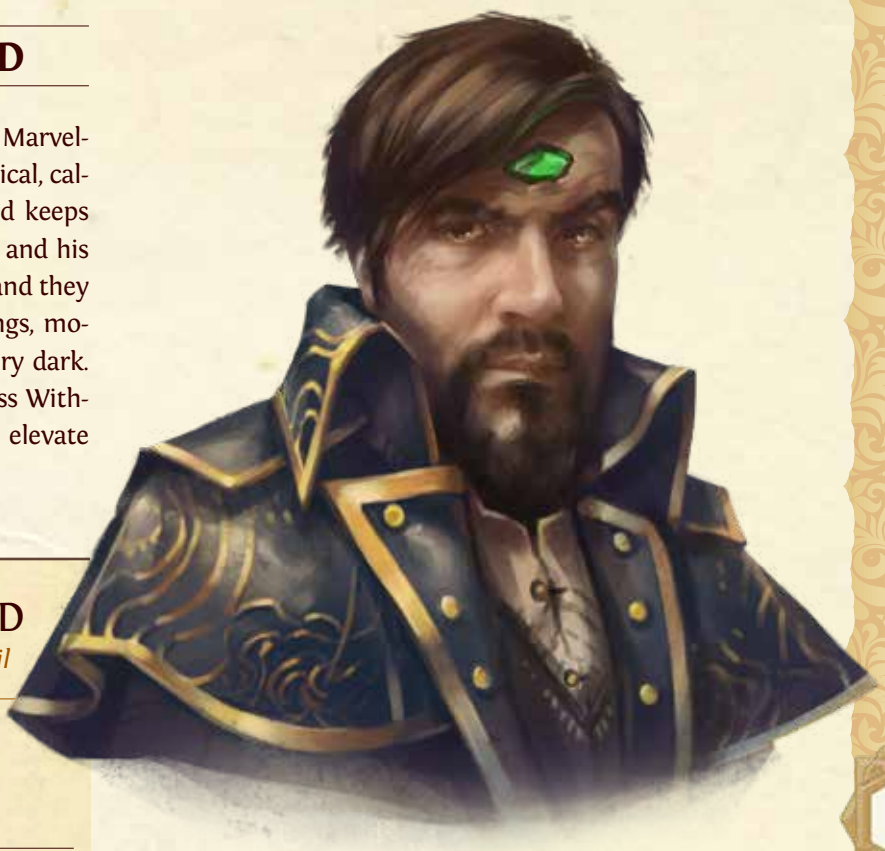
MASTER BERTIO RANBERD

The owner and professor of the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities is a man of few words. He is a practical, calculating wizard who only speaks if needed and keeps everything in rigorous order around his school and his shop. His students don't really know him well, and they don't know anything about his personal dealings, motivations, and background, which is literally very dark. Master Bertio Ranberd is a cleric of the Darkness Within, a dogmatist and irredentist who wishes to elevate his status by serving the fallen angels.



MASTER BERTIO RANBERD

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (*mithral chain shirt*)
Hit Points 58 (13d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +7
Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Insight +7, Perception +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Master Bertio Ranberd casts spells as a 11th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Master Bertio Ranberd has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, message, minor illusion, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, identify, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, hold person, scorching ray*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, glyph of warding*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, black tentacles, dimension door*
- 5th level (2 slots): *arcane hand, cone of cold*
- 6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate*

Master Bertio Ranberd casts spells as a 3rd level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Master Bertio Ranberd has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance, resistance, spare the dying*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary, shield of faith**
- 2nd Level (2 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

*Master Bertio Ranberd casts these spells before combat.

Advanced Alarm. The duration of an *alarm* spell cast by Master Bertio Ranberd becomes 24 hours and it is both mental and audible. Master Bertio Ranberd's can also designate other willing creatures to be alerted by his *alarm* spell's mental alert.

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Contingent Spell. A spell *resilient sphere* comes into effect around Master Bertio Ranberd immediately when he falls below 31 hit points.

Tenacious Abjurations. An attempt to dispel Master Bertio Ranberd's 3rd or lower level abjuration spells require an ability check. All ability checks made to dispel an abjuration spell cast by Master Bertio Ranberd have disadvantage.

ACTIONS

+1 Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

Cloak of Darkness. Master Bertio Ranberd can weave shadows around himself into a magical cloak that hides his form and protects him from attacks. For 1 minute, creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against Master Bertio Ranberd. An attacker is immune to this effect if it doesn't rely on sight, as with blindsight or tremorsense, or can see through illusions, as with truesight. Once Master Bertio Ranberd uses this feature, he can't use it again until he finishes a short or long rest.

Empowered Glyph (Recharges after a Long Rest). Master Bertio Ranberd can cast the *glyph of warding* spell as an action and reroll five of the damage dice when using the spell's explosive runes option. Master Bertio Ranberd must use the new rolls.

Channel Divinity. (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Master Bertio Ranberd can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects.

- ***Darkness Descends.*** Master Bertio Ranberd can use his *channel divinity* to harness darkness, summoning darkness and banishing light. Master Bertio Ranberd presents his holy symbol, and summons a 30 foot radius globe of darkness that functions as the *darkness* spell. The globe appears in a space that he can see within 30 feet. Any magical light effect within the globe is dispelled. Additionally, each hostile creature within the globe must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that has total cover from Master Bertio Ranberd is not affected.

- ***Turn Undead.*** Master Bertio Ranberd presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead that can see or hear him within 30 feet must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

EQUIPMENT

Master Bertio Ranberd has 2 copper pieces, 5 silver pieces, 32 gold pieces, a holy symbol of the Darkness Within made out of jet worth 60 gold pieces, a *mithral chain shirt*, a *wand of fire manipulation*, a *+1 dagger*, a *potion of superior healing*, a *potion of invisibility*, and a *potion of speed* on his person.

MENAGERIE CARETAKER

Menagerie Caretakers are rangers who specialize in handling and tending for beasts and monstrosities, specializing as monster tamers. Their knowledge and everyday practices sometimes bring them into wilderness areas when beasts or monsters need to be subdued by skill or spells.

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Menagerie Caretakers are usually not the most social of people, preferring to spend time in the presence of beats or monsters, with whom they share a closer affinity.

MENAGERIE CARETAKER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Animal Handling +4, Nature +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The menagerie caretaker is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The menagerie caretaker has the following ranger spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slot): *hunter's mark*, longstrider*, speak with animals*
- 2nd level (2 slot): *locate animals or plants, pass without trace, silence*

*The menagerie caretaker casts these spells before combat.

Bestial Affinity. The menagerie caretaker can use its body language and soothing sounds to calm animals and monsters. The menagerie caretaker gains advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) skill checks made to calm beats and monstrosities with an Intelligence score or 3 or lower.

Favored Enemies. The menagerie caretaker's chosen favored enemies are beasts and monstrosities. The caretaker has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track its favored enemies, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Natural Explorer. The menagerie caretaker's chosen natural environments are forests and grasslands. When the caretaker makes an Intelligence or Wisdom check related to its favored terrain, its proficiency bonus is doubled (to +4) if it is using a skill that it's proficient in.

Sense Beasts. The menagerie caretaker can detect hostile animals and monsters. It senses the direction to the location of the highest challenge rating beast or monstrosity and it can tell its distance from itself, as long as the creature is within 1,000 feet of it. If the creature is moving, it knows the direction of its movement. Once the menagerie caretaker uses this feature, it can't use it again until it finishes a short or long rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The menagerie caretaker makes two melee attacks or ranged attacks.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

EQUIPMENT

The menagerie caretaker has 4 copper pieces, 5 silver pieces, 19 gold pieces and a *leash of the beast tamer* on his person.

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MIDNIGHT HAG

One of the most malicious, evil, and wicked of all the hags, the midnight hags are mighty primordial night hags. Their existence is a curse by itself. They seek to spread misery and suffering by exploiting the weaknesses of others to cause as much pain as possible to as many they can. Midnight hags prefer to prolong the suffering of their victims and joyfully bathe in the tears and blood of those they torment. The souls of those whom they don't kill, eat, torture, or use for their vile practices in another way are crafted into objects by the midnight hags. Their soulbinding skills are so developed that they can even create phylacteries or give sentience to objects by implanting them with a soul.

MIDNIGHT HAG

Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 180 (24d8 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Int +9, Wis +8, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +9, Deception +11, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Primordial
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The midnight hag's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

- At will: *detect magic, magic missile*
- 2/day each: *awaken, bestow curse, detect thoughts, dimension door, dream, levitate, plane shift* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement, scrying, sleep, wall of force*

Magic Resistance. The midnight hag has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

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Midnight Power Surge. The midnight hag becomes more powerful at midnight when on the Material Plane. It gains the following benefits for an hour:

- The midnight hag's innate spells function as if they were cast using two spell slot levels higher than required for the spell.
- The midnight hag's spell save DC increases by 2.
- The midnight hag gains 24 temporary hit points.
- The midnight hag gains advantage on attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws.

Midnight Hag Items. A midnight hag carries two very rare magic items that she must craft for herself. If either object is lost, the midnight hag will go to great lengths to retrieve it, as creating a new tool takes time and effort.

Heartstone. This lustrous black gem allows a midnight hag to become ethereal while it is in her possession. The touch of a heartstone also cures any disease. Crafting a heartstone takes 30 days.

Soul Bag. When a humanoid dies as a result of a midnight hag's *nightmare haunting*, the hag catches the soul in this black sack made of stitched flesh. A soul bag can hold only one soul at a time, and only the midnight hag who crafted the bag can catch a soul with it. The midnight hag can have more than one soul bag in her possession at the same time. Crafting a soul bag takes 7 days and a humanoid sacrifice, whose flesh is used to make the bag.

Regeneration. The midnight hag regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the midnight hag takes radiant damage or damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the midnight hag's next turn. The midnight hag dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Coven Magic. If the midnight hag forms a coven with two other hags, all gain the following pool of shared spells as long as they are on the same plane of existence, until one of them dies, or abandons the coven. The midnight hag casts spells as a 18th level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The midnight hags have the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt, mage hand, poison spray, true strike*
- 1st level (4 slots): *charm person, hideous laughter, protection from evil and good, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, see invisibility*, suggestion*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, nondetection**

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- 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, phantasmal killer, polymorph*
- 5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, geas, modify memory*
- 6th level (1 slot): *suffocate*
- 7th level (1 slot): *forcecage*
- 8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind*
- 9th level (1 slot): *shapechange*

*The midnight hag casts these spells on itself before combat.

Soul Binding. A midnight hag coven can bind the soul held in a soul bag into a mundane or magical object, making it sentient. The soul bound object is targeted by an *awaken* spell that affects objects only and causes the target soul bound object to be permanently charmed. A soul bound object retains all of its memories and proficiencies of its former self. Once per item, the midnight hag coven can choose to make the target soul bound object become charmed by a chosen creature. The soul is released and laid to rest and the *awaken* spell ceases to function if a *dispel evil or good* or similar higher level spell was cast on the soul bound object.

Nightmare Manifest. The midnight hag can cast spells without requiring any components while it is part of a coven.

Shared Spells. A midnight hag can choose to cast a 7th or lower level spell with a range of self to affect all other midnight hags in its coven within 60 feet. When the spell ends on one of the midnight hags, it ends on all the other midnight hags as well.

Midnight Hag Phylactery. A midnight hag coven imbues an item with a part of each of their souls. The item recreates their bodies in 1d4 days after their death. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery and has all of the midnight hag's memories and hit points. Crafting a midnight hag phylactery takes one year and during its creation the midnight hags' maximum hit points are halved.

Any Curse (1/day). A midnight hag coven can weave a curse if all three hags are involved in crafting it. These curses are weaved through a ritual that takes an hour to complete, requiring all three members of the coven to partake. The coven jointly sets the effects of the curse and requirements to lifting it. These conditions can be as elaborate as the hags wish and the curse can be of any duration, even permanent. For effects of the curse, this ability essentially functions as a *wish* spell.

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ACTIONS

Multiattack. The midnight hag makes two claw attacks.

Claws (Hag Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Change Shape. The midnight hag magically polymorphs into a small or medium humanoid or fey, or back into her true form. Her statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. She reverts to her true form if she dies.

Etherealness. The midnight hag magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. To do so, the midnight hag must have a heartstone in her possession.

Nightmare Haunting (1/Day). While on the Ethereal Plane, the midnight hag magically touches a sleeping humanoid on the Material Plane. A *protection from evil and good* spell cast on the target prevents this contact, as does a magic circle. As long as the contact persists, the target has dreadful visions. If these visions last for at least 1 hour, the target gains no benefit from its rest, and its hit point maximum is reduced by 11 (2d10). If this effect reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its soul is trapped in the hag's soul bag. The reduction to the target's hit point maximum lasts until removed by the greater restoration spell or similar magic. The midnight hag can cast spells at the target.

EQUIPMENT

Each midnight hag carries a *heartstone* and a *soul bag*.

MINSTREL OF THE COLLEGE

Senior members of the College of Minstrels can bear the associated title, proving their aptitude through rigorous study and examinations. Minstrels are taught a wide range of entertainment skills, including various styles of singing and oratory, instruments, juggling, and even acrobatic arts, bolstered by bardic magic.

MINSTREL OF THE COLLEGE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 13 (3d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Cha +4
Skills Arcana +4 , Acrobatics +4, Insight +3, History +4, Performance +6, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common plus any three languages
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The minstrel of the college is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). A minstrel of the college has the following bard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *charm person, comprehend languages, hideous laughter, identify*
- 2nd level (2 slots): *enhance ability*, enthrall*

* The minstrel casts these spells on itself before combat.

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Bardic Inspiration (Recharges after a Long Rest). The minstrel of the college has 2 bardic inspirations (d6).

Jack of All Trades. The minstrel of the college can add +1 to any ability checks it makes that doesn't already include its proficiency bonus.

Song of Rest. The minstrel of the college can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any hit dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. The minstrel of the college can confer this benefit on itself as well.

ACTIONS

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

REACTIONS

Cutting Words (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When a creature that the minstrel of the college can see within 60 feet of it makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a damage roll, the minstrel of the college can roll 1d6 and subtract the number rolled from the creature's roll. The minstrel of the college can choose to use this feature after the creature makes its roll, but before the DM determines whether the Attack roll or ability check succeeds or fails, or before the creature deals its damage. The creature is immune if it can't hear the minstrel of the college or if it's immune to being charmed.

MOB OF FRENZIED NOBLES

This lynch mob of crazed nobles has been whipped into a frenzy to attack anyone it has picked as a target without any logic or reason. They are armed with small weapons, tools, or improvised weapons and attack as a group, stabbing and slashing from every possible angle at their target, usually a single foe that they overrun.

MOB OF FRENZIED NOBLES

Huge swarm of medium humanoids, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (varied armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The mob of frenzied has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Pile On. The mob of frenzied nobles has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that has no other creatures within 5 feet of it. A target attacked this way by the mob of frenzied nobles must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or become prone.

Swarm. The mob of frenzied nobles occupies a 15 by 15 foot area. It can enter another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through

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any opening large enough for a medium humanoid. The mob of frenzied nobles can be attacked normally but it can't be targeted by effects that target a single creature. It can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Stabs. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all targets in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 17 (4d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage if the mob of frenzied nobles has half of its hit points or fewer.

MORDIO DELONS

The master saddler of the Fiery Hooves equipment shop has been a devotee of the Matrons of Malice since their first encounter when the lad was a young apprentice. The midnight hags sent a horse-like nightmare creature to Mordio in his dreams, and instead of being trampled by the fiery hooves of the beast, the saddler rode it every night. The Matrons of Malice took Mordio under their patronage and gave the craftsman a book of ancient secrets to learn from and an imp to assist him. Mordio craves power and feels a burning hatred for the city's nobles for their negligence towards anyone not of their status. He hates paying taxes or contributing to the community in any form and feels oppressed by the elite. Over the years, Modrio Delons has risen to become the leader of the Children of the Coven with the guidance of the Matrons of Malice. The young zealot has shown great aptitude in organizing the witchservant cultists into a well-hidden and efficient network of informants.

MORDIO DELONS

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +7
Skills Deception +7, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. Mordio Delons is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, fire bolt, guidance*, mage hand, message, minor illusion, poison spray*
- Rituals (at will): *comprehend languages, detect magic*

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- 1st-5th level (2 5th level slots): *bestow curse, blight, blindness/deafness, charm person, commune, divination, dream, hellish rebuke, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, wither limb*

*Mordio Delons casts these spells on itself before combat.

Ascendant Step. Mordio Delons can cast *levitate* on himself at will, without expending a spell slot or material components.

Bewitching Whispers (Recharges after a Long Rest). Mordio Delons can cast *compulsion* once using a warlock spell slot.

Dark Devotion. Mordio Delons has advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Devil's Sight. Mordio Delons can see normally in darkness, both magical and nonmagical, to a distance of 120 feet.

Hag's Form (Recharges after a Long Rest). As a bonus action, Mordio Delons can magically polymorph into a small or medium humanoid for one hour. Mordio Delons' statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment Mordio Delons is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Mordio Delons reverts to his true form if he dies.

One with Shadows. When Mordio Delons is in an area of dim light or darkness, he can use his action to become invisible until he moves or takes an action or a reaction.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Malediction (Recharges after a Long Rest). As a bonus action, Mordio Delons can force one creature of his choice within 30 feet to make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save the target creature is cursed and must roll 1d6 and subtract the number rolled from its attack rolls or saving throws whenever it makes one within the next 1 minute. For the duration, the target creature also gains vulnerability to all damage dealt by Mordio Delons. A remove curse spell ends this effect.

Painful Incantation (Recharges after a Long Rest). As a bonus action, Mordio Delons can choose to use painful incantation when he rolls damage for a spell and force the damaged creature to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a fail save, the target creature's speed is halved, it has disadvantage on attacks, skill checks, Strength, Reflex saving throws for 1 minute, and if the target tries to cast a spell during this time, it must first succeed on a Constitution saving throw, or the casting fails and the spell is wasted. A target suffering from this pain can make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, the pain ends.

EQUIPMENT

Moderio Delons has 7 copper pieces, 8 silver pieces, 353 gold pieces on his person. He also carries a *contingent applicator* set to activate a *potion of greater healing* when he falls under half of his maximum hit points.

MORKIEL REBORN

Morkiel, one of the planetar generals of the Dark Star and the manifestation of fear, was turned to stone and buried by Sarath in his ziggurat under the city, beneath the napping giant. Upon the rise of Krasnar as a lich-knight, Faeryl Myrryn took notice of the undead carnage. The drow conjurer vampire lord arrived on the Material Plane and made a pact with the newly risen knight. As a sign of her support, she unearthed the Ziggurat of Dread under the napping giant and weaved her spells to drain

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the soul of the planetar from its petrified statue and implement it into a phylactery to create a lich. Morkiel Reborn gained undeath and tore his ancient ziggurat from the earth, wishing it to fly above the city. The lich serves Faeryl Myrryn's commands to act as an advisor to Krasnar and maintain the portal that leads to the realm of Orcus.

MORKIEL REBORN

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 225 (18d10 + 126)
Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +14, Int +12, Wis +13, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +19, History +12, Insight +13, Perception +13
Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages All, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Morkiel Reborn is an 18h-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). Morkiel Reborn has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, fire bolt, true strike*
- 1st level (4 slots): *false life*, magic missile, protection from evil and good, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, darkness, detect thoughts, mirror image**
- 3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, counterspell, fear, wither limb*
- 4th level (3 slots): *dimension door, phantasmal killer*
- 5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, hold monster*
- 6th level (1 slot): *circle of death, create undead*
- 7th level (1 slot): *finger of death, symbol*
- 8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind, mind blank**
- 9th level (1 slot): *power word kill*

*Morkiel Reborn casts these spells on itself before combat.

Innate Spellcasting. Morkiel Reborn's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). The planetar can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *detect evil and good, invisibility (self only)*
- 3/day each: *blade barrier, dispel evil and good, flame strike, raise dead*
- 1/day each: *commune, control weather, insect plague*

Dark Angelic Weapons. Morkiel Reborn's weapon attacks are magical. When it hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 5d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack).

Divine Awareness. Morkiel Reborn knows if it hears a lie.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Morkiel Reborn fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Morkiel Reborn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rejuvenation. If it has a phylactery, the destroyed Morkiel Reborn gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery.

Turn Resistance. Morkiel Reborn has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

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ACTIONS

Multiattack. Morkiel Reborn makes two melee attacks with its great mace or one with its paralyzing touch.

Mace of Terror. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 21 (4d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 22 (5d8) necrotic damage.

Paralyzing Touch. *Melee Spell Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 10 (3d6) cold damage. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Cantrip. Morkiel Reborn casts a cantrip.

Paralyzing Touch (Costs 2 Actions). Morkiel Reborn uses its Paralyzing Touch.

Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). Morkiel Reborn fixes its gaze on one creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Wis-

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dom saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the lich's gaze for the next 24 hours.

Disrupt Life (Costs 3 Actions). Each non-undead creature within 20 feet of Morkiel Reborn must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Tome of Skulls (Costs 3 Actions). Morkiel Reborn casts a spell.

LAIR ACTIONS

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

- Morkiel Reborn can cast the *arcane eye* spell, allowing it to observe its lair at its pleasure. It does not require concentration to maintain the spell. The eye has Truesight out to 30 feet.
- Morkiel Reborn can cast the *project image* spell centered on a point it can see. It does not require concentration to maintain the spell.
- Morkiel Reborn can cast the *darkness* spell centered on a point it can see. It lasts until initiative count 20 on the next round.

EQUIPMENT

Morkiel Reborn wields a large *mace of terror*.

MUMUS

The mumus thrives on the fear of others, especially those of children. This malicious fey creature grows in power with every frightened or panicked creature around it. It can heighten such emotions to a level where its victim cowers in fear in one place or even dies when looking it in the eye.

MUMUS

Small fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d6 + 12)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Intimidation +6, Stealth +5
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Glare of Terror. When a creature that can see the mumus' eyes starts its turn within 30 ft. of the mumus, the mumus can force it to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw if the mumus isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. On a failed save, a creature that fails the save is frightened of the mumus for 1 minute. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly paralyzed in addition to being frightened of the mumus for 1 minute. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect on a success.

Magic Resistance. The mumus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Syphon Terror. The mumus has advantage on its melee attack rolls against frightened creatures and regains 3 (1d6) hit points at the start of its turn for every frightened creature within 60 feet of it.

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Conjure One's Worst Fear. As an action, a mumus can cause a frightened creature, that is also paralyzed as a result of the mumus' glare of terror feature, to visualise its worst fear, which is only visible to that creature. The target must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target creature is reduced to 0 hit points. On a successful save, the target creature takes 2d10 psychic damage.

QUEEN APHINAH AZENNAR

The triplet hagspawn daughters of the Matrons of Malice, fathered by King Waldrann Azennar, are vicious, sadistic, spoiled teenagers who look much older than their actual age. They have been raised in turns on the Material Plane and the Bleak Mire, and were taught to spread malice and suffering by their hag mothers, a lesson they enjoyed to the fullest. As a result, the triplets look at the world as their playground, which is theirs to ravage. They are utterly loyal to their hag mothers, whom they consider the source of their power and status, which they are afraid to lose.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mumus makes three attacks, one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Invisibility. As a bonus action, the mumus magically turns invisible until it attacks, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the mumus wears or carries is invisible with it.

