

DREAD METROL

Into the Mists



Keith Baker

AN EBERRON/RAVENLOFT CROSSOVER
WITH ANDREW BISHKINSKYI
AND IMOGEN GINGELL



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This book refers to spells and items from several sources, denoted with the following abbreviations. If a source is not specified, it comes from the *Player's Handbook* or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

- *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*: RLW
- *Exploring Eberron*: EXE
- *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*: TCE
- *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*: XGE

Disclaimer: No puppies were harmed in the making of this book. Not a one. We don't know what's in the Ghallanda ragout, but we know one thing that's definitely not in it, and that's puppies. We promise.

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VERSION 1.1

INTRODUCTION

ABANDON ALL HOPE? THAT'S THE LAST thing we want these mortals to do. If every creature consumed by our mists abandoned all hope, we'd be denied the pleasure of slowly stripping it from them. Let the people of Metrol struggle against their fate, and we shall make wine from their tears.

—The Empress of Shadows,
Dark Power of Mabar

Dread Metrol: Into the Mists presents a new domain that serves as a bridge between the settings of Eberron and Ravenloft. If you wish, *Dread Metrol* can be used in conjunction with *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*, and *Exploring Eberron* (available on the Dungeon Masters Guild).

WHAT'S INSIDE

Metrol is one of the largest cities of the Five Nations, so a detailed description of the city could fill a lengthy sourcebook. This supplement instead presents an overview, providing the flavor of Metrol and describing a few of its most important locations and NPCs. As a DM, whether you're running a single adventure or a full campaign, this supplement is intended to serve as a foundation for you to add your own districts, buildings, and NPCs, fleshing out what's described here.

Chapter 1: The Domain of Metrol opens with an overview of *Dread Metrol*, discussing the powers and themes at work in the city, as well as Metrol's physical structure. This chapter also includes player inspiration and character options for creating adventurers from *Dread Metrol*.

Chapter 2: The Mourning After contains an adventure set in *Dread Metrol*. This 8- to 12-hour starter adventure is designed for a party of four to six 1st-level characters, who advance to 4th level by the adventure's conclusion. The chapter includes guidance on how you can either work "The Mourning After" into an ongoing campaign or use it as a starting point for a new campaign in *Dread Metrol*.

Appendix A: Friends and Foes includes creature statistics for all encounters in "The Mourning After." In this section, you'll discover monsters unique to Metrol, including one of House Vadalis's latest breakthroughs: the spider-horse.

Appendix B: Adventure Maps provides copies of the maps referred to throughout "The Mourning After." Your supplement download also includes high-resolution versions of these