QUEEN APHINAH AZENNAR

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Intimidation +5
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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False Appearance (Recharges after a Long Rest). Queen Aphinah Azennar can cast the *alter self* spell.

Regeneration. Queen Aphinah Azennar regains 5 hit points at the start of her turn. If Queen Aphinah Azennar takes radiant damage or damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. Queen Aphinah Azennar dies only if she starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

QUERRAI XALO

Born as the child of a female drow slaver and a cultist of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten, Querrai Xalo grew up with his cruel mother, far from his father or the cult of mutated drow, wandering the Bleak Mire and the caverns of the Dark Below. As soon as he matured, he soon had enough of his mother's cruelty, and after tossing her into a slave pen, he fled into the wild. Querrai spent decades alone in the Dark Below and learned to stay out of sight to survive. He later found his way back to the only place where he had allies, Quellar Ausstyl, the house where his father was a member of the druidic cult. He offered his services to the house nobles and his body to the alien entities they served. After his body-warping initiation, he was introduced to the unfathomable secrets of the cult and soon rose to become the most skilled assassin of the cult.

QUERRAI XALO

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (+1 studded leather)
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances psychic
Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +5
Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +4, Deception +5, Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Stealth +11
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Deep Speech, Elvish, Undercommon, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Alien Anatomy. Querrai Xalo is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Alien Mind. Querrai Xalo has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, frightened, or having its thoughts read. Querrai Xalo is immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

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Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Querrai Xalo can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. Querrai Xalo can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects. When it is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Querrai Xalo instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Eyes of Darkness. Querrai Xalo can see through magical darkness.

Limited Telepathy. Querrai Xalo can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

One with the Shadows. Querrai Xalo can make sneak attacks and has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks while in darkness.

Reliable Talent. Whenever Querrai Xalo makes an ability check that lets him add his proficiency bonus, he can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

Shadow Step. Querrai Xalo can use his movement to teleport to a location within the range of his speed while in darkness.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Querrai Xalo deals an extra 24 (7d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of his that isn't incapacitated and Querrai Xalo doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Unsettling Appearance. Querrai Xalo has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Querrai Xalo makes two attacks with his shortsword or hand crossbow.

+1 Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage.

+1 Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage

Shadow Rift (Recharges after a Long Rest). Querrai Xalo can open a narrow rift in the fabric of the planes and transpose himself to the Shadowrealm or back to the plane he came from as if he has cast the *planeshift* spell. Querrai Xalo can only use this feature if he is on the Ethereal Plane, the Feyrealm, the Material Plane, or the Shadowrealm. No magical or physical restrictions can prevent Querrai Xalo from accomplishing the planar travel made possible by this feature.

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EQUIPMENT

Querrai Xalo has a selection of black diamonds worth 1,200 gold pieces that he carries well hidden on his person. He also carries a *potion of gaseous form, a potion of invisibility,* a *+1 shortsword* and a *+1 hand crossbow.*

RICIO TANE

Many stories circulate Onadbyr about the owner of the Lucky Leap tavern, a known adventurer and charismatic figure who can get things done. Ricio Tane was always a fixer and a compelling character, having minimal respect for the law and its enforcers. He wanted to live an easy and memorable life, and he was never afraid to achieve this by delving into deep dungeons or other people's houses. He pushed his luck daringly only until a tragedy befell his wife, Avrathia Silverstar. However, the now-retired adventurer and thief still keeps dealing in illicit goods to make a significant side income next to the earnings from his tavern.

RICIO TANE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 17 (+1 studded leather)
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +6
Skills Deception +7, Insight +5, Investigation +6, Perception +5, Persuasion +11, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +12, proficient with thieves' tools
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Elvish, Thieves' cant
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Ricio Tane can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. Ricio Tane can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects. When it is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Ricio Tane instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Fast Hands. Ricio Tane can use a bonus action granted by his cunning action feature to make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) skill check, use his thieves' tools to disarm a trap or open a lock, or take the Use an Object action.

Second-Story Work. Ricio Tane can climb at his normal speed. When Ricio Tane makes a running jump, the distance he can cover is increased by 4 feet.

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Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ricio Tane deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of his that isn't incapacitated and Ricio Tane doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Supreme Sneak. Ricio Tane has advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) skill check if he moves no more than half his speed on the same turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ricio Tane makes two attacks with his rapier or hand crossbow.

+1 Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. Ricio Tane can use his reaction to halve an attack's damage against him if can see the attacker.

EQUIPMENT

Ricio Tane has 9 copper pieces, 5 silver pieces, 281 gold pieces, a *+1 rapier*, a hand crossbow, a *+1 studded leather armor*, and a *potion of greater healing* on his person.

ROYAL GUARD

Handpicked from the ranks of the Royal Swords, these fighters undergo rigorous training that becomes a daily routine for them. Fiercely loyal to the crown and the royals they protect, the royal guards are a solid foundation of the security of the Royal Palace. Nothing and no one passes unnoticed under the watch of these soldiers, who can stand motionless on their guard duty for hours and even days if necessary. They are trained in coordinated combat techniques, and they practice swift strikes. Some of their highest-ranking commanders can strike so fast that their swords can hit a falling apple twice before it lands on the ground.

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ROYAL GUARD

Medium or small humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (chain mail, shield)
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Alert on Duty. The royal guard can designate a 10 square foot area. If the royal guard stays in this area for 10 minutes, it gains advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks made to notice creatures.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

SABRAEL

As part of the invasion on the Material Plane, the Dark Star wished to reach into the coexistent planes of the Shadowrealm and the Feyrealm. Tannur, the dark planetar, brought Sabrael directly to the Shadowrealm during their descent from their heavenly planes. Sabrael, the Voice of Sorrow, was chosen as a representative and the guardian of the crystal of immortals that was sent to the Shadowrealm. Ever since the banishment of the rest of the fallen angels from the Material Plane, Sabrael waits in its solitude and continues to serve as commanded. It frequently communes with the divine powers it serves and prays for the return of the Dark Star.

SABRAEL

Medium celestial, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 187 (22d8 + 88)
Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +9, Cha +9
Skills History +7, Insight +13, Perception +13,
Damage Resistances necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Sabrael's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). The deva can innately cast the following spells, requiring only verbal components:

- At will: *detect evil and good*
- 1/day each: *commune, raise dead*

Spellcasting. Sabrael is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Sabrael has the following bard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, minor illusion, vicious mockery*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, detect magic, faerie fire, longstrider**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, suggestion*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, fear*

* Sabrael casts these spells on itself before combat.

Angelic Weapons. Sabrael's weapon attacks are magical. When the deva hits with any weapon, the

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weapon deals an extra 4d8 necrotic damage (included in the attack).

Bardic Inspiration (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Sabrael has 5 bardic inspirations (d8).

Magic Resistance. Sabrael has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Song of Rest. Sabrael can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any hit dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. Sabrael can confer this benefit on itself as well.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The deva makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.

Healing Touch (3/Day). Sabrael touches another creature. The target magically regains 20 (4d8 + 2) hit points and is freed from any curse, disease, poison, blindness, or deafness.

Change Shape. Sabrael magically polymorphs into a humanoid or beast that has a challenge rating equal to or less than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (Sabrael's choice). In a new form, Sabrael otherwise retains its game statistics and ability to speak, but its AC, movement modes, Strength, Dexterity, and special senses are replaced by those of the new form, and it gains any statistics and capabilities (except class features) that the new form has but that it lacks.

Dirge of Grief (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Sabrael can sing a song that causes a creature to fall into intense grief, washing away its hostility. Sabrael can target a creature that it can see within 60 feet. That creature must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or become charmed. While charmed, the target becomes indifferent about creatures of Sabrael's choice that it is hostile towards. This indifference ends if the target is attacked or harmed by a spell, or if it witnesses any of its friends being harmed. The effect ends after one minute and the creature can become hostile again.

Elegy of Hopelessness. Sabrael can recite a poem about death and passing that causes creatures to lose their motivation. Sabrael can expend one use of its bardic inspiration on its turn to choose five creatures that it can see within 60 feet. Those creatures must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or become charmed. While charmed, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws for one minute, but can make a Charisma saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.

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Lament of Melancholy. Sabrael can sing a woeful lament that causes creatures to fall into a state of depression. Sabrael can expend one use of its bardic inspiration on its turn to choose five creatures that it can see within 60 feet. Those creatures must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or become charmed. While charmed, the creature has disadvantage on ability checks for one minute, but can make a Charisma saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.

SAM "WEAVER" EBONHILT

Sam is the son of the Vordani barbarian Elyssiax Ebonhilt and Erckhart Weaverson, a tapestry merchant from Ronul's End. As a half-Vordani child in the harsh northern lands, Sam was constantly bullied by both children and adults, and received a reputation of being quite the nuisance. He was caught eavesdropping on the warrior councils several times and engaged in regular fistfights with his peers. Nonetheless, the boy was taught Vordani tactics, raging styles, and weapons from a young age.

Tragedy befell the young boy at the age of twelve when the family moved to Onadbyr. While searching for victims to torment one fateful night, Tyke saw the love of Sam's parents and coveted their shining souls. The hag made Sam watch as it stole the souls of the sleeping parents with its soul bag and promised the lad to keep them for eternity. The traumatic memories are cloudy and best forgotten. Still, Sam remembers the hag's horrific appearance, their cackling unnaturally high-pitched voices, and the sign of the Children of the Coven on a pendant worn by the hag.

As an orphan, Sam moved to Onadbyr and soon became a prison guard in the Dungeon of Tears. However, he was constantly harassed and hazed by the other guards for his Vordani ancestry. Not able to find his place, Sam quit the prison and decided to take up his father's trade of tapestry trading. However, this was also a short endeavor, as the Golden Masks seized his first major shipment of cloth, putting him into bankruptcy. Sam drove into the city's underworld, working to undermine the Masks, and soon solidified himself into a position on the black market selling and buying information, fencing stolen goods, and hiring out bounty contracts.

As the hag roamed the streets of the city in ethereal form and searched for victims to take to the Shadowrealm, it found the young man walking home in an alley and remembered its sister Tyke's vile deed so long ago. With delight, the hag appeared in the form of a Child of the Coven witchservant and used plane shift to transport Sam to the Dungeon of Tears on the Shadowrealm where he now languishes in his sorrow and dark memories.

SAM "WEAVER" EBONHILT

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (+1 studded leather, defense) or 15 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 110 (17d8 + 34)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Cha +7
Skills Athletics +12, Deception +12, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +7, proficient with thieves' tools
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Thieves' cant
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Action Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). On his turn, Sam can take one additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

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Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Sam can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Danger Sense. Sam has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Defense. When Sam is wearing armor, he gains a +1 bonus to AC.

Indomitable (Recharges after a Long Rest). Sam can reroll a saving throw that he fails. If he does so, he must use the new roll.

Reckless Attack. When Sam makes his first attack on his turn, he can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during his turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Sam deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Sam's that isn't incapacitated and Sam doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Vordani Battletech. Sam's weapon attacks with the Vordani ripper or other weapons of Vordani make score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Sam can use a bonus action to regain hit points equal to 14 (1d10 + 9).

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ACTIONS

Multiattack. Sam makes two attacks with his Vordani ripper, rapier, or dagger.

Vordani Ripper. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d8 + 2) slashing damage.

+1 Smelting Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Frenzy. Sam can go into a frenzy when raging. If he does so, for the duration of his rage he can make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action on each of his turns after this one. When his rage ends, he suffers one level of exhaustion.

Rage (3/day). Sam can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, Sam gains the following benefits if he isn't wearing heavy armor:

- He has advantage on Strength checks and Strength Saving Throws.
- When he makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he gains a +2 bonus to the damage roll.
- He has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Sam's rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if he is knocked unconscious or his turn ends and he hasn't attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. He can also end the rage on his turn as a bonus action. Once Sam has raged three times, he must finish a long rest before it can rage again.

EQUIPMENT

Sam has 25 copper pieces, 40 silver pieces, 11 gold pieces, a *+1 smelting rapier*, a *+1 leather armor* in the Vordani style, a *potion of giant strength*, and a *potion of greater healing* on his person. He also has a set of thieves' tools and two daggers with decorations of eagles on their pommels.

SENTIENT CARCASS TEMPLATE

There is a rare species of extraplanar brain-eating larva that feeds only on the bodies of dead spellcasters. These maggots can recollect the knowledge of the dead they consume and do so until they are ready to hatch as death bugs. These tiny flying vermin form an intelligent hive mind that seeks out the carcasses of the most powerful beasts or monsters they can find to inhabit. A creature's remains, inhabited by the death bugs, becomes a sentient carcass that otherwise retains only the most fundamental instincts of its original life as it turns into a fully functioning vessel for the intelligent swarm of vermin.

SENTIENT CARCASS TEMPLATE

Only an aberration, beast, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, or monstrosity can become a sentient carcass. It otherwise retains its statistics, except as follows.

Alignment. A sentient carcass is always chaotic evil.

Languages. The sentient carcass can speak Common and two other languages.

Accumulated Intellect. A sentient carcass has an Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma score of 16.

Reanimated Undead. The type of the original creature changes to undead. It becomes immune to the blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, and stunned conditions. It is also immune to all forms of disease.

Corpse Eater. The sentient carcass can consume the dead remains of a creature one size category smaller than itself to regain 30 hit points. If the consumed dead creature was a spellcaster, the sentient carcass also regains a used spell slot of the lowest spell level it has already used.

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Spellcasting. The sentient carcass is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma, the spell save DC is 8 + creature's proficiency bonus + creature's Charisma modifier), and it needs only verbal components to cast its spells. It knows the following cleric, druid, paladin, ranger, warlock and wizard spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, mage hand, guidance, produce flame*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, color spray, entangle, identify*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blur, enlarge/reduce*, heat metal*
- 3rd level (2 slots): *call lightning, haste*

*The sentient carcass casts these spells on itself before combat.

SEVEN THORN

Gnome druids who join the circle of the Seven Thorns are known as seven thorns. The members of the circle are all that remain of the Seven Flowers, an ancient gnomish druidic sect from the Feyrealm, who came to the Material Plane eons ago to nourish life and tend to it against malign influences. When the Seven Thorns withdrew back to the Feyrealm at the pressure of the persecution of the Order of the Eternal Light, the sect all but died out and only left seven initiated members in Aglarion. Over the last millennium, the gnomes have lost most ties to their ancient heritage and have renamed their circle the Seven Thorns. The druids have also turned completely xenophobic under the leadership of Tonk Wildwander and hunt down any creature that is not a gnome who ventures into the Thornwoods.

SEVEN THORN

Small humanoid (gnome), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (16 with barkskin)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +5
Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Survival +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Druidic, Gnomish
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. The seven thorn is an 8th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, poison spray, resistance, shillelagh*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, goodberry, longstrider**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, heat metal, hold person, spider climb, spike growth*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, plant growth, speak with plants*
- 4th level (2 slots): *confusion, divination, freedom of movement*, hallucinatory terrain*

* The seven thorn casts these spells on itself before combat.

Gnome Cunning. The seven thorn has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.

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Land's Stride. Moving through nonmagical difficult terrain costs no extra movement for the seven thorn. It can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard. In addition, the seven thorn has advantage on saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement, such those created by the *entangle* spell.

Natural Recovery. (Recharges after a Long Rest). During a Short Rest, the seven thorn can choose four expended Spell Slots to recover.

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., (+5 with shillelagh), one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands, or 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh.

Wild Shape (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Twice per day, the seven thorn can use its action to magically assume the shape of a beast. The beast can be CR 1 or less, with a fly or swimming speed. The seven thorn can stay in beast shape for four hours. This ability otherwise functions as the wild shape ability of the druid class.

SPECTRAL CONGREGATION

When many worshippers or clerics of a deity die at a single time, their souls often cannot reach eternal rest and rise as a spectral congregation. The incorporeal undead is driven even in undeath to serve its deity as a single specter-like entity fueled by its members' faiths when alive.

SPECTRAL CONGREGATION

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities acid, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spellcasting. The spectral congregation is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The spectral congregation has the following cleric spells prepared, that require no material components:

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- Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, inflict wounds, shield of faith**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance, bestow curse, dispel magic*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, divination, stone shape*
- 5th level (2 slots): *flame strike* (that deals acid damage)

*The spectral congregation casts these spells on itself before combat.

Incorporeal Movement. The spectral congregation can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the spectral congregation has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The spectral congregation targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the spectral congregation's control. The spectral congregation can have no more than seven specters under its control at one time.

Multicasting. As a bonus action the spectral congregation can cast a spell or maintain concentration on a spell.

Sign of the Blinded (1/Day). The spectral congregation can unleash magical energies that compel the target to gouge out its own eyes. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the spectral congregation that can see it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed for one minute. While the target is charmed, it uses its actions to gouge out its own eyes, one eye per round. Once both of the target's eyes have been gouged out, the target becomes permanently blinded.

SPELLTHIEF ADEPT

A spellthief adept is a sneaky operator who has acquired actual spellcasting abilities throughout the prolonged use of spell-stealing abilities. Some spellthief adepts are drawn to occupations involving the arcane arts, a few are dedicated to the collection of magical items, and many find their calling in crime, for which their abilities make them most suited.

SPELLTHIEF ADEPT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 49 (11d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +4
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +5, Insight +3, Investigation +4, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Sleight Of Hand +8, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, plus any one language
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Spellcasting. The spellthief adept is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The spellthief

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adept has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, mage hand, minor illusion, true strike*
- 1st level (4 slots): *color spray, expeditious retreat, mage armor**
- 2nd level (2 slots): *invisibility*

*The spellthief adept casts these spells on itself before combat.

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spellthief adept can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. The spellthief adept can nimbly dodge out of the way of certain area effects. When it is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the spellthief adept instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Font of Magic (Recharges after a Long Rest). The spellthief adept thas 3 Sorcery Points.

Metamagic. The spellthief adept can use the subtle spell (costs 1 Sorcery Point) and the Quickened Spell (costs 2 Sorcery Points) metamagic options on a spell when it casts the spell.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spellthief adept deals an extra 17 (5d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of the spellthief adept that isn't incapacitated and the spellthief adept doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Sneaky Interrupt. The spellthief adept gains advantage on its attack rolls against targets maintaining concentration on a spell.

Steal Spell (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The spellthief adept can syphon a simple spell from a spellcaster with a precise strike. As a bonus action, after it hits a creature with a melee weapon, the spellthief adept can force the creature to make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, or when it touches a willing creature, the spellthief adept gains a 1st level spell slot and a prepared 1st level spell chosen by it from the creature's known or prepared 1st level spells. The creature loses a 1st level spell slot, but still knows the spell and can use it normally. For the next 8 hours, the spellthief adept knows the spell and can cast it using its spell slots. If the creature is not a spellcaster the spellthief adept doesn't gain any benefits from this feature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spellthief adept makes two melee attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

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

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that the spellthief adept can see hits it with an attack, the Spellthief adept can use its reaction to halve the attack's damage against it.

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SPRIGGAN MERCENARY

These ugly creatures are distant relatives of gnomes who find joy in tricking other creatures and stealing their valuables. They are sneaky little buggers who quickly disappear after a robbery or mischief but react aggressively when cornered. They are fierce combatants who retaliate to any offense by using their size alteration ability, charging those who thought them to be small and weak with a smirk on their ugly faces.

SPRIGGAN MERCENARY

Small fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)
Hit Points 45 (10d6 + 10)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4
Skills Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Gnomish, Sylvan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the spriggan mercenary magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the spriggan mercenary is large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the spriggan mercenary lacks the room to become large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

Iron Will. Spriggan mercenaries are focused and confident. The spriggan mercenary gains advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened.

Magic Resistance. The spriggan mercenary has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spriggan mercenary makes two attacks.

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage, or 13 (2d10 + 2) slashing damage while enlarged.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage, or 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage while enlarged.

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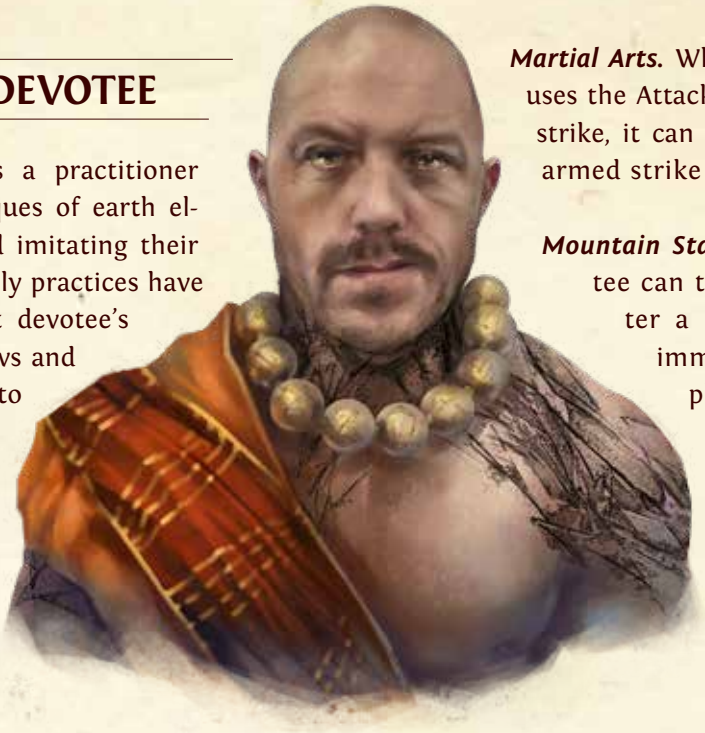
STONEFIST DEVOTEE

A stonefist devotee is a practitioner of the fighting techniques of earth elementals, studying and imitating their combat maneuvers. Daily practices have hardened the stonefist devotee's body to withstand blows and focus their strength into their stone-like fists. Though far from elevation to Master, this monk has dedicated long years of its life to the rigorous training of mind, body, and soul.



Martial Arts. When the stonefist devotee uses the Attack action with an unarmed strike, it can make one additional unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Mountain Stance. The stonefist devotee can tighten its muscles to enter a steady stance making it immovable and hard to grapple. As a bonus action, the devotee can spend 1 ki point to gain advantage on contests involving Strength (Athletics) checks made against it for 1 minute. The devotee loses this advantage if it takes a move action.

STONEFIST DEVOTEE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ki Points (Recharges after a Long Rest). The stonefist devotee has 6 ki points.

Flurry of Blows. Immediately after the stonefist devotee takes the multiattack action on its turn, it can spend 1 ki point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.

Patient Defense. The stonefist devotee can spend 1 ki point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on its turn.

Step of the Wind. The stonefist devotee can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on its turn, and its jump distance is doubled for the turn

Stunning Strike. When the stonefist devotee hits another creature with a melee weapon attack, it can spend 1 ki point to attempt a stunning strike. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the devotee's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stonefist devotee makes two attacks with its unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Magical Melee Weapon*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

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REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. The stonefist devotee can use its reaction to deflect or catch the missile when it is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When it does so, the damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 14 (1d10 + 9). If the damage is reduced to 0, the stonefist devotee can catch the missile if it is small enough for it to hold in one hand and if it has at least one hand free. If it catches a missile in this way, the stonefist devotee can spend 1 ki point to make a ranged attack (range 20 feet/60 feet) with the weapon or piece of ammunition it has just caught, as part of the same reaction. (+6 to hit, range 20 ft./60 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.)

Resist Strikes. The stonefist devotee can channel its ki into resisting damage from a blow. As a reaction, the stonefist devotee can spend 1 ki to reduce the damage it takes from an attack by 12 (1d10 + 7).

Slow Fall. The stonefist devotee can use its reaction when it falls to reduce any falling damage it takes by 30 hit points.

SWARM OF ASTRAL STIRGES

Astral striges are a variant of the stirge, sucking the psychic energies of their victims instead of their blood. When such strirges collect into a swarm, they become even more deadly as the drainings can confuse creatures when their psychic potential is siphoned away.

SWARM OF ASTRAL STIRGES

Medium swarm of tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2(-4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Psychic Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 15 (6d4) psychic damage or 7 (3d4) psychic damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. On a hit, the swarm attaches to the target. While attached, the stirges don't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the swarm's turns, the target loses 15 (6d4) or 7 (3d4) hit points due to their loss of psyche. Anyone who is subject to the swarm's drain must also make a successful DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be subject to a *confusion* spell that lasts for 1 minute. Anyone who makes this save is immune to the effect for 24 hours.

The swarm can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of psychic energies from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

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SWARM OF GHOULISH SPRITES

The Matrons of Malice created these undead from the sprite troops of King Dasmag to hunt down and eat their own kind. The swarm of ghoulish sprites claws and bites its way through anything that stands in its way, chewing flesh to the bare bone.

SWARM OF GHOULISH SPRITES

Medium swarm of tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor)
Hit Points 36 (8d8)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Stealth +8
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Swarm. The swarm of ghoulish sprites can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a tiny sprite. The swarm of ghoulish sprites can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bites and Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer. If the target is a creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Heart Sight. The swarm of ghoulish sprites touches a creature and magically knows the creature's current emotional state. If the target fails a DC 10 Charisma saving throw, the sprite also knows the creature's alignment. Celestials, fiends, and undead automatically fail the saving throw.

Invisibility. The swarm of ghoulish sprites magically turns invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the swarm of ghoulish sprites wears or carries is invisible with it.

SWARM OF MAGIC-INFUSED FIRE BEETLES

When fire beetles gather into a swarm, their devastation can bring severe blight to any area they ravage. During the theocratic reign of the Order of the Eternal Light, fire beetles were regarded as sacred beings and bred them in hordes, sometimes resulting in rampages when the beats could not be contained. The Midnight Curse has infused a ginormous fire beetle with magic, and the swarms of fire beetles it spawns are also imbued with magical essences, making their attacks magical.

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SWARM OF MAGIC-INFUSED FIRE BEETLES

Large swarm of small beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (7d10 + 7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	3 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Small insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Illumination. The swarm sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 ft.

Infused with Magic. The swarm's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +2 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit*: 21 (6d6) slashing damage or 10 (3d6) slashing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

SYLLATUR LAUDRAPHOL

The plays of Syllatur Laudraphol, a young playwright, director, and illusionist wizard of great renown, were highly sought after by the nobles of Aglarion. He lived the life of a celebrity, amassing riches and fame with his creatively and professionally executed plays. His doom came when he became tired, negligent, and somewhat ignorant towards his profession. His last play entitled "Princess Garilasia of Xantharos" was an utter failure due to several simultaneous unlucky events. The city turned on the director as quickly as they raised him high. Soon, the shameful wizard took his own life to escape from the pressure. His soul transcended to the Shadowrealm along with the souls of the others who perished during the tragic events that unfolded after the play. He tries to recreate the play and bring it to perfection in his undeath.

SYLLATUR LAUDRAPHOL

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Arcana +7, History +7, Stealth +5
Damage Vulnerability radiant
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

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Spellcasting. Syllatur Laudraphol is an 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Syllatur Laudraphol has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
- 1st level (4 slots): *color spray, disguise self, illusory script, silent image*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, magic mouth, mirror image**
- 3rd level (3 slots): *fear, hypnotic pattern, major image*
- 4th level (3 slots): *hallucinatory terrain, shadowcraft conjuration*
- 5th level (2 slots): *creation, seeming*
- 6th level (1 slot): *programmed illusion*

* Syllatur Laudraphol casts these spells on itself before combat.

Amorphous. Syllatur Laudraphol can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Pseudo Reality. Syllatur Laudraphol can empower its illusions with quasi-real shadows that deal damage. When Syllatur Laudraphol casts a 1st or higher level spell to create the image of an object, creature, or visible phenomenon, it can choose to cast its spell to deal 1d6 psychic damage per spell level every round to those creatures that are affected by it. Affected creatures can make an Intelligence saving throw to half the damage. Physical interaction with the image does not reveal it to be an illusion. A creature that successfully sees through the image by taking an action to make a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check becomes immune to the damage dealt by the spell.

Shadow Evocation. Syllatur Laudraphol can create a barrage of illusory damaging spells formed out of semi-real shadowstuff. Syllatur Laudraphol can spend a spell slot to cast an evocation spell of the same spell level that deals damage. This spell is an illusion but otherwise works exactly as the original spell. The affected creature must make the saving throws as described in the spell's description. A creature affected by a shadow evocation spell must also make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the creature believes the spell to be real and takes damage from the spell as normal. On a successful save the creature takes only half damage.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, Syllatur Laudraphol can take the Hide action as a bonus action. Its stealth bonus is also improved to +7.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, Syllatur Laudraphol has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

REACTIONS

Shadow Shield (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Syllatur Laudraphol can instantly create a tangled mass of shadows that make it harder to hit. Syllatur Laudraphol can use its reaction to conjure a shadowy aura that negates one hit by an attack that targets it.

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TENTACLED MASTER

The Inheritors of the Unbegotten choose tentacled masters carefully from the newborn of their house. These mutated drow monks are implanted with an alien symbiont at an early age, just like the frenzied mutants. However, they receive a more rigorous, ancient form of combat training that emulates the movement and combat tactics of the aberrations they venerate. The tentacled masters are silent, obedient, and loyal servants of the druids and protect them with their lives if needed.

TENTACLED MASTER

Medium humanoid (drow), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +7
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The tentacled master's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dancing lights*
- 1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*

Alien Anatomy. The tentacled master is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Alien Mind. The tentacled master has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened. The tentacled master is immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

Fey Ancestry. Magic can't put the tentacled master to sleep.

Limited Telepathy. The tentacled master can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the tentacled master has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

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Unsettling Appearance. The tentacled master has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

Martial Arts. When the tentacled master uses the attack action with an unarmed strike, it can make one additional unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Ki Points (Recharges after a Long Rest). The tentacled master has 6 ki points.

Flurry of Blows. Immediately after the tentacled master takes the multiattack action on its turn, it can spend 1 ki point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.

Patient Defense. The tentacled master can spend 1 ki point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on its turn.

Step of the Wind. The tentacled master can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on its turn, and its jump distance is doubled for the turn

Stunning Strike. When the tentacled master hits another creature with a melee weapon attack, it can spend 1 ki point to attempt a stunning strike. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the tentacled master's next turn.

Tentacle Limb. As a bonus action, the tentacled master can spend 1 ki point to transform its arm into a 10 feet long tentacle for 1 minute. The tentacle has reach and can be used as part of an unarmed strike. The tentacle deals 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. The tentacled master gains advantage on Strength (Athletics) skill checks to grapple an opponent with the tentacle.

Nerve Wrecking Strike. The unarmed strikes of the tentacled master with its tentacle limb count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. It can spend 1 ki point to deal an additional 5 (1d6 + 2) psychic damage with one unarmed strike of its tentacle limb.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The tentacled master makes two attacks with its unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. *Magical Melee Weapon*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. The tentacled master can use its reaction to deflect or catch the missile when it is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When it does so, the damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 15 (1d10 + 10). If the damage is reduced to 0, the tentacled master can catch the missile if it is small enough for it to hold in one hand and if it has at least one hand free. If it catches a missile in this way, the tentacled master can spend 1 ki point to make a ranged attack (range 20 feet/60 feet) with the weapon or piece of ammunition it has just caught, as part of the same reaction. (+7 to hit, range 20 ft./60 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.)

Slow Fall. The tentacled master can use its reaction when it falls to reduce any falling damage it takes by 30 hit points.

THE COLOSSUS

The Colossus is a 40-foot tall stone construct that Master Arlen created for the campaign against the Order of the Eternal Light. Its body is made out of an otherworldly material that absorbs light, making the Colossus immune to radiant damage. The massive construct was built to break through all kinds of fortifications and after Razmyrel's victory, it was deemed too powerful by Master Arlen to remain active. Master Arlen ordered the monumental construct to bury itself in a remote location at the edge of the Arden Forest. Reawakened by the Midnight Curse but without the magical control of its creator, the Colossus now wanders aimlessly, leaving a trampled swath of trees in its wake.

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THE COLOSSUS

Gargantuan construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 390 (20d20+180)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	8 (-1)	28 (+9)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison, psychic, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantine weapons
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages -
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Damage Threshold. The Colossus has extra resilience due to its construction represented by a damage threshold. It has immunity to all damage unless it takes at least 10 points of damage from any single attack or effect, in which case it takes damage as normal. Any damage that fails to meet or exceed the 10 points of damage is considered superficial and doesn't reduce the Colossus' hit points.

Immutable Form. The Colossus is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magical Mauling Fists. The Colossus' attacks are magical.

Siege Monster. The Colossus deals double damage to objects and structures.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Colossus can make two melee attacks with its oversized mauling fists.

Mauling Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 36 (4d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Hurled Tree. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +16 to hit, range 200/800 ft., one target. *Hit*: 32 (4d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Path of Destruction. The Colossus tramples everything and everyone in its path in a 60-foot line that is 20 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 52 (8d12 + 10) damage on a failed save.

THE UTTER BLINDNESS

The Utter Blindness is a gargantuan gelatinous cube that has been amalgamated from smaller specimens through a vile ritual that requires the self-immolation by corrosion of those who undertake it. The gargantuan ooze becomes infused by the divine energies of the deity known, only to a few, as the Blind God and can cause blindness through its pseudopod.

THE UTTER BLINDNESS

Gargantuan ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 6
Hit Points 132 (8d20 + 48)
Speed 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	3 (-4)	22 (+6)	1(-5)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

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Ooze Cube. The cube takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to the cube's engulf and has disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures inside the cube can be seen but have total cover. A creature within 5 feet of the cube can take an action to pull a creature or object out of the cube. Doing so requires a successful DC 17 Strength check, and the creature making the attempt takes 17 (5d6) acid damage. The cube can hold only two huge creatures, four large creatures or up to sixteen medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.

Transparent. Even when the cube is in plain sight, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a cube that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the cube's space while unaware of the cube is surprised by the cube.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 17 (5d6) acid damage and the target must make a successful DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be permanently blinded. This blindness can only be cured by *heal* or higher level spells.

Engulf. The cube moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Huge or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the cube enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 feet back or to the side of the cube. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw. On a failed save, the cube enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 17 (5d6) acid damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 35 (10d6) acid damage at the start of each of the cube's turns. When the cube moves, the engulfed creature moves with it. An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 17 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the cube.

THE LICH-KNIGHT

The Lich-Knight was created as part of the Midnight Curse by the Matrons of Malice as a last resort to inflict suffering upon the Kingdom of Aglarion. The soul of Prince Krasnar Azennar was bound to a phylactery with a ritual similar to the one that wizards use to turn themselves into liches. The Lich-Knight seeks to rule over its promised kingdom that it wants to fashion to its own image, a land ravaged by its undead minions.

THE LICH-KNIGHT

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 19 (*+1 plate*)
Hit Points 195 (26d8 + 78)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +9 (+3 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +9, Perception +7
Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic, psychic
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

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Spellcasting. The Lich-Knight is a 11th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The Lich-Knight has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, divine favor, shield of faith**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *aid**, *branding smite, lesser restoration,*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*

The Lich-Knight is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The Lich-Knight knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, true strike*
- 1st-2th level (2 2nd level slots): *blindness/deafness, mirror image**, *protection from evil and good, ray of enfeeblement*

*The Lich-Knight casts these spells on itself before combat.

Agile Tentacles. The Lich-Knight has two additional tentacle limbs that it can use to manipulate objects within a reach of 5 feet. It can attack with both tentacles as a bonus action.

Aura of Menace. Each creature of the Lich-Knight's choice that is within 10 feet of it and aware of him must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Aura of Protection. Whenever the Lich-Knight or a friendly creature within 10 feet of it must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to the Lich-Knight's Charisma modifier of +3. The Lich-Knight must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Great Weapon Fighting. When the Lich-Knight rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack it makes, it can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the Lich-Knight fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Limited Telepathy. The Lich-Knight can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

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Rejuvenation. If it has a phylactery, the destroyed Lich-Knight gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the phylactery.

Turn Resistance. The Lich-Knight has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Unholy Smite. When Krasnar Azennar hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, he can expend one spell slot to deal necrotic damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 4 (1d8) for each spell level higher than 1st. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is a paladin or celestial.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Lich-Knight makes three attacks with its glaive and two attacks with its tentacles as a bonus action.

+2 Nine Lives Stealer Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (1d10 + 8) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

+1 Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Divine Sense (4/Day). The Lich-Knight can detect evil forces. Until the end of its next turn, the Lich-Knight knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of it that is not behind total cover. It knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence he senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, the Lich-Knight also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Hand of Doom. The Lich-Knight can touch a creature and draw power from its pool of 55 hit points to cause necrotic damage to a creature touched, up to the maximum amount remaining in its pool. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

Touch of Undeath. The Lich-Knight can choose to create and control a skeleton, zombie, ghoul, ghast, or wight from a dead humanoid, giant, or beast by merely touching it.

REACTIONS

Deflection. When another creature damages the Lich-Knight or its ally within 5 feet with a melee attack, it can use his reaction to reduce the damage by 6 (1d6 + 3) points.

Protection. When a creature the Lich-Knight can see attacks a target other than the Lich-Knight that is within 5 feet of the Lich-Knight, it can use its reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Cantrip. The Lich-Knight casts a cantrip.

Tentacle. The Lich-Knight attacks with its tentacle.

Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). The Lich-Knight fixes its gaze on one creature it can see within 10 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened for 1 minute. The frightened target can

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repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the lich's gaze for the next 24 hours.

Disrupt Life (Costs 3 Actions). Each non-undead creature within 20 feet of the Lich-Knight must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LAIR ACTIONS

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

- The Lich-Knight can point to any point and cause a necrotic fog to fill an area in a 20 feet radius. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, that creature must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. The creature takes 18 (4d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures are affected even if they hold their breath or don't need to breathe.

- The Lich-Knight can infuse undead with unholy power making them harder to turn. The Lich-Knight can choose an undead creature that the Lich-Knight can see within 60 feet of it, granting it advantage on saving throws against effects that turn or destroy undead.

- The Lich-Knight can invigorate itself with unholy energies. The Lich-Knight regains 40 hit points.

EQUIPMENT

The Lich-Knight wields a *+2 nine lives stealer glaive* that has four charges remaining, carries a *+1 heavy crossbow*, and wears a *+1 plate armor*.

UNIT OF ARMED COMMONERS

Sometimes, armies need to enlist every able-bodied person who has the will to fight - artisans, merchants, peasants, men and women of the community who are ready to die for their families, freedom, and country, willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for them. They are armed only with a club, but their greatest weapon is their unity and ferocious will to overcome their enemies.

UNIT OF ARMED COMMONERS

Gargantuan unit of medium humanoids, any alignment

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 210 (20d20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Unit. The unit of armed commoners can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of armed commoners has a space of 50 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 20 (8d4) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (4d4) bludgeoning damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

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UNIT OF GHOULS

Longing for humanoid flesh, this huge pack of ghouls hunts ferociously and without ever satiating their dreadful need. The paralytic effect of their claws quickly subdues most humanoid victims that are soon consumed without leaving a trace of their former existence.

UNIT OF GHOULS

Huge unit of medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 420 (40d20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Unit. The unit of ghouls can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of ghouls has a space of 25 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

Divine Susceptibility. The unit of ghouls is considered as a CR 1 undead creature for the purposes of a cleric's Channel Divinity: Turn Undead class feature.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 72 (16d6 + 16) piercing damage, or 36 (8d6 + 8) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 56 (16d4 + 16) slashing damage, or 28 (8d4 + 8) slashing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer. If the target is a non-unit creature other than an elf or undead, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

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UNIT OF ROYAL ARROWS

The regular ranged militia of the Kingdom of Agalrion consists of well-equipped archers selected by their superiors. These units guard the walls of the cities and provide ranged support to the troops fighting in the first rows of the battles when needed.

UNIT OF ROYAL ARROWS

Gargantuan unit of medium humanoids, any alignment

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 575 (50d20 + 50)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Unit. The unit of Royal Arrows can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of Royal Arrows has a space of 50 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

ACTIONS

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 150/600 ft., all creatures in a 25 feet radius. *Hit:* 52 (8d8 + 16) piercing damage, or 26 (4d8 + 8) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 28 (8d6) slashing damage, or 14 (4d6) slashing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

UNIT OF ROYAL RIDERS

The outriders of the army, these well-trained and battle-hardened riders, are fewer in number than units of regular foot soldiers but are capable of delivering significant damage, especially if they can utilize the power of their charging horses.

UNIT OF ROYAL RIDERS

Huge unit of medium humanoids, any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)
Hit Points 375 (50d12 + 50)
Speed 30 ft. (60 ft. when mounted)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Animal Handling +5, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Unit. The unit of Royal Riders can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a large creature. The unit of Royal Riders has a space of 50 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

Trampling Stampede. If the unit of Royal Riders moves at least 60 feet straight toward a creature, the unit of Royal Riders can make one trample attack against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The unit of Royal Riders makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 44 (8d8 + 8) slashing damage, or 22 (4d8 + 4) slashing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

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Trample. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit:* 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage.

UNIT OF ROYAL SWORDS

The regular foot soldiers and city guards of the Kingdom of Aglarion comprise well-equipped regiments that can halt the enemy's advance and stand firm on the battleground.

UNIT OF ROYAL SWORDS

Gargantuan unit of medium humanoids, any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)
Hit Points 575 (50d20 + 50)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Unit. The unit of Royal Swords can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of Royal Swords has a space of 50 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 44 (8d8 + 8) slashing damage, or 22 (4d8 + 4) slashing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

UNIT OF SATYRS

A small but competent group of satyrs who come together to fight and revel after their victory is the basis of many fairy tales and a truly magnificent sight to behold. Their loud cheers during and after battle speak of willpower and the love of battle.

UNIT OF SATYRS

Huge unit of medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)
Hit Points 487 (75d12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Unit. The unit of satyrs can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of satyrs has a space of 25 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

Magic Resistance. The unit of satyrs has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 48 (16d4 + 8) bludgeoning damage, or 24 (8d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

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Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 52 (8d6 + 24) piercing damage, or 26 (4d6 + 12) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., all creatures in a 25 feet radius. *Hit:* 52 (8d6 + 24) piercing damage, or 26 (4d6 + 12) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

UNIT OF SCOUNDRELS

This group of self-taught scoundrels and thieves benefit from their unpredictable battle tactics that can force most enemies to their knees. They move with great agility on the battlefield, outsmarting foes with heavier armaments.

UNIT OF SCOUNDRELS

Gargantuan unit of medium humanoids, any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 210 (20d20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Thieves' cant plus any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Unit. The unit of scoundrels can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of scoundrels has a space of 50 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the unit of scoundrels can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Opportunist Attack (1/Turn). The unit of scoundrels deals an extra 70 (20d6), or 35 (10d6) damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer, when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or if the target is surprised.

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 44 (8d6 + 16) piercing damage, or 22 (4d6 + 8) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 80/320 ft., all creatures in a 25 feet radius. *Hit*: 44 (8d6 + 16) piercing damage, or 22 (4d6 + 8) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

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UNIT OF WIGHTS

A troop of intelligent undead is a truly horrific opponent, especially if its members retain their battle skills from their previous lives. What makes them an even more potent and dreadful enemy is the fact that their necrotic powers turn their victims into a mass of walking mindless zombies that join their ranks against the living.

UNIT OF WIGHTS

Huge unit of medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 760 (80d12 + 240)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages The languages it knew in life
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Unit. The unit of wights can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of wights has a space of 25 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +6 modifier.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the unit of wights has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Divine Susceptibility. The unit of wights is considered as a CR 3 undead creature for the purposes of a cleric's Channel Divinity: Turn Undead class feature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The unit of wights makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 44 (8d6 + 16) necrotic damage, or 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid or a unit made up of humanoids slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie or a unit of zombies under the control of the unit of wights, unless the humanoid or the unit is restored to life or their bodies are destroyed. The unit of wights can have no more than one unit of zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 52 (8d8 + 16) slashing damage, or 26 (4d8 + 8) slashing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 150/600 ft., all creatures in a 25 feet radius. Hit: 52 (8d8 + 16) piercing damage, or 26 (4d8 + 8) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

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UNIT OF WIZARDS

Almost nothing can withstand the powerful spells that a group of combat-trained wizards can unleash upon their enemies. Their magically enhanced battle tactics make them one of the most potent units on any battlefield.

UNIT OF WIZARDS

Huge unit of medium humanoids, any alignment

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)
Hit Points 325 (50d12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +7
Skills Arcana +7, History +7
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Unit. The unit of wizards can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of wizards has a space of 25 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +4 modifier.

ACTIONS

Volley of Fire Bolts. *Ranged Spell Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 120 ft., all creatures in a 25 feet radius. *Hit*: 66 (12d10) fire damage, or 33 (6d10) fire damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer.

Volley of Magic Missiles (3/Day). The unit of wizards can unleash a volley of glowing darts of magical force. The volley of magic missiles deals a total of 157 (45d4 + 45) force damage, or 77 (22d4 + 22) force damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer. The unit of wizards can divide the damage rolled as it chooses among any number of creatures that it can see within a range of 120 feet.

Invisibility (1/Day). The unit of wizards can cast the *invisibility* spell.

Levitate (1/Day). The unit of wizards can cast the *levitate* spell.

Barrage of Fireballs (2/Day). The unit of wizards can unleash deadly explosions of flames in a 80 foot radius area within a range of 150 feet. A creature in the area takes 420 (120d6) fire damage, or 210 (60d6) fire damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer. A creature in the area can halve the damage by succeeding on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. The fire spreads around corners. It ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

REACTIONS

Magical Shielding (2/Day). The unit of wizards can cast the *shield* spell.

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UNIT OF ZOMBIES

Spawn from the petitioners of the Abyss, these zombies bear the traits of the demonic plane they spawn from. The mass of dozens of mindless, loudly moaning zombies crawl and bite at any creature that comes within their reach. The horde of abyssal undead climb over their targets, engulfing all creatures in their way before tearing them apart.

UNIT OF ZOMBIES

Gargantuan unit of medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8
Hit Points 1,080 (80d20 + 240)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	6 (-2)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Wis +2
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Understands common but can't speak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Unit. The unit of zombies can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the unit can move through any opening large enough for a medium creature. The unit of zombies has a space of 50 feet. The unit makes Strength ability checks with a +5 modifier.

Pile On. The unit of zombies has advantage on melee attack rolls against any huge or smaller creature that has no other creature within 5 feet of it. Such targets must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or become prone.

Undead Fortitude. Every time the unit of zombies takes damage, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, unless the damage is radiant damage. On a success, the unit of zombies takes only half the damage.

Divine Susceptibility. The unit of zombies is considered as a CR 1/4 undead creature for the purposes of a cleric's Channel Divinity: Turn Undead class feature.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit*: 36 (8d6 + 8) piercing damage, or 18 (4d6 + 4) piercing damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer. A non-unit creature hit by the unit of zombies must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or become prone. Standing up in the space of a unit of zombies requires a successful DC 13 Strength saving throw.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., all creatures in the unit's space. *Hit:* 36 (8d6 + 8) bludgeoning damage, or 18 (4d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage if the unit has half of its hit points or fewer. A non-unit creature hit by the unit of zombies must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or become prone. Standing up in the space of a unit of zombies requires a successful DC 13 Strength saving throw.

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VAULT NAGA

These imperishable guardians of treasure vaults are menacing combatants and magic users who hone their deals for eternity but demand their shares equally fiercely. The god of strength, the Relentless, originally created them as a gift to the first dwarven kings, and as a result, the vault naga is fond of the dwarven race, its songs, and beer.

VAULT NAGA

Large monstrosity, lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +6, Int +4, Wis +6, Cha +6
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Celestial, Common, Dwarvish, Undercommon
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The vault naga is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks), and it needs only verbal components to cast its spells. It has the following cleric and paladin spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, divine favor, shield of faith**
- 2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite, hold person, spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, meld into stone, spirit guardians*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement*, guardian of faith*
- 5th level (1 slots): *flame strike*

*The vault naga casts these spells on itself before combat.

Brutal Swing. The vault naga can reroll any of the damage die for its tail axe if the roll is 1 or 2. It must use the new roll.

Magic Weapons. The vault naga's weapon attacks are magical.

Rejuvenation. If it dies, the vault naga returns to life in 1d6 days and regains all its hit points. Only a *wish* spell can prevent this trait from functioning.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vault naga makes two attacks, one with its bite and one with its tail axe.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage. The target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving

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throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Tail Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) slashing damage.

WELVYNN AUSSTYL

The archdruid of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten is served even by the circle's other druids as a godling. The vile drow druid has taken their entire house to the Farrealm thousands of years ago and has returned to avenge their exile and to sacrifice the Feyrealm as a whole to his aberrant masters. Welvynn Ausstyl is motivated only by the service to the entities he and his circle venerates and has no remorse about achieving the goals set forth by them.

WELVYNN AUSSTYL

Medium humanoid (drow), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (chuul carapace breast plate)
Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +10
Skills Intimidation +6, Nature +6, Perception +10, Religion +6, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Elvish, Undercommon, Deep Speech, Druidic, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Welvynn Ausstyl's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dancing lights*
- 1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*

Spellcasting. Welvynn Ausstyl is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, druidcraft, poison spray, resistance, shillelagh*
- 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, goodberry*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, detect thoughts, heat metal, hold person, lesser restoration, spider climb*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, gaseous form, spirit guardians, water breathing, wind wall*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, black tentacles, confusion, freedom of movement**
- 5th level (2 slots): *antilife shell, contact other plane, hallow, mass cure wounds*
- 6th level (1 slot): *heal, sunbeam,*
- 7th level (1 slot): *fire storm, regenerate, reverse gravity*
- 8th level (1 slot): *feeblemind*

*Welvynn Ausstyl casts these spells on itself before combat.

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Alien Anatomy. Welvynn Ausstyl is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Alien Mind. Welvynn Ausstyl has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being frightened. Welvynn Ausstyl is immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

Fey Ancestry. Magic can't put Welvynn Ausstyl to sleep.

Incomprehensible Intellect. The thoughts of Welvynn Ausstyl can't be read by magical means and it is immune to being charmed.

Limited Telepathy. Welvynn Ausstyl can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Unsettling Appearance. Welvynn Ausstyl has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Welvynn Ausstyl has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Voice of the Void. Welvynn Ausstyl can make itself understood with aberrations that don't speak Dark Speech or are not capable of speech.

ACTIONS

Whip of Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on DC 11 Constitution save or become poisoned for one minute. The target can attempt a new save at the end of its turn. A successful save ends the poisoned condition.

Conjure Abomination (Recharges after a Long Rest). Welvynn Ausstyl can cast the *conjure celestial* spell but instead of a celestial creature he conjures an aberration type creature of his choice within the limits of the spell. The spell lasts 1 hour and doesn't require him to concentrate on it.

Enslave (Recharges after a Long Rest). Welvynn Ausstyl can cast the *dominate person* spell without expending a spell slot or material components.

Wild Shape (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Twice per day, Welvynn Ausstyl can use its action to magically assume the shape of a beast. The beast can be CR 1 or less, with a fly or swimming speed. The Inheritor of the Unbegotten can stay in beast shape for seven hours. This ability otherwise functions as the wild shape ability of the druid class.

Manifest Aberrant Trait. Welvynn Ausstyl can expend one use of its Wild Shape feature to emulate one special trait of any aberration type creature of CR 3 or lower for one minute. If there is a saving throw associated with the special trait then the saving throw is made against DC 18.

EQUIPMENT

Welvynn Ausstyl wears a *robe of eyes* and wields a *whip of tentacles*.

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WEREHELLHOUND KNIGHT

A Knight of the Crown who has chosen to stay loyal to the crown despite the Midnight Curse, has been turned into a werehellhound lycanthrope by the newly crowned Queen Aphinah as a gift for its service. Maintaining the tenets of its oath to protect the sovereign, a werehellhound knight relies on its divine magic and shapechanger abilities to weed out and persecute any and all opposition. Serving as the queen's private guard and commando, werehellhound knights always travel in packs of at least two members and spread the flames of their hellish curse upon their victims.

WEREHELLHOUND KNIGHT

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger, afflicted lycanthrope), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 in humanoid and hybrid form (plate, shield) 15 in hellhound form (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft. (50 ft. in hellhound form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +5 (+2 on all saving throws from Aura of Protection)
Skills Athletics +7, Insight +4, Perception +4
Damage Immunities fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Shapechanger. The werehellhound knight can use its action to *polymorph* into a hellhound-humanoid hybrid or into a hellhound, or back into its true form, which is humanoid. Its statistics, other than its AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It is automatically cast out of its armor when it changes into hellhound form. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Spellcasting. The werehellhound knight is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The werehellhound knight has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command, cure wounds, divine favor, heroism, protection from evil and good, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (2 slots): *branding smite, magic weapon**, *zone of truth*

*The werehellhound knight casts these spells on itself before combat.

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Aura of Protection. Whenever the werehellhound knight or an allied creature within 10 feet of it must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to the werehellhound knight's Charisma modifier (+2). The werehellhound knight must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Divine Health. The werehellhound knight is immune to disease.

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

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

Unholy Smite. When the werehellhound knight hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can expend one spell slot to deal necrotic damage to the target, in addition to the weapon's damage. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, or 13 (3d8) for a 2nd-level spell slot. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is a celestial.

ACTIONS

Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). The werehellhound knight makes three attacks: two with its longsword (humanoid form) or claws (hybrid form) and one with its bite (hybrid form).

Bite (Hellhound or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4 piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werehellhound lycanthropy.

Claws (Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Longsword (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack*: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Fire Breath (Hellhound or Hybrid Form Only, Recharge 5-6). The werehellhound knight exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Divine Sense (3/Day). The werehellhound knight can detect otherworldly or undead forces. Until the end of its next turn, the werehellhound knight knows the location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of it that is not behind total cover. It knows the type (celestial, fiend, or undead) of any being whose presence it senses, but not its identity. Within the same radius, the werehellhound knight also detects the presence of any place or object that has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the *hallow* spell.

Lay on Hands (Recharges after a Long Rest). The werehellhound knight can touch a creature and draw power from its pool of 30 hit points to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in its pool. Alternatively, the werehellhound knight can expend 5 hit points from its pool of healing to cure the target of one disease or neutralize one poison affecting it. The werehellhound knight can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands, expending hit points separately for each one. This feature has no effect on undead and constructs.

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Oath of Protection (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). The werehellhound knight can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects.

- ***Vow of Protection***. The werehellhound knight can use its Oath of Protection to bolster its defenses. As a bonus action, it can utter a vow of protection against a creature that it can see within 30 feet. That creature gains disadvantage on attack rolls against the werehellhound knight for 1 minute or until the werehellhound knight drops to 0 hit points or falls unconscious.

- ***Divine Ward.*** The werehellhound knight can use its Oath of Protection to offer protection to those around it. It can present its holy symbol and each creature of its choice that it can see within 30 feet becomes warded for 1 minute. Any creature who targets a warded creature with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This effect doesn't protect the warded creature from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball. If the warded creature makes an attack or casts a spell that affects an enemy creature, this effect ends. This effect ends on the creature if the Knight is incapacitated or dies or if the warded creature is more than 30 feet away from it.

REACTIONS

Protection. When a creature the werehellhound knight can see attacks a target other than the werehellhound knight that is within 5 feet of the Knight, the werehellhound knight can use its reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll. The werehellhound knight must be wielding a shield to use this feature.

WEREHELLHOUND TEMPLATE

The following information applies to a creature, including player characters, who contract the curse of werehellhound lycanthropy. The creature gains the following features only in hellhound or hybrid form.

WEREHELLHOUND TEMPLATE

Werehellhound Lycanthropy. On a full moon, which happens once every week, an afflicted creature turns into a bloodthirsty hellhound-humanoid hybrid or into a hellhound based on the DM's discretion. While in hellhound or hybrid form, the character has a Strength score of 15 if their score isn't already higher, and a +1 bonus to AC (from natural armor). Its other statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

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

Stealthy. The werehellhound gains proficiency in the Stealth skill. If it is already proficient in the skill, it adds double its proficiency bonus to checks it makes with it.

Speed. The werehellhound's speed increases by 10 feet in hybrid form.

Fire Immunity. While in hybrid or hellhound form, the werehellhound is immune to fire damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5-6). The werehellhound can exhale fire in a 15-foot cone while in hybrid or hellhound form. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 8 + the werehellhound's proficiency bonus + the werehellhound's Constitution modifier), taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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

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Bite (Hybrid Form Only). As a bonus action, the werehellhound can make a bite attack that deals 4 (1d8) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. Attack and damage rolls for the natural weapons are based on Strength. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + the werehellhound's proficiency bonus + the werehellhound's Constitution modifier) or be cursed with werehellhound lycanthropy.

Claw (Hybrid Form Only). As a bonus action, the werehellhound can make a claw attack that deals 7 (2d4) slashing damage. Attack and damage rolls for the natural weapons are based on Strength.

WITCHSERVANT CULTIST

Witchservant cultists are usually bitter, power-hungry individuals who live hidden in society, serving the cause of their Hag patrons in exchange for dark warlock powers. They live as average citizens and practice their rituals secretly, gathering only to conduct vile rituals and contact their hag patrons for guidance. They are usually uninitiated into the deeper schemes of their patrons and superiors.

WITCHSERVANT CULTIST

Medium humanoid (any race), any evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Spellcasting. The witchservant cultist is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It knows the following warlock spells:

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, poison spray*
- 1st level (1 slot): *charm person, hellish rebuke*

Dark Devotion. The witchservant cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Hag's Form (Recharges after a Long Rest). The witchservant cultist can magically polymorph into a small or medium humanoid for one hour. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

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XARZAX AUSSTYL

Xarzax Ausstyl was born a noble drow but Welvynn Ausstyl has not seen hope for his progression as an initiate of the Inheritors of the Unbegotten. The archdruid expelled the noble child and threw him in the midsts of the savage frenzied mutants. Over the past century, the noble child became the mightiest of the savages, trying to prove his worth to his patron and the druids of the comic horrors.

XARZAX AUSSTYL

Medium humanoid (drow), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (unarmored defense, grafted appendage)
Hit Points 107 (15d8 + 30 + 10 grafted appendage)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6
Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +4, Survival +5
Damage Resistances psychic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Elvish, Undercommon, telepathy (one-way, 120 ft.)
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Xarzax Ausstyl's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will: *dancing lights*
- 1/day each: *darkness, faerie fire*

Aberrant Anatomy. Xarzax Ausstyl is immune to critical hits and diseases. His extra eyes give him advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks that rely on sight.

Alien Anatomy. Xarzax Ausstyl is considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but otherwise retains its original creature type.

Alien Mind. Xarzax Ausstyl has resistance to psychic damage and advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened. Xarzax Ausstyl is immune to madness and spell effects that provoke uncontrolled action (such as *confusion*).

Brutal Critical. Xarzax Ausstyl can roll one additional weapon damage die when determining the extra damage for a critical hit with a melee attack.

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Danger Sense. Xarzax Ausstyl has advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that he can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, he can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Feral Instinct. Xarzax Ausstyl has advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, if Xarzax Ausstyl is surprised at the beginning of combat and aren't incapacitated, he can act normally on his first turn, but only if he enters his rage before doing anything else on that turn.

Fey Ancestry. Magic can't put Xarzax Ausstyl to sleep.

Grafted Appendages (Recharges after a Long Rest). Xarzax Ausstyl has an additional 10 temporary hit points and +1 bonus to AC while he has at least 1 of these temporary hit points (both included in its statistics). He regains these temporary hit points after a long rest.

Limited Telepathy. Xarzax Ausstyl can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of him that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Reckless Attack. When Xarzax Ausstyl makes its first attack on its turn, it can decide to attack recklessly. Doing so gives him advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during his turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until his next turn.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Xarzax Ausstyl has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Telepathic Terror. Xarzax Ausstyl can telepathically project his rage into the mind of his enemies causing them immense pain. As a bonus action, Xarzax Ausstyl can expend one use of his Rage feature to assault the mind of a target creature. The target creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed. A creature charmed this way has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the effect ends on the target.

Unsettling Appearance. Xarzax Ausstyl has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Xarzax Ausstyl makes two attacks with its bone claw or handaxe.

Bone Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Handaxe. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Rage (3/day). Xarzax Ausstyl can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, Xarzax Ausstyl gains the following benefits if he isn't wearing heavy armor:

- He has advantage on Strength checks and Strength Saving Throws.
- When he makes a melee weapon attack using Strength, he gains a +3 bonus to the damage roll.
- He has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Xarzax Ausstyl's rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if he is knocked unconscious or his turn ends and he hasn't attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then. He can also end the rage on his turn as a bonus action. Once he has raged four times, Xarzax Ausstyl must finish a long rest before he can rage again.

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XENO THE REKINDLED FLAME

Xeno, an orphan from the Shanties, was taken in and raised by Father Drunnag Steelarm, a zealous cleric of the Shining Light who follows the ancient traditions of the Order of the Eternal Light in his secret shrine. The old dwarven cleric saw Xeno as a chosen prodigy to be inducted to the order, due to the powers the boy manifested at a young age. As Xeno got older, he learned the truth about the history of the theocracy and the remnant sect with which he was involved. One day, he had a vivid dream about a couatl in the light and gained an understanding of his place. He abandoned Father Drunnag and his rigorous doctrines, and walked into the main chapel of the temple of Light and Darkness, pledging his soul to the dual deity. Xeno spent the next twenty years serving the temple, never looking back at the evil priest who raised him and his fanatic dogma, and keeping his past a secret from all. He rapidly rose in the hierarchy of the temple, becoming the right hand of the high priest of the temple, Father Kalozark Solamyr, who named him the Rekindled Flame.

XENO THE REKINDLED FLAME

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (*+1 breastplate*)
Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +9, Cha +7
Skills Insight +9, Religion +6
Damage Resistances radiant
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

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Spellcasting. Xeno is a 16th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Xeno has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, guiding bolt, healing word*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *continual flame, prayer of healing, spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *daylight, dispel magic, mass healing word*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith*
- 5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, hallow, mass cure wounds*
- 6th level (1 slots): *blade barrier, heal*
- 7th level (1 slots): *fire storm, resurrection*
- 8th level (1 slots): *holy aura*

*Xeno casts these spells on himself before combat.

ACTIONS

+1 Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

Channel Divinity. (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). Xeno can channel divine energy to fuel either of the following magical effects.

- ***Light Ascends.*** Xeno can use his *channel divinity* to harness light, summoning light and banishing darkness. Xeno presents his holy symbol, and summons a 30 foot radius globe of light that functions as the day*light* spell. The globe appears in a space that he can see within 30 feet. Any magical darkness effect within the globe is dispelled. Additionally, each hostile creature within the globe must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 23 (2d6 + 16) radiant damage on a failed save, and half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that has total cover from Xeno is not affected.

- ***Turn Undead.*** Xeno presents his holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead that can see or hear him within 30 feet must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage or it is destroyed if it has a CR of 3 or lower. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

EQUIPMENT

Xeno wields a *+1 quarterstaff* and wears a *+1 breastplate*.

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APPENDIX E

SUBCLASSES

This collection of 36 subclasses features three for each base class in the Player's Handbook. Many are woven into notable NPCs and organizations in the Crown of the Oathbreaker adventure, whether they appear on the side of the characters, as neutral players, or as villains. Since many organizations and factions are represented, they can offer integrated hooks into Crown of the Oathbreaker for the players. Players may choose to follow any of them, even ones leaning towards evil or representing evil organizations if the DM allows and can implant into the story without spoiling anything from the adventure's plot. However, all subclasses can be used in any other adventure as standalone options.

BARBARIAN

Fear Rager

Taking advantage of one's weakness is a crucial tactic in combat. These barbarians learn how to instill fear in their enemies and exploit their opponents' hesitation when facing a raging menace. The disregard and disdain these barbarians feel for those who fear them gives them an extra surge of power as if they would feed on the fear they create. Many of the Vordani war tribes use this tactic to overcome their foes.

Demoralizing Blow. Starting at 3rd level, you can break the ferocity of those whom you attack. As a bonus action, you can choose a creature that you have dealt damage to with a melee weapon during your turn. If the creature can see or hear you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier) or have disadvantage on its melee attack rolls against you until the end of your next turn.

Terrifying Onslaught. Starting at 6th level, you can instill fear in the hearts of those you attack. As a bonus action, you can choose a creature that you have dealt damage to with a melee weapon during your turn. If the creature can see or hear you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier) or become frightened until the end of your next turn.

Culling the Weak. Starting at 10th level, you can take advantage of those who fear you. You gain advantage on melee attack rolls against frightened creatures and your melee weapon attacks score a critical hit against them on a roll of 19 or 20.

Intimidating Slaughter. Starting at 14th level, the fear in the eyes of your enemies intensifies your combat prowess. As a bonus action, you can make a melee weapon attack against a frightened creature and your melee weapon attacks score a crit-

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ical hit against them on a roll of 18, 19 or 20. On a critical hit, all hostile creatures within 30 feet who saw your critical hit must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier) or become frightened until the end of your next turn.

Frenzied Mutant

The drow of House Ausstyl keep some of their offspring in an almost feral state, training them to harness their rage in combat. When these children are initiated to the wrath of the otherworldly entities they venerate, they are infused with aberrant flesh that quickly spreads in their bodies like a parasite. These barbaric warriors learn a primitive way to graft their bodies to enhance themselves further with mutations that allow them to grow in power.

Grafted Appendages. Starting at 3rd level, you learn how to graft aberrant appendages into your body and use them to soak up damage from attacks. You gain 10 temporary hit points and +1 bonus to AC while you have these hit points. You regain these temporary hit points after a long rest.

Bone Claw. Starting at 3rd level, sharp, curved bone appendages grow out of both of your forearms that you can use to make attacks. The bone claws have a reach of 5 feet, can be used as part of an unarmed attack, and deal 1d8 + Strength modifier slashing damage on a hit.

Telepathic Terror. Starting at 6th level, you can telepathically project your rage into the mind of your enemies, causing them spasms that shake their will. As a bonus action, you can expend one use of your Rage feature to assault the mind of a target creature. The target creature must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Constitution modifier) or become charmed. A creature charmed this way has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the effect ends on the target.

Aberrant Anatomy. Starting at 10th level, your bodily mutations become so severe and bizarre that your physiology is no longer similar to that of

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your original race. You become immune to critical hits and diseases. Extra eyes give you advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks that rely on sight, and you gain darkvision to a range of 120 feet. You are also considered an aberration type creature for the purposes of determining effects but you otherwise retain your original creature type.

Agile Tentacles. Starting at 14th level, you sprout appendages in the form of two fully functional alien tentacles that spread disease. You gain additional tentacle limbs that you can use to manipulate objects within a reach of 5 feet. You are considered to be proficient with these tentacles when making unarmed attacks with them. You can attack with both tentacles as a bonus action. Each hit with a tentacle causes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage + your Strength modifier. A creature hit by a tentacle must make a Constitution saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Constitution modifier) or become diseased. A creature diseased this way gains disadvantage on its attack rolls and ability checks for 1 minute.

Spelleater

Some barbarians, mainly those who live under the oppression of magic users, have learned to use sheer power to overcome magic. These individuals, called Spelleaters by the Vordani tribes, are able to withstand spells of all sorts by tensing their muscles to block magical energies from affecting them physically. Some spelleaters can even utilize these energies to vitalize their bodies and benefit from them instead of being harmed by their baleful effects.

Raging Defiance. Starting at 3rd level, you can shake off and overcome magical effects with ease. While raging, you have advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Absorb Magic. Starting at 6th level, you can soak up harmful magic while raging and revitalize yourself from its energies. When you succeed on a save against a spell or magical effect while raging, you regain 1d6 hit points for each level of the spell affecting you or 2d6 hit points if the magical effect has no spell levels associated with it.

Brawn Over Magic. Starting at 10th level, you can tense your muscles and stiffen your body to withstand the effects of magic. When you become the target of a spell or magical effect that requires a saving throw, you may choose to make a Strength saving throw instead of the original required save. In addition, if the spell or magical effect would allow you to make a saving throw to take only half damage, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw and only half damage if you fail. Once you use this feature, you can't use it until you finish a short or long rest.

Magic Resistance. Starting at 14th level, you become naturally resilient towards harmful magic. You gain advantage on all saving throws against spells and magical effects. You also gain the effects of a *haste* spell for three rounds when you successfully save against a harmful spell or magical effect.

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BARD

College of Dirge Singers

The college of dirge singers was formed from the ancient funeral singers of the Inevitable, the god of Death. These pious servants of the clergy of death were able to project the feelings associated with their chosen faith through songs and poems so powerfully that they could influence the emotions of others and even kill them. The followers of the Inevitable still imitate the secret songs and poems of the original dirge singers, but only the most skilled singers can invoke their true magical powers.

Lament of Melancholy. Starting at 3rd level, you can sing a woeful lament that causes creatures to fall into a state of depression. As an action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration on your turn to choose a number of creatures that you can see within 60 feet equal to your Charisma modifier (a minimum of one). Those creatures must make a Charisma saving throw against your spell DC or become charmed. While charmed, the creature has disadvantage on ability checks for one minute but can make a Charisma saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.

Dirge of Grief. Starting at 3rd level, you can sing a song that causes a creature to fall into a state of intense grief, washing away its hostility. As an action, you can target a creature that you can see within 60 feet. That creature must make a Charisma saving throw against your spell DC or become charmed. While charmed, the target becomes indifferent about creatures of your choice towards which it is hostile. This indifference ends if the target is attacked or harmed by a spell or if it witnesses any of its allies being harmed. The effect ends after one minute and the creature can become hostile again. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Elegy of Hopelessness. Starting at 6th level, you can recite a poem about death and passing that causes creatures to lose their motivation. As an action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration on your turn to choose a number of creatures that you can see within 60 feet equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one). Those creatures must make a Charisma saving throw against your spell DC or become charmed. While charmed, the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws for one minute but can make a Charisma saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.

Threnody of Death. Starting at 14th level, you can sing a song of death that creates harmful necrotic energies. As an action, you can target a creature that you can see within 60 feet. That creature must make a Constitution saving throw against your spell DC. On a failed save, the creature takes 49 (14d6) necrotic damage, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

High Speaker

Traditionally, the monarch of the kingdom chooses the High Speaker of the Minaret of the Speaker for lifelong service. The High Speaker's duty is to study the ancient scripts of the minaret that define its unique magic based on inflections of voice and use this knowledge to serve the kingdom. There are always a handful of apprentices who assist the High Speaker and train in the arts of word-magic. The High Speaker and the apprentices announce important information and call the city to action if needed. In times of war, the High Speaker organizes major movements and commands the Minaret of the Speaker that serves as a magical defense for the city.

Accentuated Tone. Starting at 3rd level, you learn how to add weight to your voice-based spells. As a bonus action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to force your target to make a saving throw against your spell with disadvantage if that spell requires your target to hear you.

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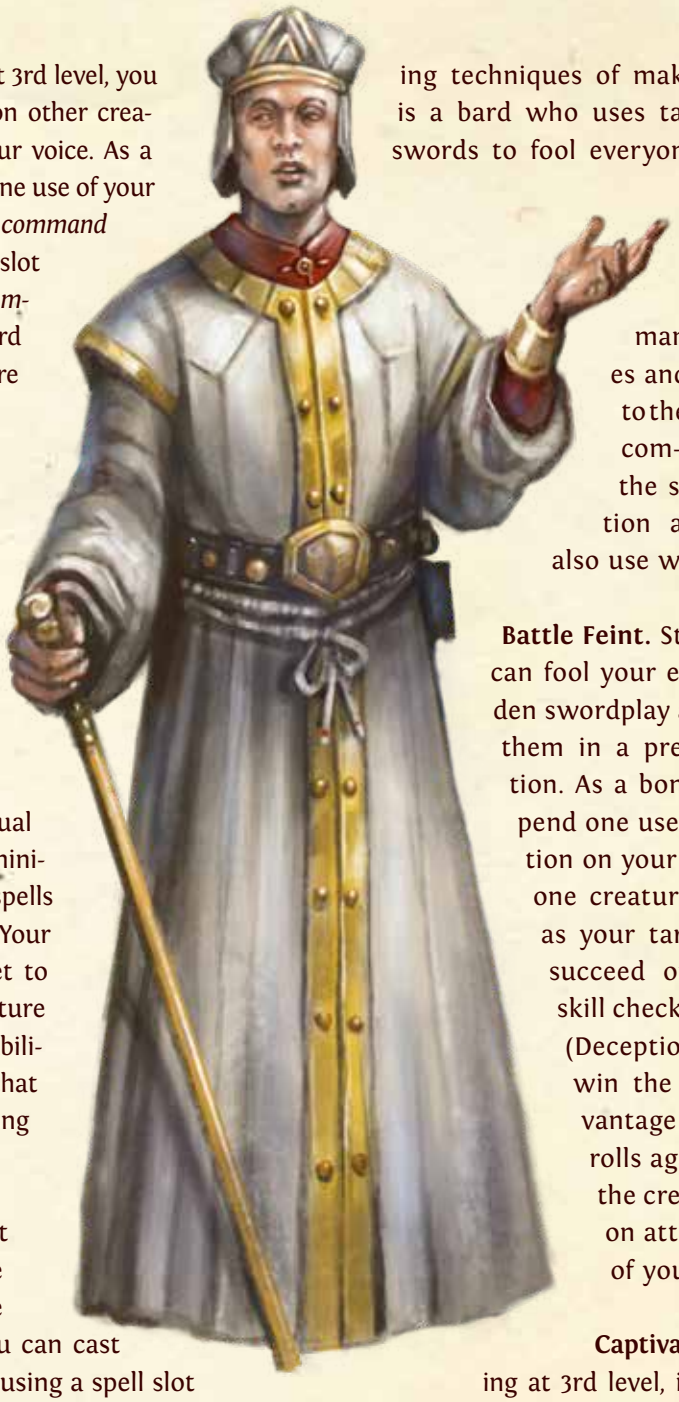

Commanding Voice. Starting at 3rd level, you learn how to force your will on other creatures by the sheer force of your voice. As a bonus action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to cast the *command* spell without expending a spell slot or material components. The *command* spell is added to the bard spell list when you learn more bard spells of your choice.

Universal Language. Starting at 6th level, you become able to converse with anyone alive or dead. You are constantly under the effect of a *tongues* spells and you can cast the *speak with dead, speak with animals, speak with plants* spells each a number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once) without using spells slots or material components. Your spells that require your target to hear you can affect any creature type that has an Intelligence ability score of 3 or higher even if that creature is immune to being charmed or frightened.

Word of Creation. Starting at 14th level, you learn to voice the word that shaped the world. As a bonus action, you can cast the *divine word* spell without using a spell slot or material components. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Pretender

Not every bard in Aglarion is trained in the College of Minstrels. Some of them learn their trade on the streets by picking up survival techniques that allow them to manipulate their enemies by utilizing techniques of make-believe. A Pretender is a bard who uses talents with words and swords to fool everyone. They are always at home in social situations where they can draw attention to themselves and manipulate people's choices and viewpoints according to their will. They also excel in com-bat, where they utilize the same tactics of distraction and feint, which they also use when speaking.

Battle Feint. Starting at 3rd level, you can fool your enemies with your sudden swordplay and movement, placing them in a precarious combat situation. As a bonus action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration on your turn to feint, choosing one creature within 5 feet of you as your target. Your target must succeed on a Wisdom (Insight) skill check against your Charisma (Deception) skill check. If you win the contest, you have advantage on your melee attack rolls against that creature and the creature has disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of your next turn.

Captivating Monologue. Starting at 3rd level, if you speak to an audience for at least 1 minute, you can attempt to captivate them with your style and colorful phrases. At the end of the performance, choose a number of humanoids within 60 feet of you who watched and listened to all of it, up to a number equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of one). Each target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be charmed by you. While charmed in this way, the target has disadvantage on all Wisdom (Insight) skill checks against you. This effect ends on the target after

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1 hour, if it takes any damage, if you attack it, or if it witnesses you attacking or damaging any of its allies. If a target succeeds on its saving throw, the target has no hint that you tried to charm it. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

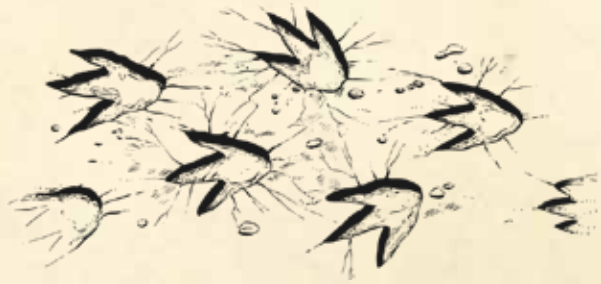
Elusive Target. Starting at 6th level, you can avoid the melee attacks of your enemies with an unexpected move. As a reaction, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to negate a melee attack that would otherwise hit you.

The Great Pretender. Starting at 14th level, you can pretend to be someone else by projecting a visage of your pure imagination, while you remain invisible. As an action, you can expend one use of your Bardic Inspiration to cast *mislead* without using a spell slot or material components.

CLERIC

Congregation Domain

Shepherds of their flocks and great orators, these clerics can heighten the potency of their prayers when others of their faith reinforce them. The congregation's strength is in numbers, and clerics who follow this domain almost never serve alone and are almost always found in at least pairs. Priests of the congregation can favor war or competence over battle might, but all are dedicated to leading large groups of worshippers, sharing their faith, and lending a hand to their co-religionists.



Congregation Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*bless, protection from evil and good*
3rd	*aid, calm emotions*
5th	*beacon of hope, mass healing word*
7th	*compulsion, private sanctum*
9th	*mass cure wounds, telepathic bond*

Bonus Cantrip. When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain the *guidance* cantrip, which doesn't count against the number of cleric cantrips you know.

Communal Prayers. Starting at 1st level, you can make your spells more potent if others cast the same spell as you. When another friendly creature casts the same spell in the same round as you, but before your spell takes effect, creatures targeted by your spell have disadvantage on saving throws against your spell.

Bonus Proficiency. Starting at 1st level, you become proficient in the Persuasion skill.

Channel Divinity: Mass Aid. Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to bolster your allies with toughness and resolve. As an action, you present your holy symbol and evoke healing energy that increases the hit point maximums and current hit points by your proficiency bonus x 5 for eight hours for all creatures you choose within 30 feet of you. This trait has no effect on undead or constructs.

Channel Divinity: Heighten Spells. Starting at 6th level, you can heighten your spells more effectively. If you cast a spell at a higher level that allows for additional creatures to be affected by your spell, you can use your Channel Divinity to make your spell affect two additional creatures per spell level instead of just one creature.

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Helping Hand. Starting at 8th level, you can aid multiple creatures in the completion of a task or allow a creature to make multiple attacks. When you take the Help action, an additional friendly creature within 5 feet of you gains advantage on the next ability check made to perform the task you are helping with, provided that the check is made before the start of your next turn. Alternatively, you can use your Help action to aid up to two friendly creatures in attacking a creature within 5 feet of you and if your allies attack the target before your next turn, all of their first attack rolls are made with advantage.

Forceful Communal Prayers. Starting at 17th level, you can make spells more potent if you or others cast the same spell in your presence. After you or an ally casts a spell, creatures targeted by the same spell cast by you or an ally gain disadvantage on the saving throw until the end of the turn. Additionally, if the spell requires a dice roll, you or allies can reroll 1s and 2s and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.

Darkness Domain

The clerics of the Darkness Within are secretive individuals who detach themselves from society and keep to the shadows. They accommodate themselves to darkness and operate unseen, focusing on hiding what they deem significant from the eyes of those who seek them. The imprint of the Dark Star's reign still resonates with the populace of Aglarion, manifesting in the subconscious memory of the society as a whole. Those who follow the Darkness Within keep their faith to themselves even if they are not devoted to the ideology of the dark solar avatar of their dualistic god. They pray at midnight and venerate the new moon as the absolute peak of their god's power.

Darkness Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*fog cloud, sleep*
3rd	*darkness, darkvision*
5th	*fear, nondetection*
7th	*greater invisibility, phantasmal killer*
9th	*dream, mislead*

Dark Sight. Starting at 1st level, you gain darkvision 60 ft. and magical darkness doesn't impede your sight. If you already have darkvision, its range increases by 60 ft.

Cloak of Darkness. Starting at 1st level, as a bonus action, you can weave shadows around you into a magical cloak that hides your form and protects you from attacks. For 1 minute, creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against you. An attacker is immune to this effect if it doesn't rely on sight, as with blindsight or tremorsense, or can see through illusions, as with truesight. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Channel Divinity: Darkness Descends. Starting at 2nd level, as an action, you can use your Channel Divinity to harness darkness, summoning darkness and banishing light. As an action, you present your holy symbol and summon a 30 foot radius globe of darkness that functions as the *darkness* spell that lasts for 1 minute. The globe appears in a space that you can see within 30 feet of you. Any magical light effect within the globe is dispelled. Additionally, each hostile creature within the globe must make a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC when the globe of darkness appears. A creature takes necrotic damage equal to 2d6 + your cleric level on a failed saving throw, and half as much damage on a successful one. A creature that has total cover from you is unaffected.

Channel Divinity: Conjure Shadows. Starting at 6th level, you can spend two uses of your Channel

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Divinity as an action to summon living shadows from darkness. This ability functions as a *conjure animals* spell, however it summons a single shadow, which speaks Common and does your bidding for one hour.

Void Eye. Starting at 8th level, you gain blindsight 30 ft. and become immune to the blinded condition.

Shadowform. Starting at 17th level, as an action you can transform yourself into the form of a shadow. You and your possessions become incorporeal for one hour. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a fly speed equal to your walking speed.
- You can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.
- You can take the Hide action as a bonus action while in dim light or darkness.
- You have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks.
- You gain damage resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks.
- You gain damage immunity to poison.
- You are immune to the exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, and restrained condition.

Once you use this feature you can't use it until you finish a long rest.

Ooze Domain

Clerics of the Ooze Domain believe in a higher level of physical existence that is represented by oozes. They serve their formless god to learn to be free from physical bounds. They believe that in the end, all organic materials will be wholly absorbed by oozes and are ready to sacrifice even themselves towards the fulfillment of this eventuality. In Aglarion, clerics of the ooze domain usually serve the Blind God, a minor entity that has only a few fanatic believers.

Ooze Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*create or destroy water, false life*
3rd	*acid arrow, blindness/deafness*
5th	*meld into stone, protection from energy*
7th	*black tentacles, freedom of movement*
9th	*contagion, hold monster*

Bonus Cantrip. When you choose this domain at 1st level, you gain the *acid splash* cantrip, which doesn't count against the number of cleric cantrips you know.

Sense of the Ooze. Starting at 1st level, you can gain the senses of an ooze as a bonus action. You gain blindsight to 5 ft. for a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier. The range of this blindsight increases by 5 feet at 5th, 9th, 13th and 17th level. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Bonus Proficiencies. Starting at 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons.

Channel Divinity: Charm Oozes. Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity to charm ooz-

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es. As an action, you present your holy symbol and invoke the name of your deity. Each ooze that can sense you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw it is charmed by you for 1 minute or until it takes damage. While it is charmed by you, it is friendly to you and other creatures you designate.

Acid Resistance. Starting at 6th level, you gain resistance to acid damage.

Gelatinous Form. Starting at 8th level, you can become as transparent as a gelatinous cube. As an action, you can become transparent, even when you are in plain sight. Your gear also becomes transparent with you. It requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) skill check to spot you if you have not moved nor attacked during your turn. A creature that tries to enter your space while unaware of you is surprised by you.

Ooze Form. Starting at 17th level, as an action you can assume the form of an ooze for 1 hour. You gain a speed of 20 ft. and climb 20 ft. You gain damage immunity to acid, cold, lightning and slashing damage. You become immune to the blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened and prone conditions as well as exhaustion. In addition, you gain blindsight 60 ft., but become blind beyond the range of your blindsight. You gain the following abilities:

- You can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.
- A creature that touches you or hits you with a melee attack while within 5 feet of you takes 13 (3d8) acid damage. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal or wood that hits you corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal or wood that hits you is destroyed after dealing damage. You can eat through 2-inch thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.
- You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.
- You can make a melee attack with a reach of 5 ft. that deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) acid damage. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is partly dissolved and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

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DRUID

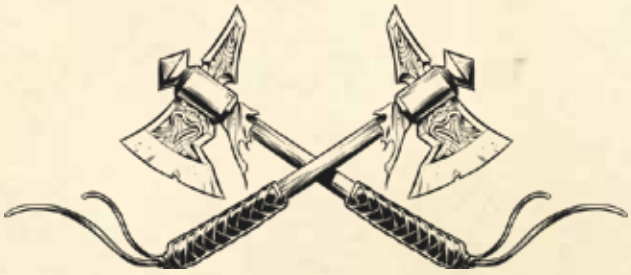
Circle of the Bloom

The Circle of the Bloom unites all druids who nurture flora and dedicate their lives to cultivating all forms of plant life. These druids tend to nature wherever their travels lead them, often tasked with important roles within farming communities but just as often living solitary lives in wilderness areas with heavy vegetation. Many druids of the circle might seem extremely introverted, slow, and even antisocial towards people, as they prefer to converse with plants and are used to the cyclical and slower nature of plant life.

Plant Form. Starting at 2nd level, your strong connection to plant life allows you to transform into monstrous forms. You can use your Wild Shape to transform into a plant instead of a beast.

Starting at 6th level, your attacks in plant form count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Circle Spells. Your mystical connection to plant life infuses you with the ability to cast certain spells. At 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level you gain access to circle spells Once you gain access to a circle spell, you always have it prepared, and it doesn't count against the number of spells you can prepare each day. If you gain access to a spell that doesn't appear on the druid spell list, the spell is nonetheless a druid spell for you.



Druid Level	Spells
3rd	*barkskin, locate animals or plants*
5th	*daylight, plant growth*
7th	*control water, freedom of movement*
9th	*commune with nature, tree stride*

Speak with Plants. Starting at 2nd level, you gain the ability to converse with plants. You can cast the *speak with plants* spell without expending a spell slot or material components. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Land's Stride. Starting at 6th level, moving through nonmagical difficult terrain costs you no extra movement. You can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard.

In addition, you gain advantage on saving throws against plants that are magically created or manipulated to impede movement, such as those created by the *entangle* spell.

Blessings of Bloom. Starting at 10th level, your magic becomes attuned to the flora and your plant magic is stronger than usual. You gain the following benefits:

- When you cast the *entangle* spell, the area of the spell is increased to a 40-foot square. Whenever a creature uses a Strength check to free itself, the thorns on the plants deal 2 (1d4) piercing damage.
- When you cast *barkskin*, the target's AC can't be less than 18, regardless of what kind of armor it is wearing.
- When you cast the *locate animals or plants* spell and you describe a specific kind of plant, the area of the spell increases to a range of 50 miles.
- When you cast *plant growth*, the radius of the area covered by plants is 500 feet.

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- When you cast the *commune with nature* spell, the area of the effect is doubled. You also gain an understanding of all plant creatures in the area, as well as all plant-based hazards and poisons.

Treant Form. Starting at 14th level, you can take on the form of the grandest creature of the forest, the treant. You can use your Wild Shape to transform into a treant, but must follow all other limitations presented under Wild Shape. You cannot use the Animate Trees ability of the treant.

Circle of the Savage Blood

Druids of the Circle of the Savage Bloods perceive monstrosities as a more evolved form of life. They are inspired by the wild variety of their powers and abilities that have developed to overcome the challenges they face in life. Savage Blood druids befriend and live amongst these creatures, helping them survive and learning from them what they can.

Circle Spells. Starting at 2nd level, you gain access to the *true strike* cantrip and the following circle spells, which are always prepared and don't count towards the number of spells you can prepare each day.

Druid Level	Spells
3rd	*enhance ability, enlarge/reduce*
5th	*blink, fly*
7th	*dominate beast, polymorph*
9th	*antilife shell, hold monster*

Monstrous Form. Starting at 2nd level, you acquire the ability to transform into monstrous forms. You can use your Wild Shape to transform into a monstrosity instead of a beast.

Monstrous Aspect. Starting at 2nd level, you can transform your body to manifest the feature of a monstrosity. As a bonus action, you can apply one of the features to your body from the options below.

- **Gallop of the Centaur.** Your two legs turn into those of a centaur and become powerful. Your speed increases to 50 feet.
- **Wings of the Cockatrice.** You sprout two feathery wings that allow you to fly. You gain a fly speed of 40 feet.
- **Claws of the Griffon.** Your hands turn into savage claws like those of a griffon. You can use your attack action to make a claw attack that deals 2d4 slashing damage plus your Strength modifier.
- **Horns of the Minotaur.** Horns grow from your forehead. You can use your attack action to make a gore attack that deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage plus your Strength modifier. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Strength modifier) or be pushed up to 10 ft. away and knocked prone.

This manifestation persists for 1 minute or until you're incapacitated. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Monster Caller. Starting at 6th level, you can summon monstrous creatures that obey your commands. Your conjuration spells can summon monstrosities instead of beasts.

Master of Monsters. Staring at 10th level, you can affect monstrosities with your spells that would otherwise affect beasts. You can target monstrosities with spells that normally affect beasts.

Monster Friend. Starting at 14th level, monstrosities sense your connection to their kind and become hesitant to attack you. When a monstrosity wants to attack you, that creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your druid spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature must choose a different target, or the attack automatically misses. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The creature is aware of this effect before it makes its attack against you.

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Inheritor of the Unbegotten

The drow of House Ausstyl, one of the ancient drow houses of the Feyrealm, have venerated otherworldly abominations since the dawn of time. The druidic tradition of the aberration worshiping dark elves of the Dark Below includes merging one's body with unspeakable, indescribable beings that have penetrated reality from beyond time and space. The Inheritors of the Unbegotten are not just aberrant creatures themselves, but they are also vital instruments and gatekeepers of the horrors they worship.

Circle Spells. Starting at 2nd level, you gain access to the *eldritch blast* can-trip and the following circle spells, which are always prepared and don't count towards the number of spells you can prepare each day.

Druid Level	Spells
3rd	*blur, detect thoughts*
5th	*gaseous form, spirit guardians*
7th	*banishment, black tentacles*
9th	*contact other plane, hallow*

Voice of the Void. Starting at 2nd level, you learn how to converse with aberrations. You learn how to speak, read, and write Deep Speech. You can also make yourself understood by aberrations that don't speak Dark Speech or are not capable of speech.

Incomprehensible Intellect. Starting at 2nd level, your mind becomes as obscure and alien as the beings you venerate. Your thoughts can't be read by magical means and you become immune to being charmed.

Manifest Aberrant Trait. Starting at 6th level, you can call forth specific powers of your revered entities. As an action, you can expend one use of your Wild Shape feature to emulate one special trait of any aberration type creature of CR 3 or lower for one minute. If there is a saving throw associated with the special trait then the DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Wisdom modifier.

Enslave. Staring at 10th level, you can manifest your dominance over humanoids. As an action, you can cast the *dominate person* spell without expending a spell slot or material components. Once you use this feature, you can't use it until you finish a long rest.

Conjure Abomination. Starting at 14th level, the otherworldly beings you venerate allow you to summon their more powerful servants. As an action, you can cast the *conjure celestial* spell without expending a spell slot or material components, but instead of a celestial creature, you conjure an aberration type creature of your choice within the limits of the spell. The spell lasts 1 hour and doesn't require you to concentrate on it. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

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FIGHTER

Commander

Giving orders is second nature to a commander. These exemplary fighters lead their squadrons by inspiring their subordinates and bolstering their fighting prowess through the strength of their voices and their presence. As a result, the forces under their command can achieve incredible feats of battle, even when odds are stacked against them.

Commander's Orders. Starting at 3rd level, you can inspire others through the power of your commands. To do so, you use a bonus action on your turn to choose any number of creatures other than yourself within 60 feet of you who can hear you. Those creatures gain one Command die, a d6.

Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Command die, but must decide before the DM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Command die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Command die at a time. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (a minimum of once). You regain any expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Your Command die changes when you reach certain levels in this class. The dice becomes a d8 at 5th level, a d10 at 10th level, and a d12 at 15th level.

Order of Charge. Starting at 7th level, you can expend one use of your Commander's Order ability to double the movement speed of the creatures you choose until the end of their next turn.

Order of Defense. Starting at 10th level, you can expend one use of your Commander's Order ability to allow the creatures you choose to gain and roll the Command die and add the number rolled to one saving throw.

Order of Attack. Starting at 15th level, you can expend one use of your Commander's Orders ability to allow the creatures you choose to gain and roll the Command die and add the number rolled to one attack roll.

Legendary Commander. Starting at 18th level, your Commander's Order can influence every friendly creature within 80 feet of you who can hear you, as well as yourself. Additionally, you can cast the *command* spell a number of times per day equal to your proficiency bonus (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier) without expending a spell slot or material components.

Mercenary

Those who offer their martial skills for hire face various challenges with each mission. Their most essential skills are surviving any threat, standing their ground in any situation they face, and overcoming their foes. A good mercenary is always prepared for the unexpected and will creatively improvise a solution to meet the requirements of the battle. Most of the large mercenary companies operate out of the Drayl City States where this type of warfare based on swords-for-hire has long-established traditions.

Iron Will. Starting at 3rd level, you become focused and confident. You gain advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened.

Ready For Anything. Starting at 7th level, you learn to be prepared for the unexpected. You can't be surprised while you are conscious. When targeted by a spell or effect, you can take a reaction to gain advantage on the saving throw.

Versatile Fighting Style. Starting at 10th level, you become experienced with all kinds of weapons and fighting styles. You can swiftly change your style of fighting to fit the challenge temporarily. You can't benefit from the same Fighting Style option more than once. Choose one of the following options at the beginning of your turn:

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- **Archery.** You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls you make with ranged weapons.
- **Defense.** While you are wearing armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.
- **Dueling.** When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.
- **Great Weapon Fighting.** When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

Mettle. Starting at 15th level, you have become skilled in resisting several types of threats. Choose two abilities in which you don't have a saving throw proficiency. You gain proficiency in saving throws made with the chosen abilities.

Get The Job Done. Starting at 18th level, you can overcome threats with ease. Instead of rolling, you can choose to succeed on a saving throw automatically. Once you use this feature, you can't use it until you finish a short or long rest.

Royal Guard

Guards who serve at the Royal Palace or protect monarchs must pass a rigorous selection process. They are evaluated both for their physical and martial skills as well as their loyalty and ability to work as part of a unit. Royal guards are trained to be alert and fight in formation, taking advantage of each other's movement and position in combat. The royal guards' most skilled, legendary commanders have been said to wield their weapons as if they were extensions of their bodies.

Alert on Duty. Starting at 3rd level, you can focus your attention to notice movement. Designate a 10 square foot area. If you stay in this area for 10 minutes, you can double your proficiency bonus and gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks made to notice creatures.

Coordinated Strike. Starting at 7th level, you can use your combat training to coordinate your attacks with your allies. Once per turn, you gain advantage on your first melee attack roll against a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.

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Coordinated Shot. Starting at 10th level, you can spot the exact moment to release a shot while your ally occupies your target. Once per turn, you gain advantage on your first ranged attack roll against a creature if at least one of your allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't Incapacitated.

Swift Strike. Starting at 15th level, your combat reactions become effortless. You gain an extra reaction that doesn't count towards your single use in the turn and that you can use only to make an attack roll, but only when your reaction is triggered.

Divert Strike. Starting at 18th level, you become one with your weapon, being able to deflect melee attacks. As a reaction, when targeted by a melee attack made by a creature within 5 feet of you that you can see, you can try to negate the attack. You must make a melee attack roll contest against the melee attack roll of the creature. On a success, you negate all damage from the creature's attack.

MONK

Stonefist

A small monastery of the Stonefists exists in the Shandar Mountains, which is related to some unspeakable horrors of legend that supposedly lurk on the top of the highest peaks. The monks of the Stonefist practice the fighting techniques of earth elementals by studying and imitating their combat maneuvers. Their daily practice involves hardening their bodies to withstand blows and the rigorous focusing of their strength. Masters of this monastic tradition become almost impervious to non-magical attacks and reach a level of ascendance where they can turn themselves into earth elementals.

Resist Strikes. Starting at 3rd level, you can channel your *ki* into resisting damage from a blow. As a reaction, you can spend 1 *ki* point to reduce the damage you take from an attack by 1d10 + your Strength modifier + your monk level.

Mountain Stance. Starting at 6th level, you can tighten your muscles to enter a steady stance making you immovable and hard to grapple with. As a bonus action, you can spend 1 *ki* point to gain advantage on contests involving Strength (Athletics) ability checks made against you and on Strength saving throws for 1 minute. If you take the move action, you lose this advantage until the start of your next turn.

Stone Body. Starting at 11th level, you can evoke a protective layer of stoney skin over your entire body. As a bonus action, you can spend 3 *ki* points to gain damage resistance from bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for 1 minute.

Elemental Transformation. Starting at 17th level, you can become one of the elemental creatures you learned to imitate your whole life. As a bonus action, you can spend 6 *ki* points to transform into an earth elemental for 1 minute as if you were using the Wild Shape ability of the druid class. You can use all of your monk abilities in this new form. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Way of the Nine Seals

Only a handful of devil-bound individuals practice the Way of the Nine Seals in Aglarion or the neighboring regions. This monastic tradition was forged in the flames of Hell, and it is infused with the accuracy and mettle of the fiends who practice it. Devils teach it only to those who pledge eternal servitude in return for the knowledge of the secret combat techniques. A monk of the Nine Seals is hard to fool and even harder to overcome. Masters of the Nine Seals are offered a fate-bound contract by their superiors, allowing them to alter their fate. In return, they are obedient tools of the armies of Hell.

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Hellfire Fist. Starting at 3rd level, you can spend 1 *ki* point as an action to inflame a melee weapon you touch or your fists with hellish fire for 1 minute. Your unarmed or melee attacks deal an extra 1d4 fire damage.

Deny Advantage. Starting at 6th level, you can demand equal chances from your enemies. As a bonus action, you can spend 1 *ki* point to have one creature of your choice within 30 feet lose its advantage on all ability checks, saving throws, skill checks, and attack rolls until the start of your next turn.

Pierce Deception. Starting at 11th level, the powers of Hell grant you the ability to see reality as it is for a short period of time. As a bonus action, you can spend 3 *ki* points to gain the benefits of a *true seeing* spell for 1 minute.

Contractual Fate. Starting at 17th level, you can benefit from your hellish contract that has promised to protect you from unwanted outcomes of your fate in return for your service. As a reaction, you can automatically succeed on one ability check, saving throw, or skill check instead of rolling. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest, unless you spend 5 *ki* points.

Way of the Tentacle

The Inheritors of the Unbegotten select some of their children to participate in unarmed combat practices that emulate the fighting techniques of their foul unearthly masters. They are trained in ancient monk traditions that eventually enable them to turn their limbs into tentacles, giving them combat superiority. The drow of House Ausstyl utilize these monks as their most trusted guards, who have access to the unholiest sections of their palace.

Tentacle Limb. Starting at 3rd level, you can turn your body into the form of an aberrant creature. As a bonus action, you can spend 1 *ki* point to transform your arm into a 10-foot long tentacle for 1 minute. The tentacle has reach and can be used as part of an unarmed strike. The tentacle deals bludgeoning damage equal to your Martial Arts die + your Strength or Dexterity modifier. You gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) skill checks to grapple an opponent with the tentacle. At 11th level, you can transform both of your arms into tentacle limbs.

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Nerve-wracking Strike. Starting at 6th level, you can channel psychic energies into your tentacle strikes. Your unarmed strikes with your tentacle limb count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. You can spend 1 *ki* point to deal additional psychic damage with one unarmed strike of your tentacle limb equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die + your Wisdom modifier.

Psychic Barrage. Starting at 11th level, your ability to channel harmful psychic powers intensifies. When you use Flurry of Blows after an attack made with Nerve-wracking Strike, you can replace each of the unarmed strikes with a use of your Nerve-wracking Strike without spending additional *ki* points.

Suffocating Strike. Starting at 17th level, you learn how to force your tentacle limb into the throat of your enemies to kill them. The reach of your tentacle limb becomes 15 feet. As an action, you can attempt to grapple your opponent with your tentacle limb. A successfully grappled target becomes unable to speak and if you choose, it starts to suffocate while being grappled by you.

PALADIN

Inquisitor

Seekers of the truth and judges of the faith, the inquisitors are paladins who vow to punish the guilty and upkeep the law set by their faith and tenets. These paladins focus on divination magic to lift the veils of deception and to find truths that lie behind them. Their loyalty to their church and beliefs is unquestionable, as is their dedication to any mission on which they are sent. Inquisitors and their methods might vary from religion to religion, but every one of them holds a zealous fervor in common, which drives them and empowers their abilities.

Tenets of Inquisition. The tenets of the Oath of the Inquisitor drive a paladin to seek the truth and to eliminate the hidden enemies of its faith.

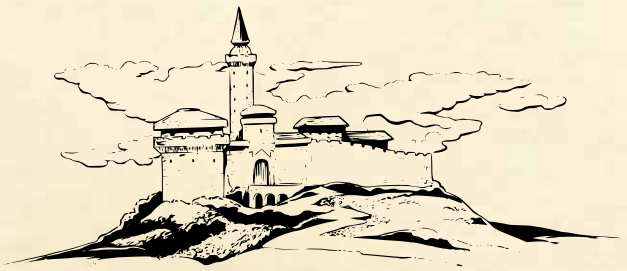
Draw out the truth. The truth is not always visible. Finding it is sometimes hard, but the effort must be made. Once found, it must be announced so that others can learn it as well.

Facts only. Facts are the only truths on which you can rely. Anything else is mere speculation. One can only make a decision based on facts. Without firm evidence, even truth cannot be proven.

Oppose heresy. Seeking those who work to ruin and undermine the church's integrity is the holiest service one can do for one's faith. Therefore, one must always stay vigilant and be on the lookout for corruption and those who spread falsehoods.

Live by the law. Law provides safety and justice to all. Order is the only truth on which one can build. Those who break the law must pay the price. Therefore, one must live by the law and keep it at all costs.

Oath Spells. You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.



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Inquisitor Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*comprehend languages, detect evil and good*
5th	*detect thoughts, zone of truth*
9th	*clairvoyance, speak with dead*
13th	*banishment, locate creature*
17th	*dispel evil and good, legend lore*

Channel Divinity. When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

- **Pierce Illusion.** As a bonus action, you can use your Channel Divinity to augment your senses to overcome illusions. For the next 10 minutes, you can automatically see through 2nd level or lower illusion spells, you can automatically make an Intelligence (Investigation) skill check to discern 3rd or higher level illusion spells that allow such checks by merely looking at them, and you gain advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) skill checks.

- **Denounce Shapeshifter.** You can use your Channel Divinity to force a shapeshifting creature back into its natural form. As an action, you can target one creature within 30 feet. The target creature must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target reverts to its natural form and can't change its form for 1 minute.

Discern Falsehood. Starting at 7th level, you can focus your senses to detect deliberate lies. As an action, you can target one creature within 30 feet. The target creature must make a Charisma saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier). On a failed save, you know if the target creature deliberately and knowingly speaks a lie. This ability does not reveal the truth. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Prevent Escape. Starting at 15th level, you are able to prevent your enemies from escaping. As an action, you can target one creature within 30 feet. The target creature must make a Charisma saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier). On a failed save, the target creature becomes restrained by an invisible force and is prevented from using any form of teleportation, dimensional, or planar travel for one minute. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Ultimate Conviction. Starting at 20th level, you can imprison, interrogate, and punish those you find guilty. As an action, you can create a cage made out of energy similar to a *forcecage* spell. Any creature within the cage must make a Charisma saving throw (DC equals 8 + your Proficiency Bonus + your Charisma modifier). On a failed save, the creature is charmed. Creatures charmed this way must answer your questions truthfully until they are imprisoned this way. You can choose to release the target from the cage at any time, or target one of the creatures within the cage with an *imprisonment* or *power word kill* spell as if you have cast it requiring no material components. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Oath of Cleansing

Paladins who swear this oath dedicate their lives to purify themselves, others, and places from malign influences. They are paragons of cleanliness, both in their dwellings, places of worship, private quarters, and persons. These paladins are often found engaged in rooting out malevolent forces, whether they be diseases or poisons. They are commonly found in places of healing, sometimes accompanying armies as medics, and rarely on personal quests to cleanse places or people from harm.

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Tenets of Cleansing. The tenets of the Oath of Cleansing offer a framework for paladins of this order to keep all aspects of their lives and those of others pristine and devoid of harmful effects.

Cleanse the domain. Your surroundings reflect upon your person. Keep them spotless so that you may benefit from their immaculate nature and the purity they provide.

Cleanse the body. Your body is the shrine of your being. A healthy body is the first step to a healthy mind and soul.

Cleanse the mind. Keep your mind sharp and without filthy thoughts. Avoid substances that cloud your intellect and strive to keep it sharp.

Cleanse the soul. The soul is divine and must be protected from external influences. By righteous actions, you can fortify it and keep it unsullied.

Oath Spells. You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Oath of Cleansing Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*protection from evil and good, purify food and drink*
5th	*lesser restoration, protection from poison*
9th	*protection from energy, remove curse*
13th	*death ward, freedom of movement*
17th	*dispel evil and good, greater restoration*

Channel Divinity. When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

- **Hallow.** You can use your Channel Divinity to infuse an area as sacred ground. As an action, you present your holy symbol and speak a prayer. The effect functions as a *hallow* spell with a radius of up to 30 feet and lasts for 1 minute. When you use this feature, you can only choose the *Courage* or *Energy Protection* features of the spell.

- **Cleansing Lay on Hands.** You can use your Channel Divinity to empower your Lay on Hands ability. By extending one use of your Channel Divinity, you can cure multiple diseases and neutralize multiple poisons with a single use of Lay on Hands without expending hit points separately for each affliction. This use of your Lay on Hands also functions against negative influences that include being charmed, cursed, or frightened.

Exorcist. Starting at 7th level, you can exorcise evil spirits from others. As an action, you can end possession on a creature, forcing the possessing spirit out of the target. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (a minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Purify. Starting at 15th level, you can remove any negative condition from yourself or a willing creature you touch as an action. This ability also includes madness, petrification, and polymorph effects in addition to diseases and poisons, as well as being charmed, cursed, frightened. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (a minimum of once). You regain any expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Greater Purify. At 20th level, your faith gives you and your allies immunity to all negative influences that you can cleanse in your surroundings. As an action, you can remove all effects listed under your Purify ability from yourself and friendly creatures within 30 feet of you.

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Oath of Protection

Paladins who swear the Oath of Protection are committed to the cause of protecting people, places, or even beliefs. Their well-grounded – and often narrowly interpreted – faith leads many who take the Oath to serve religious and secular organizations. However, paladins of this Oath have often turned against these very organizations when faced with tyrannical or oppressive regimes. Paladins who follow this path usually train frequently to maintain their capacity to offer aid in all circumstances to those that need it. They also encourage charity and lead by example in sheltering the weak and downtrodden.

Tenets of Protection. The first monarchs of Aglarion laid down the tenets of the Oath of Protection to protect their royal personages and the realm. However the oath has been shared widely by many faiths since then. Adherents to this oath hold the protection of people, places, and beliefs above all else and usually share these basic principles.

Protect those who protect us. Show respect to and safeguard those that are deserving and to whom you are sworn. Your word is your bond. Knights of the Crown take a special oath in Aglarion that stands above all other tenets: "Protect the Realm, your Sovereign, and the Crown."

Protect your allies. Keep those who depend on you from harm if threatened by forces greater than themselves. Shield those who are in allegiance with you as a bastion against harm. Join forces with your allies to overcome threats.

Protect those who stand behind you. Lead by example to become a beacon of inspiration to those around you, especially against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Protect yourself if there is nothing left to protect. Fortify your faith so that you may stand firm against that which makes you vulnerable. Be willing to sacrifice even your own life before all others. Tend to your own well-being, so that you may safeguard your charge until the very last.

Oath Spells. You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

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Oath of the Crown Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*protection from evil and good, shield of faith*
5th	*protection from poison, warding bond*
9th	*magic circle, protection from energy*
13th	*death ward, guardian of faith*
17th	*dispel evil and good, raise dead*

Channel Divinity. When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

- **Vow of Protection.** You can use your Channel Divinity to bolster your defenses. As a bonus action, you can utter a vow of protection from a creature you can see within 30 feet of you, using your Channel Divinity. That creature gains disadvantage on attack rolls against you for 1 minute or until you drop to 0 hit points or fall unconscious.

- **Divine Ward.** You can use your Channel Divinity to offer protection to those around you. As an action, you present your holy symbol and each creature of your choice that you can see within 30 feet of you becomes warded for 1 minute. Any creature who targets a warded creature with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This effect doesn't protect the warded creature from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball. If the warded creature makes an attack or casts a spell that affects an enemy creature, this effect ends. This effect ends on the creature if you are incapacitated or die or if the warded creature is more than 30 feet away from you.

Dedicated Defender. Starting at 7th level, you can deflect attacks against those whom you protect. When another creature damages you or your ally within 5 feet with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to reduce the damage by 1d6 + your Charisma modifier points. This reduction increases to 1d8 + your Charisma modifier at 13th level, and 1d10 + your Charisma modifier at 17th level.

Bastion of Self. Starting at 15th level, your faith makes you protected against your foes. Any creature who targets you with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. Any creature that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to Bastion of Self for 24 hours. This effect doesn't protect you from area effects, such as the explosion of a fireball. This effect also ends if you are incapacitated or die.

Divine Protector. At 20th level, your dedication to become a paragon of protection makes you a bulwark against the enemies of your cause and a symbol to those around you. As an action, you recount the Tenets of Protection and gain the following benefits for 1 minute:

- You gain the benefits of a shimmering field of protection, granting you a +2 bonus to AC.
- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical weapons.
- Whenever you or any ally within 30 feet fails a saving throw, you can use your reaction to force the creature to reroll it. You must use this new roll.

This effect ends early if you are incapacitated or die. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

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RANGER

Feyfriend

Those who venture into the forests deep enough might find crossroads that connect the Feyrealm and the Material Plane. Often, mischievous fey dwell around these planar breaches, and if one can express the right attitude, they can be befriended. The fey respect those who understand their nature and are willing to become life-long allies over time. In Aglarion, feyfriend rangers have horrific stories to tell about the recent hardships of the few fey who have fled the Bleak Mire. Even with the crossroads blocked to this domain, the Feyrealm itself still helps these allied rangers upkeep their valued alliances.

Resist Lure. Starting at 3rd level, you learn how to resist enchantments. You gain advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Fey Armament. Starting at 3rd level, the fey lords grant you the armament of a sprite. As an action, you can create one of the following weapons in your empty hand:

- **Shortbow of the Sprite.** A creature hit by this shortbow must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. If its saving throw result is 5 or lower, the poisoned target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature takes an action to shake it awake.
- **Sword of the Elves.** This extremely sharp longsword deals an extra 1d6 slashing damage.

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These weapons count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. The weapon disappears after 1 minute, if it is more than 5 feet away from you for 1 round, if you dismiss the weapon (no action required), or if you die. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Speak with Beasts and Plants. Starting at 3rd level, you can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language with you. You learn how to read, write, and speak Sylvan.

Sprite Companion. Starting at 7th level, the Fey-realm blesses you with a faithful sprite companion. The sprite acts on its own and has its own will, but it is always loyal to you. It disappears if it reaches 0 hit points but a new sprite arrives the next dawn to replace the previous one.

Fey Reinforcements. Starting at 11th level, you can call fey creatures to help you. You can cast the *conjure fey* spell without expending a spell slot or material components. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Sanctuary of the Fey Court. Starting at 14th level, fey creatures and creatures of the natural world sense your connection to their kind and become hesitant to attack you. When a fey, beast or plant creature attacks you, that creature must make a Wisdom saving throw against your ranger spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature must choose a different target, or the attack automatically misses. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The creature is aware of this effect before it makes its attack against you.

Monster Tamer

A ranger with a knack for calming and controlling beasts and creatures with bestial intelligence, the monster tamer has dedicated its life to locating and dealing with such creatures. Usually, monster tamers are called in to handle threats from the wild, but sometimes they are merely essential personnel in keeping large beasts of burden in line. Some monster tamers use their skills to subjugate animals, some to care for them and nourish them in the wild. Their favored enemies are always beasts and monstrosities. In Aglarion, tamers can be found in the countryside or as the caretakers of the Monster Menagerie in Onadbyr.

Monster Tamer Magic. You learn an additional spell of 1st level or higher when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Monster Tamer Spell List table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

Monster Tamer Spell List

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*speak with animals*
5th	*locate animals or plants*
9th	*conjure animals*
13th	*dominate beast*
17th	*hold monster*

Bestial Affinity. Starting at 3rd level, you can use your body language and soothing sounds to calm animals and monsters. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) skill checks made to calm beats and monstrosities with an Intelligence score of 3 or lower.

Sense Beasts. Starting at 3rd level, you can detect hostile animals and monsters. You sense the direction to the location of the highest challenge rating beast or monstrosity, and you can tell its distance from you as long as the creature is within 1,000 feet

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of you. If the creature is moving, you know the direction of its movement. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Master of Monsters. Starting at 7th level, your spells can affect monstrosities the same way they affect beasts. You can substitute the beast creature type with the monstrosity creature type in any of your spells.

Call of the Beasts. Starting at 11th level, you can conjure beasts and monsters to do your bidding. You can cast the *conjure animals* spell without expending a spell or material components and use it to summon a monstrosity with a challenge rating of 2 or lower and with an Intelligence score of 3 or lower. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Protection of the Pack. Starting at 15th level, when you surround yourself with allied beasts or monstrosities, the pack grants you benefits. You gain the following benefits if an allied beast or monstrosity, is within 5 ft. of you or if you are mounted on such a creature.

- You gain +2 to your AC.
- Whenever you are the target of a melee attack, the beast or monstrosity can make a melee attack against the attacking opponent as a reaction.
- When an attacker that you can see hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against you. However your beast or monstrosity ally takes the other half of the damage.

Siege Beast Master

Even the largest of beasts can be subdued and harnessed as siege weapons by a ranger of this enclave. A siege beast's power lies in its sheer size and ability to smash down walls or destroy siege weapons. As a result, they are at the forefront of armies, trampling anything and anyone who crosses their path, often serving as mounts for their ranger companions. Once bonded to a ranger, the siege beast becomes a force of devastation, gaining some magical abilities from its companion.

Beast Companion. Starting at 3rd level, you gain a beast companion that fights beside you. Choose a beast that is no larger than Large size and that has a challenge rating of 1 or lower. The beast obeys your commands and takes its turn on your initiative. On your turn, you can command the beast where to move or what actions to take, which require no actions on your part. If you are incapacitated or absent, the beast has free will and protects you and itself. If the beast dies, you can obtain another one by spending 8 hours to befriend another non-hostile beast.

Siege Beast Companion. Starting at 7th level, the maximum challenge rating of the beast that you can have as your companion increases to 2.

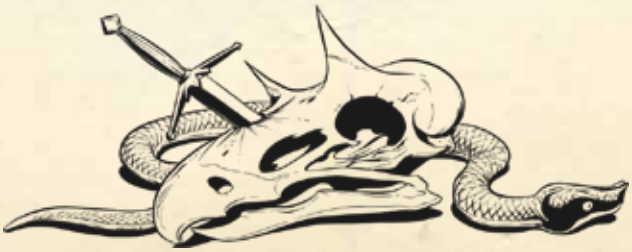
Your beast companion also gains the *Siege Monster* trait, allowing it to deal double damage to objects and structures.

Magical Siege Beast Companion. Starting at 11th level, the maximum challenge rating of the beast that you can have as your companion increases to 3 and can be of Huge size.

Your beast companion's natural attacks count as magical for the purposes of overcoming damage resistance.

Greater Magical Siege Beast Companion. Starting at 15th level, the maximum challenge rating of the beast that you can have as your companion increases to 4.

When you are mounted on your beast companion or within 5 feet of it, any creature that attacks you provokes an opportunity attack from your beast companion.



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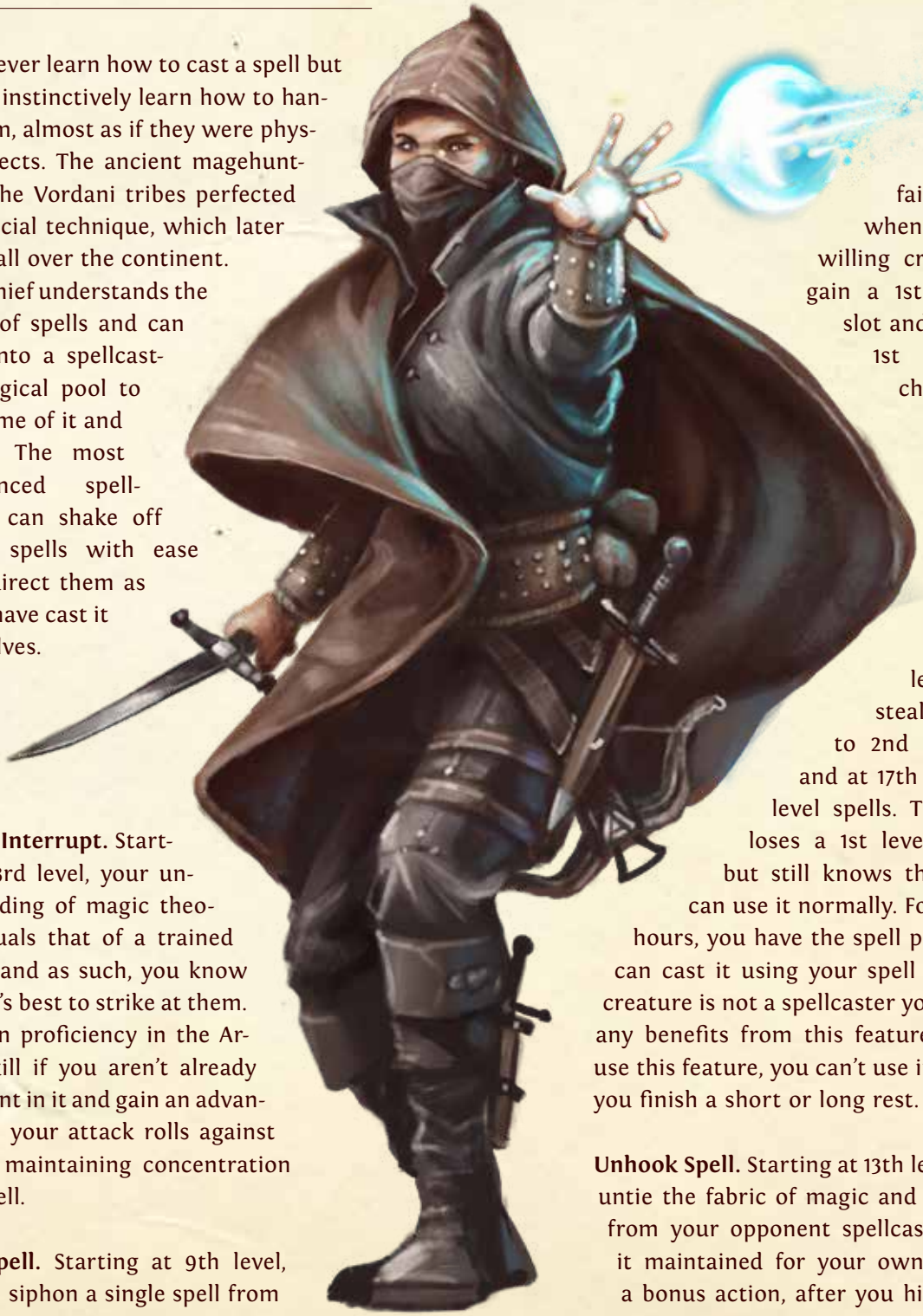
ROGUE

Spellthief

Some never learn how to cast a spell but instead instinctively learn how to handle them, almost as if they were physical objects. The ancient magehunters of the Vordani tribes perfected this special technique, which later spread all over the continent. A spellthief understands the nature of spells and can reach into a spellcaster's magical pool to take some of it and use it. The most experienced spellthieves can shake off ranged spells with ease and redirect them as if they have cast it themselves.



Sneaky Interrupt. Starting at 3rd level, your understanding of magic theories equals that of a trained wizard and as such, you know when it's best to strike at them. You gain proficiency in the Arcana skill if you aren't already proficient in it and gain an advantage on your attack rolls against targets maintaining concentration on a spell.

Steal Spell. Starting at 9th level, you can siphon a single spell from a spellcaster with a precise strike. As a bonus action, after you hit a creature with a melee weapon, you can force the creature to make a saving throw with its spellcasting ability modifier. The DC is 8 + proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier.

On a failed save or when you touch a willing creature, you gain a 1st level spell slot and a prepared 1st level spell chosen by you from the creature's known or prepared 1st level spells. At 13th level, the spell level you can steal increases to 2nd level spells, and at 17th level to 3rd level spells. The creature loses a 1st level spell slot, but still knows the spell and can use it normally. For the next 8 hours, you have the spell prepared and can cast it using your spell slots. If the creature is not a spellcaster you don't gain any benefits from this feature. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Unhook Spell. Starting at 13th level, you can untie the fabric of magic and take it over from your opponent spellcaster, keeping it maintained for your own benefit. As a bonus action, after you hit a creature

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who is maintaining concentration on a spell with a melee weapon, you can choose not to deal extra damage from your Sneak Attack. Instead, you force the creature to make a saving throw with its spellcasting ability modifier. The DC is 8 + proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier. On a failed save, the maintained spell ends on the creature and you gain the spell's benefits for 1 minute. Once you successfully use this feature to unhook a spell, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Reflect spell. Starting at 17th level, you know exactly how to deflect and divert a ranged magical attack. As a reaction, you can reflect a magical ranged attack made against you back at any target you can see within the spell's range. The range and DC of the spell is the original caster's range and spell save DC. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Spy

Spies are masters of infiltration and stealth, able to get out of seemingly impossible situations with the intelligence they seek. They train their memories to remember even the most minute details at a glance, making them valuable agents to recover information. Spies are adept at avoiding notice when needed, pocketing valuable objects or intelligence, and deceiving whoever they encounter with expertly woven cover stories. Some masters of their trade can even pierce the minds of their marks, allowing them to more effectively infiltrate the ranks of organizations they target.

Spycraft. Starting at 3rd level, you become a master of spycraft. You gain proficiency with the Dexterity (Stealth), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), and Charisma (Deception) skills if you are not already proficient in them or double your proficiency bonus if you are already proficient in them.

Photographic Memory. Starting at 3rd level, you gain photographic memory and can recall the most minute details of what you've seen. You can recall every detail of a single image or a single page of script that you've studied for one round. You can recall a number of images or pages up to your Intelligence ability modifier. You can memorize new images or pages, but you will lose the memory of an image or page that you have previously memorized.

Second Chance. Starting at 9th level, whenever you fail a Dexterity (Stealth), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), or Charisma (Deception) skill check, you can reroll the check as a bonus action. You must use the new result, even if it's lower than the original roll. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Read Thoughts. Starting at 13th level, as an action you can read the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of you. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, you can continue reading its thoughts, as long as your concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, you have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) skill checks against the target.

Master Spy. Starting at 17th level, instead of rolling, you can choose to automatically succeed on a Dexterity (Stealth), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), or Charisma (Deception) skill check. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

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Umbral Stalker

Those who spend their lives in darkness become part of it. The umbral stalker lives in the shadows and strikes unexpectedly. These rogues train to become part of the darkness they live in and to use it to the best of their advantage. Soon, its essence starts to seep into their very beings. Umbral stalkers eventually become able to open a rift into the Shadowrealm and learn to move between the planes, feeling at home in the shadows of both realms.

Eyes of Darkness. Starting at 3rd level, your eyes become adapted to even the deepest darkness. You gain darkvision in a 60-foot radius and can see through even magical darkness.

One with the Shadows. Starting at 9th level, you can blend into darkness, making your movement almost undetectable. While under the cover of darkness, you can use your Sneak Attack feature regardless of other requirements and have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks.

Shadow Step. Starting at 13th level, you become able to move through the Shadowrealm to reach your destination. While in darkness, you can use your movement to teleport to a location within the range of your as long as it is also in darkness.

Shadow Rift. Starting at 13th level, you become able to open a narrow rift in the fabric of the planes and transpose yourself to the Shadowrealm and back to the plane from whence you came. As an action, you can travel to the Shadowrealm or return to the plane you came from as if you have cast the *plane shift* spell. You can only use this feature if you are on the Ethereal Plane, the Feyrealm, the Material Plane, or the Shadowrealm. No magical or physical restrictions can prevent you from accomplishing the planar travel made possible by this feature. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Umbral Strike. Starting at 17th level, you can attack a creature's life force through its shadow. When you are able to use your sneak attack, your target's AC against your attack becomes 10 + the creature's Dexterity modifier. You can use this feature only if your target is in darkness.

SORCERER

Entropist Bloodline

You carry the forces of entropy in your bloodline, fueled by the elemental rule of chaos, and are driven to turn all things into their natural and eventual state of nothingness. Most sorcerers who are touched by chaos in this manner embrace the gifts of their blood and find use of their abilities in everyday life, while some strive through fanatical devotion to turn all things to dust, acting as agents of destruction. In either case, the magic that infuses their blood lends itself to combat, and many entropists are experts at breaking down the fortifications of their opponents and denying them healing.

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Touch of Entropy. Starting at 1st level, your touch destroys non-organic matter. If the nonmagical object isn't being worn or carried, you can choose to cause your touch to destroy a Tiny object at 1st level, a Small object at 5th level, a Medium object at 9th level, a Large object at 13th level, and a Huge object at 17th level. If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, the creature can make a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC to avoid your touch. If the object touched is a non-magical weapon being carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. If the object touched is either a nonmagical armor or a nonmagical shield being worn or carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed.

Aura of Entropy. Starting at 1st level, you emanate an aura of entropy that interferes with the natural order of reality. The radius of your aura is 5 feet at 1st level, but increases to 10 feet at 6th level, 15 feet at 11th level, and 20 feet at 16th level. Within your aura, objects cannot be repaired (ex.: by *mending* spell). Additionally, all healing effects are hampered by your aura and require a DC 10 Constitution saving throw to function.

Entropic Damage. Starting at 6th level, your aura of entropy also dissolves organic flesh. Each creature you choose in your Aura of Entropy must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or lose a number of hit points equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier at the start of each of its turns. While the creature remains in your aura, its body continues to dissolve, and the creature continues to lose hit points at the start of its turns unless it succeeds on the Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Resistances to Natural Law. Starting at 14th level, you are partially protected against the flow of entropy. You gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantine weapons. You also gain advantage on saving throws against any spell cast or effects created by lawful creatures.

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Additionally, you gain advantage against petrification and any other transmutation effect that would change the composition of your body or physical form, like polymorph.

Sphere of Entropy. Starting at 18th level, as an action you can rip the fabric of space and create a swirling void in the multiverse, summoning a *sphere of annihilation* out of raw entropy. The sphere remains in existence for 1 minute, and you have advantage on rolls to control the sphere. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Lycanthropic Bloodline

Some descendants of lycanthropes can awaken the power of their ancestors and benefit from the curse that runs in their blood. These individuals become more and more bestial as their dormant heritage slowly awakens, which they sometimes find hard to control. Lycanthropic bloodline sorcerers rely on their newfound natural savagery in combat and benefit from the defensive capabilities of their ancestors.

Keen Senses. Starting at 1st level, your senses become sharper, similar to that of a predator. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Predator's Knowledge. Starting at 1st level, your bestial side awakens, giving you the skills of predators. You gain proficiency in the Dexterity (Stealth), Wisdom (Perception), and Wisdom (Survival) skills if you are not already proficient in them.

Hybrid Form. Starting at 6th level, you can assume the form of a lycanthrope hybrid. As an action, you can spend 1 sorcery point to transform into a hybrid form for 1 minute and gain the following benefits:

- When you aren't wearing armor, your AC equals 12 + your Dexterity modifier.
- You gain damage resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.
- You become proficient with natural weapons.
- Your hands transform into claws that deal 1d6 + Strength modifier points of slashing damage. You can attack twice with your claws, instead of once, whenever you take the attack action on your turn.
- As a bonus action, you can make a bite attack that deals 1d8 + Strength modifier points of piercing damage.

Curse of Silver. Starting at 14th level, the curse coursing in your veins manifests, giving you enhanced invulnerability. You gain damage resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.

Apex Predator. Starting at 18th level, you become an apex lycanthropic predator infused with magic. When using your Hybrid Form class feature, you gain the following additional benefits:

- When you aren't wearing armor, your AC equals 13 + your Dexterity modifier.
- Your claw damage increases to 2d4 + Strength modifier points of slashing damage.
- Your bite damage increases to 2d6 + Strength modifier points of piercing damage.
- You gain an additional attack action on each of your turns.

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Primordial Energy Savant

The bloodline of the ancient primordial elementals runs in only a few creatures on the Material Plane. These creatures are partially composed of the elements that make up the fabric of all worlds, making them less vulnerable to energy effects. Primordial energy savants are conduits of elemental power who can nurture their heritage to an extent where they can freely access all of the elements to imbue their spells. At the peak of their power, the connection of these elemental-infused creatures on the Elemental Planes is so strong that they can tear a gateway to them using their sheer forces of will.

Voice of the Elements. Starting at 1st level, you innately become able to converse with those who speak the language of the elements. You can understand and speak Auran, Aquan, Ignan, and Terran.

Primordial Physiology. Starting at 1st level, your anatomy resembles that of an elemental, making you less vulnerable to elements and certain conditions that affect the body. You gain advantage on saving throws against being petrified or poisoned. You also gain a damage threshold of 2 against acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage.

Energy Admixture. Starting at 6th level, you become able to choose the element you wish to create with your spells. You can spend 1 sorcery point to change the damage type of a spell that causes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage to any of the damage types that you can change.

Heightened Primordial Magic. Starting at 14th level, your element-based spells become harder to resist. When you cast a spell that deals acid, cold, fire, lightning, radiant, or thunder damage and forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist the effects of the spell, you can spend 3 sorcery points to give all targets of the spell disadvantage on their first saving throw made against the spell.

Elemental Gate. Starting at 18th level, you can open a portal to any of the elemental planes. You can cast the *gate* spell to open a portal to an Elemental Plane. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

WARLOCK

Chaos Wielder

Chaos Wielders choose the Elemental Chaos as their patron, allowing them to tap into the raw forces of chaos and manipulate fate itself. In their temperaments, these warlocks often resemble the force they serve - they are erratic and sometimes even nihilistic, not bound by any standards of laws or social norms. As a result, Chaos Wielders are usually spurned by the rest of society and are considered dangerous in their seemingly incomprehensible motives.

Expanded Spell List. At 1st level, the Elemental Chaos lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you:

Chaos Wielder Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*bane, bless*
2nd	*flaming sphere, spiritual weapon*
3rd	*blink, call lightning*
4th	*confusion, polymorph*
5th	*flame strike, reincarnate*

Wild Magic. Starting at 1st level, your spells can have unforeseen consequences. You can choose to apply a Wild Magic Surge effect immediately after you cast the spell. Roll for a random effect on the Wild Magic Surge table on page 104 of the Player's Handbook. You can use this feature a number of

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times equal to half your warlock levels rounded down, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Flows of Chaos. Starting at 6th level, you can manipulate fate using the power of chaos. When any creature makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can use your reaction to roll 1d4 and apply the number rolled as a bonus or penalty to the creature's roll. You can do so after the creature rolls but before any effects of the roll occur. At 10th level, this dice increases to 1d6, and at 14th level this dice increases to 1d8. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Order in Chaos. Starting at 10th level, you can manipulate the energies of your spells for optimal effect. For any spell that requires a dice roll, you can roll twice and take the desired roll. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Twisted Fate. Starting at 14th level, you can manipulate your fate and those of others. When any creature makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, you can use your reaction to give advantage or disadvantage to the creature's roll. You can do so after the creature rolls but before any effects of the roll occur. You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Dragon Patron

Warlocks who venerate a Great Wyrm are bestowed with powers that emulate those of their draconic patrons. Their patrons share their blood with these warlocks, slowly transforming their physical forms as they gain draconic features like claws and even wings, as well as the senses and frightful presence of their mighty master.

Expanded Spell List. At 1st level, your Great Wyrm patron lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you:

Dragon Patron Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*feather fall, hunter's mark*
2nd	*darkvision, enhance ability*
3rd	*clairvoyance, haste*
4th	*freedom of movement, stoneskin*
5th	*geas, legend lore*

Dragon's Tongue. Starting at 1st level, you can speak, read, and write Draconic. Additionally, whenever you make a Charisma ability check when interacting with dragons, your proficiency bonus is doubled if it applies to the check.

Dragon's Claws. Starting at 1st level, your hands become clawlike that you can use to make attacks. The claws have a reach of 5 feet, can be used as an unarmed strike, and deal 1d6 + Strength modifier slashing damage on a hit.

Draconic Ancestry. Starting at 6th level, you become dragonlike in your nature. You gain the *Draconic Ancestry*, and associated *Breath Weapon* and *Damage Resistance* traits of the Dragonborn race.

Dragon's Senses. Starting at 10th level, you gain blindsight 30 ft. Additionally, you sense the presence of any treasure worth over 100 gold pieces within 120 feet of you. This ability merely reveals that treasure is present. You don't learn the location of the treasure, but you do learn its general value. This ability can't locate treasure if any thickness of lead, even a thin sheet, blocks a direct path between you and the object.

Dragon Wings. Starting at 14th level, you gain the ability to sprout a pair of dragon wings from your

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back, gaining a fly speed equal to your walking speed. You can create these wings as a bonus action on your turn. They last until you dismiss them as a bonus action on your turn. You can't manifest your wings while wearing armor unless the armor is made to accommodate them, and clothing not made to accommodate your wings might be destroyed when you manifest them.

Frightful Presence. Starting at 14th level, you can channel the dread presence of your dragon ancestor, causing those around you to become frightened. As an action, you can draw on this power and exude an aura of fear to a distance of 60 feet. For 1 minute or until you lose your concentration (as if you were concentrating on a spell), each hostile creature that starts its turn in this aura must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be frightened until the aura ends. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to your aura for 24 hours. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Witchservant

Hags can sense those who seek power desperately and are willing to spread the malice of their patron to cause discord and misery. Witchservants are usually bitter, power-hungry individuals who live hidden in society. They live as average citizens and practice their devotions secretly, gathering only to conduct vile rituals and contact their hag patrons for guidance. Various hags have a decent number of servants in Aglarion who treat their subjects as expendable assets.

Expanded Spell List. At 1st level, your hag patron lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you:

Witchservant Expanded Spells

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*bane, hideous laughter*
2nd	*blindness/deafness, darkvision*
3rd	*bestow curse, tiny hut*
4th	*divination, polymorph*
5th	*commune, contagion*

Hag's Form. Starting at 1st level, you can mimic the shape-changing ability of your hag patron. As a bonus action, you can magically polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid for one hour. Your statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment you are wearing or carrying isn't transformed. You revert to your true form if you die. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Dark Devotion. Starting at 1st level, your hag patron bolsters your determination. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Painful Incantation. Starting at 6th level, you can cause intense pain with your damaging spells. As a

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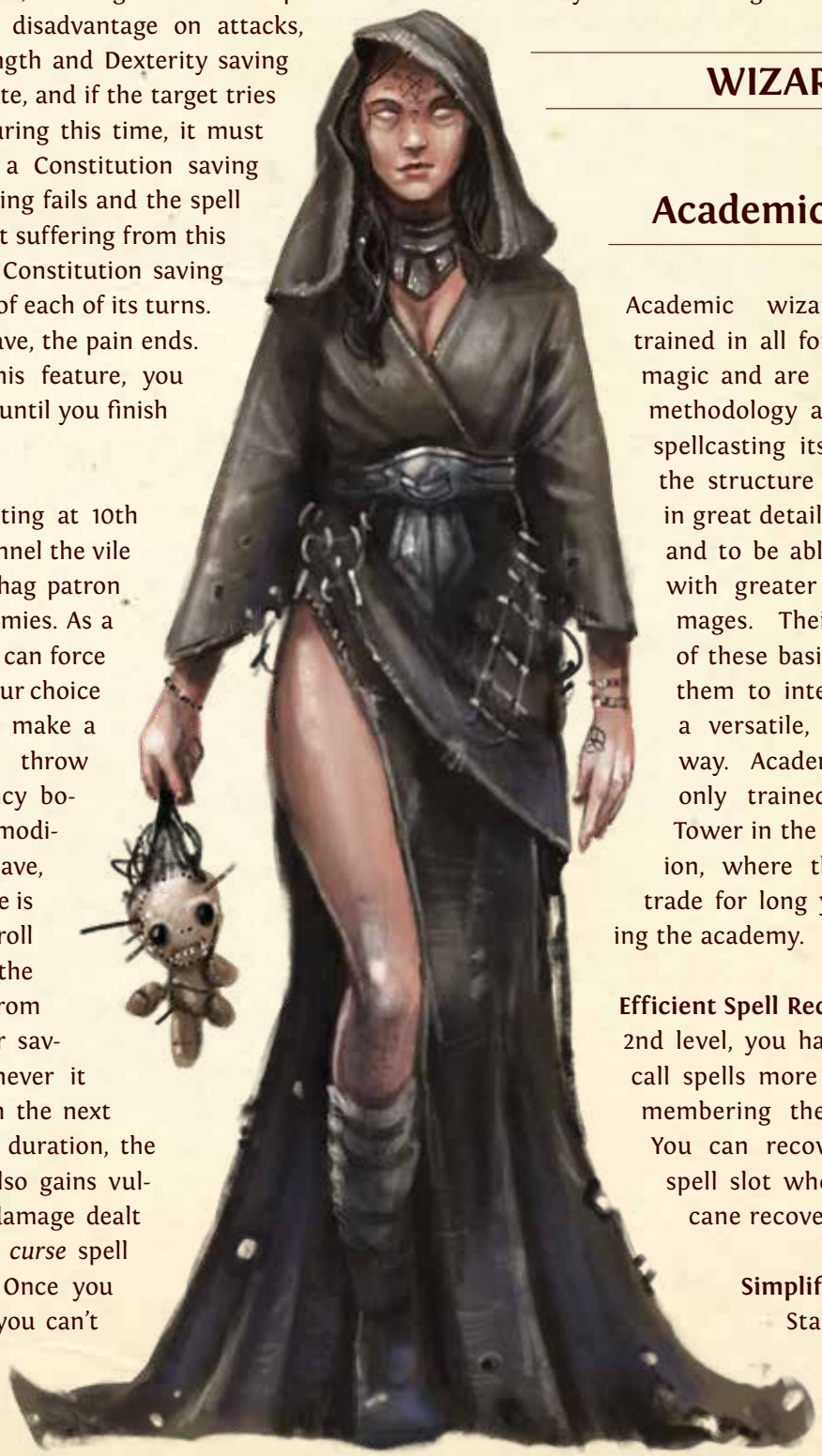
bonus action, you can choose to use painful incantation when you roll damage for a spell and force the damaged creature to make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + proficiency bonus + Charisma modifier). On a failed save, the target creature's speed is halved, it has disadvantage on attacks, skill checks, Strength and Dexterity saving throws for 1 minute, and if the target tries to cast a spell during this time, it must first succeed on a Constitution saving throw or the casting fails and the spell is wasted. A target suffering from this pain can make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, the pain ends. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Malediction. Starting at 10th level, you can channel the vile energies of your hag patron to curse your enemies. As a bonus action, you can force one creature of your choice within 30 feet to make a Charisma saving throw (DC 8 + proficiency bonus + Charisma modifier). On a failed save, the target creature is cursed and must roll 1d6 and subtract the number rolled from its attack rolls or saving throws whenever it makes one within the next 1 minute. For the duration, the target creature also gains vulnerability to all damage dealt by you. A *remove curse* spell ends this effect. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



Ethereal Passage. Starting at 14th level, you gain the ability to traverse the Ethereal plane. You can cast *etherealness* without consuming a spell slot. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

WIZARD

Academic Wizard

Academic wizards are highly trained in all forms of schools of magic and are specialized in the methodology and procedures of spellcasting itself. They analyze the structure of spell formulas in great detail to optimize them and to be able to handle them with greater ease than other mages. Their understanding of these basic concepts allows them to interchange spells in a versatile, almost effortless way. Academic wizards are only trained in the Arcane Tower in the kingdom of Aglarion, where they master their trade for long years before leaving the academy.

Efficient Spell Recovery. Starting at 2nd level, you have learned to recall spells more efficiently by remembering their key variables. You can recover an additional spell slot when using your arcane recovery class ability.

Simplified Spell Rituals. Starting at 2nd level, you have mastered conducting rituals

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by focusing on their most fundamental structures. Instead of the usual 10 minutes required to cast ritual spells, you can cast the ritual version of a spell in 1 minute.

Expedient Spell Preparation. Starting at 6th level, you can prepare spells faster than usual. Preparing a new spell takes 1 round per spell level for you instead of the usual 1 minute per spell level.

Elevated Spell Power. Starting at 10th level, you attain an optimized form of spellcasting methodology, which makes your spells more powerful. Spells you cast are considered to be one spell slot level higher than their actual spell slot level.

Combined Spell Effects. Starting at 14th level, you learn how to apply spells so that their effects are combined. You can apply and stack the same magical effect of a spell to a target one additional time. Once you use this feature, you can't use it until you finish a long rest.

Arcane Sentinel

Magic is reliable, it is hard to cheat, and is a more convenient tool to safeguard riches or secrets than intelligent guardians or monsters of any kind. Arcane sentinels are abjuration-specialist wizards who focus on magic that wards areas and prevents intrusion. Their spells are more durable, harder to remove, and more deadly when properly placed. Master Bertio Ranberd is the most renowned practitioner of the arcane sentinel school in Aglarion, teaching his secret formulas at his shop and boarding school, the Emporium of Marvelous Rarities.

Practiced Abjurer. Starting at 2nd level, you become practiced at learning abjuration spells. The gold and time you must spend to copy an abjuration spell into your spellbook is halved.

Advanced Alarm. Starting at 2nd level, you gain deeper insight into the working of the *alarm* spell. Add the *alarm* spell to your spellbook. The duration of an *alarm* spell cast by you becomes 24 hours, and it can be both mental and audible. You can also designate other willing creatures to be alerted by your *alarm* spell's mental alert.

Empowered Glyph. Starting at 6th level, you can inscribe the *glyph of warding* spell in an instant and make it more potent. Add the *glyph or warding* spell to your spellbook. You can cast the *glyph of warding* spell as an action without using a spell slot and reroll a number of the damage dice equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) when using the spell's explosive runes option. You must use the new rolls. Once you use this feature, you can't use it until you finish a long rest.

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Tenacious Abjurations. Starting at 10th level, your abjuration spells become hard to dispel. An attempt to use the spells *counterspell* or *dispel magic* against your 3rd or lower level abjuration spells requires an ability check. All ability checks made to dispel an abjuration spell cast by you have disadvantage.

Logical Defense. Starting at 14th level, you can deduct the outcome of a threat directed at you. As a reaction, you can add your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) as a bonus to your AC or a saving throw made against a spell.

School of Shadow

The arcane studies of the school of illusions led some specialist mages to discover ways to infuse their spells with shadow material drawn directly from the Shadowrealm. These illusions are tangible, almost real manifestations of their creator's creativity that can physically interact with their surroundings. Most shadow wizards in Aglarion treat their knowledge as a highly kept secret that they rarely teach to others. Many of them have succumbed to the negative influence of the umbral powers they have learned to manifest, turning into bitter, emotionless versions of their former selves.

Darksight. Starting at 2nd level, your eyes have adapted to darkness. You gain darkvision with a 60-foot radius, or your darkvision's radius improves by 60 feet if you already have darkvision.

Shadow Shield. Starting at 2nd level, you can instantly create a tangled mass of shadows that make you harder to hit. You can use your reaction to conjure a shadowy aura that negates one hit by an attack that targets you. Once you use this feature, you can't do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

Pseudo Reality. Starting at 6th level, you can empower your illusions with quasi-real shadows that deal damage. When you cast a 1st or higher level spell to create the image of an object, creature, or visible phenomenon, you can choose to cast your spell to deal 1d6 psychic damage per spell level every turn to those creatures that are affected by it. Affected creatures can make an Intelligence saving throw to halve the damage. Physical interaction with the image does not reveal it to be an illusion. A creature that successfully disbelieves the image by taking an action to make a successful Intelligence (Investigation) skill check becomes immune to the damage dealt by the spell.

Shadow Evocation. Starting at 10th level, you can create a barrage of illusory damaging spells formed out of semi-real shadowstuff. As an action, you can choose an evocation spell that deals damage. You cast this spell as an illusion spell using a spell slot equal to the spell level of the chosen spell. Otherwise, the spell works exactly like the original spell. The affected creature must make the saving throws as described in the spell's description. However, a creature affected by a shadow evocation spell must first make an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the creature believes the spell to be real and takes damage from the spell as normal. On a successful save, the creature takes only half damage.

Shadow Conjuration. Starting at 14th level, you can create a quasi-real creature made out of shadows. As an action, you can cast the *conjure elemental* spell without expending a spell slot or material components, but instead of conjuring an elemental, you can create an illusory creature of challenge rating 6 or lower of any type. A creature that uses its action to examine the illusory creature can determine that it is an illusion with a successful Intelligence (Investigation) skill check against your spell save DC. If a creature discerns the illusory creature for what it is, the creature can see through the image and takes only half damage from the illusory creature, and has advantage on saving throws and ability checks made against the illusory creature. Once you use this feature, you can't use it until you finish a long rest.

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Appendix F

Feats

The following 13 new and unique feats establish backgrounds and special flares to a few notable NPCs in Crown of the Oathbreaker. They incorporate options that players can use to give flavor to their characters and have a deeper connection to the available subclasses that we have created as well.

Adaptive Personality

You are a master of social interactions and make-believe, wearing your personality as a sleeve to fit any occasion.

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Performance) checks when interacting with someone for the first time.
- Your demeanor can even cloak your alignment, fooling divinations made to determine it. Choose the alignment you wish to enact and divination spells will show your chosen alignment.

Blessed Spirit

Your sanctified spirit protects you from curses and you can detect the auras of cursed items or creatures.

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- If you fail a saving throw against a curse or curse effect, you can reroll the saving throw with advantage at the start of your next turn. You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.
- As an action, you can sense the presence of cursed items or creatures within 30 feet of you for 1 minute. If you sense curses in this way, you can use your action to see a faint aura around any visible creature or object in the area that is cursed. The effect can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt. You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.

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Braveheart

You are used to scary situations and easily overcome your fear.

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- You can reroll a saving throw against being frightened that you fail. If you do so, you must use the new roll. You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.

Focused Aim

You can target ranged attacks more precisely by focusing only on the shot but letting your guard down. As a bonus action, you can focus your aim to gain the following benefits and penalties until the start of your next turn:

- You gain advantage on your first ranged attack on your turn, but all attacks against you are made with advantage until the start of your next turn.
- You gain 1d4 damage on your first ranged attack on your turn.

Gravetouched

You have been exposed to necromantic powers so many times that you have become somewhat resistant to them.

- You gain damage resistance against necrotic damage.
- You gain advantage on saving throws against effects that deal necrotic damage.

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Guardian

You protect your allies and sense danger before it happens. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +1 bonus to AC if there are allies within 5 feet of you.
- As a reaction, you can protect an ally who is within 5 feet from you from an attack of opportunity. If you use this action, the attack automatically misses.

- When an ally who is within 5 feet of you is attacked, you can shield them with your body. As a reaction, you switch the target of the attack to yourself, using your own AC to determine if the attack hits and taking damage if it does.

Hellfire Channeler

Hellfire courses through your veins, and you can channel it into your fire spells for devastating effect against creatures who would otherwise be unharmed.

- Whenever you cast a spell that deals fire damage, you can substitute hellfire damage for half of the total damage dealt. Creatures cannot reduce this half of the damage even if they have resistance or immunity to fire damage, however, devils are immune to hellfire.

Mounted Charger

You are a master of charging into the fray on your mount. While you are mounted and aren't incapacitated, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on melee attack rolls against any unmounted creatures that are smaller than your mount.
- When your mount takes a dash action, and you hit a creature with a melee attack in the same round, your attack deals an additional 1d6 damage.
- When wielding a lance, you don't have disadvantage when attacking a target within 5 feet of you.

Scourge of the Undead

You gain powers to resist and punish the living dead.

- You gain advantage on saving throws against necromancy spells or being charmed, frightened, or possessed by undead creatures.
- Your weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 against undead creatures.

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Shadowcaster

You can infuse your illusion spells with the essence of shadows, making them more persistent and less resistible.

- The DC to end or dispel your illusion spell or interrupt you in casting an illusion spell is 13 + your spell's level.
- The duration of your illusion spells is doubled.
- You can spend an extra spell slot of the same spell level when you cast an illusion spell. The saving throw against your spell or the Intelligence (Investigation) skill check to discern your spell is made with a disadvantage.

Spell Tattoo

You can create a tattoo etched into your skin with magically treated ink and infused with a spell that you can cast. The tattoo is drawn in a design that resembles the specific spell placed within it, which must be of 1st level. It takes a day of work to imprint the tattoo and costs 100 gold pieces for the material components. You gain the following benefit:

- You can cast the spell weaved into the tattoo as a bonus action. You regain the ability to cast the spell when you finish a long rest.

Stern Justicar

You have seen all the dirty little tricks, making you hard to fool. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in the Investigation skill. If you are already proficient in the skill, you add double your proficiency bonus to checks you make with it.
- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks to disbelieve illusions.

Trap Engineer

You can easily detect and disarm traps using your vast understanding of their workings and mechanical parts. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain proficiency in the Investigation skill to deduce the workings of traps. If you are already proficient in the skill, you add double your proficiency bonus to checks you make with it for this purpose.
- You gain proficiency in the Perception skill to detect traps. If you are already proficient in the skill, you add double your proficiency bonus to checks you make with it for this purpose.
- You gain proficiency with the artisan's (engineering) or thieves' tools and can use them as part of a Dexterity check to disarm traps. If you are already proficient with them, you add double your ability bonus to checks you make with them for this purpose.

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APPENDIX G

SPELLS

The following 16 new and unique spells give flavor to many NPCs, locations, and situations in the Crown of the Oathbreaker adventure. All of them can be researched, emulated, or accessed by the characters as they progress in spellcasting levels.

Disable Construct

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a gear made of metal)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard

Choose a construct that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed for the duration even if the target is immune to being paralyzed. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can target an additional construct for each slot level above 4th. The constructs must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

Fortify Soul

4th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: 8 hours
Classes: Cleric, Paladin

You resist external influences to your soul through your unbreaking faith. You gain immunity to any effect that would influence your soul (such as the *magic jar* spell or a hag's *nightmare haunting* ability).

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Immobilize

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (tendrils from the roots of an oak)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

Even if this defies gravity, a creature or unattended item you touch becomes magically fixed in place. A creature must succeed on a Strength saving throw or become restrained for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Strength saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target. An item immobilized by the spell can hold up to 8,000 pounds of weight. More weight causes the item to fall. A creature can use an action to make a DC 30 Strength check, moving the fixed item up to 10 feet on a success.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell on an item using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the spell lasts until dispelled, without requiring your concentration.

Infuse with Entropy

5th-level transmutation

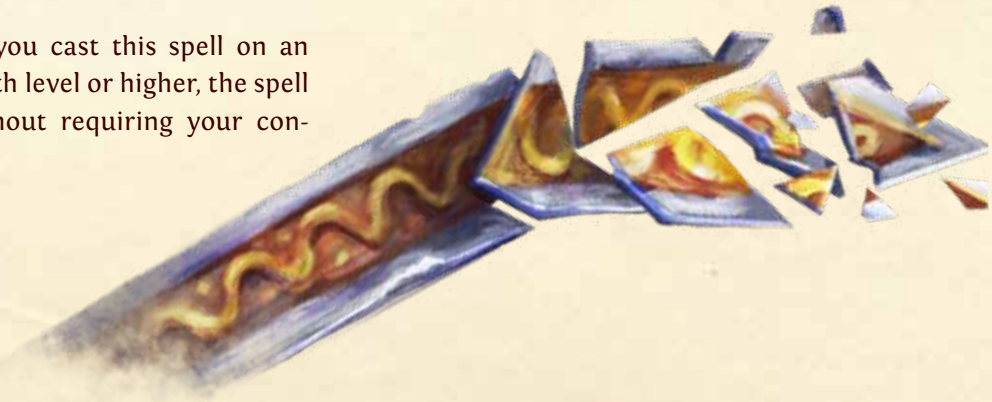
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of ash)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You alter the structure of an object or the body of a creature, which starts to lose its structural integrity or decompose.

Choose a creature that you can see within range. The target creature must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 11 (2d10) force damage at the start of its turn and has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

Choose an object that you can see within range. This spell destroys a large or smaller nonmagical object in three rounds. If the target is a huge object, this spell causes it to become damaged, or renders it useless if it has a complex mechanism or moving parts. A magic item is unaffected by this spell.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 5th.



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Instant Tent

5th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a small piece of silk cloth)
Duration: 8 Hours
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard

You conjure a tent of a magnificent size that lasts for the duration.

The tent is a large "Big Top" tent with an oval shape of 50 by 75 feet and is open on the sides. The colors and the designs on the canvas are determined by you when you cast the spell. The tent is waterproof and well-fastened to the ground, its magic preventing it from tipping.

The tent is made of magical canvas, supported by iron poles. The ten supporting poles each have AC 19 and 24 hit points, immunity to damage from non-magical weapons excluding siege weapons, and resistance to all other damage. Only a *wish* spell can repair the tent (this use of the spell counts as replicating a spell of 8th level or lower). Each casting of *wish* causes one column to regain 50 Hit Points.

Lungrot Vapor

6th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a piece of lung tissue harvested from a corpse)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

A 20-foot-radius sphere of vile-smelling necrotic gas of a green shade magically swirls forth from a point that you choose within range. The gas eats away at the lungs of any creature in the area and creates a particular form of choking zombie from those who die due to the spell. The fog spreads around corners. It lasts for the duration or until strong wind disperses the fog, ending the spell. Its area is heavily obscured.

When a creature enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, that creature must make a Constitution saving throw. The creature takes 4d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures are not affected if they hold their breath or don't need to breathe. The fog moves 10 feet away from you at the start of each of your turns, rolling along the surface of the ground. The vapors, being heavier than air, sink to the lowest level of the land, even pouring down openings.

If a creature falls to 0 hit points, it rises as a **zombie** at the end of the round with the following modification:

- **Choking Strike.** The zombie chokes the living, trying to suck the air from the lungs of its victims. Any creature hit by the slam attack of the zombie must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC equals 10 + the zombie's Constitution ability modifier) or gain one level of exhaustion.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 6th.

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Melancholic Melody

4th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a handful of dried lavender petals)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

The air fills with a melancholic tune, otherworldly and disheartening, emanating from a point of your choice within range. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius centered on that point that hears the melody must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, an affected target becomes frightened for the duration and takes 1d6 psychic damage every round. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target. On a successful save that creature is unaffected and is immune to the effects of the spell for 24 hours.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, the radius of the emenation increases by 10 feet for each slot level above 4th.

Melt Flesh

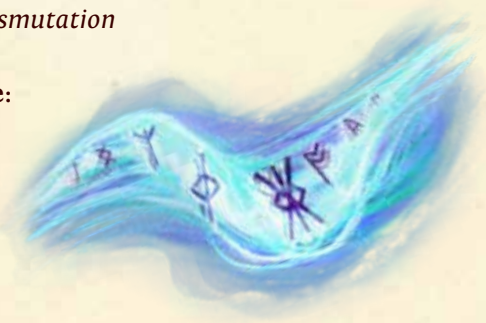
3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a strip of tallow)
Duration: 1 minute
Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You disfigure your enemy, melting their muscles, sinews, or flesh and making them weaker and clumsier. Choose a creature that you can see within range. The target creature must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, choose an ability score from Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, or Charisma. The Target creature has disadvantage on ability checks made with the chosen ability score for the duration of the spell.

Music of the Spheres

3rd-level transmutation



Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a page of sheet music)
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Wizard

You can cast this spell during an uninterrupted short rest while studying your spellbook. Your mind is transported to the outer reaches of the cosmos, and you hear the music of the spheres, composed of melodies by pure magical energies. During the short rest, you can recover a combined level of spell slots equal to your wizard level when using your arcane recovery class ability.

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Rally

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (30-foot cube)
Components: V, S, M (cloth from a flag)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Bard, Cleric, Paladin, Ranger

You boost the morale of your allies even in a seemingly hopeless situation. All allies within a 50-foot cube centered on you that can see and hear you gain advantage on saving throws to resist being charmed and frightened for the duration of the spell.

Shadowcraft Conjuration

4th-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You can conjure any creature through potent illusions that are partly material. You summon illusory creatures made of shadow material that take form and appear in unoccupied spaces that you can see within range. Choose one of the following options for what appears:

- One creature of challenge rating 2 or lower
- Two creatures of challenge rating 1 or lower
- Four creatures of challenge rating 1/2 or lower
- Eight creatures of challenge rating 1/4 or lower

Each shadow creature retains its type, and disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends. The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures but otherwise take no actions. The GM has the creatures' statistics.

When a shadow creature attacks or interacts with a target, the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw to disbelieve the illusion. On a failed save, the shadow creature deals full damage. On a success, the shadow creature only deals half damage and has half of its total hit points for the rest of the spell's duration.

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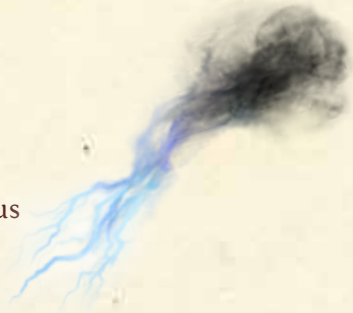
Shadowcraft Evocation



4th-level illusion

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You unleash bursts of magical energy through potent illusions that are partly material. You can choose to emulate any evocation spell of 3rd-level or lower that deals damage and has a casting time of 1 action by casting this spell. Before the regular effects of the replicated spell are determined, the target must first succeed on a Wisdom saving throw to disbelieve the illusion. On a failed save, the spell deals full damage. On a success, the spell only deals half damage. The damage type of the spell is determined by the spell being replicated.

Shout

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (15-foot cone)
Components: V
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Wizard

You unleash the power of your voice to devastating effect. You emit an ear-splitting yell that damages creatures. Each creature in a 15-foot cone originating from you must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 5d8 thunder damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage.

In addition, a creature made of inorganic material such as stone, crystal, or metal has disadvantage on this saving throw. A nonmagical object that isn't being worn or carried also takes the damage if it's in the spell's area. The spell emits a thunderous boom audible out to 300 feet.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 3rd.

Steadfast

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (wood from the roots of an oak)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Cleric, Ranger, Paladin

Your spell makes it harder to knock you down or to unseat you if you are mounted.

You gain advantage on saving throws against spells and on Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill checks against grappling creatures and effects that attempt to push you or force you to become prone. You also gain advantage on saving throws and ability checks against any effect that would force you to fall from the back of your mount.

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Suffocate

6th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 90 feet
Components: V, S, M (a small vial of smoke)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You extract the air from your enemy's lungs and fill it with smoke to cause suffocation. Choose a creature that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target creature is paralyzed for the duration and starts to suffocate as it has run out of breath. This spell has no effect on constructs, plants, undead, or other creatures that don't breathe. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 6th. The creatures must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

Wither Limb

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a pinch of ash from a corpse)
Duration: 1 minute
Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You hinder your enemy's movement, or their combat abilities, or both. Choose a creature that you can see within range and the creature's arms or feet. The target creature must make a Constitution saving throw.

If you choose its arms, on a failed save, the target creature gains disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks that require the use of an arm. If you cast this spell again on the same creature's arms and the target fails the saving throw a second time while under the effect of the same spell, the target creature loses the function of their arms entirely.

If you choose a leg, on a failed save, the target creature's movement speed is halved. If you cast this spell again on the same creature's feet and the target fails the saving throw a second time while under the effect of the same spell, the target creature loses the function of their leg and becomes restrained.

At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Constitution saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

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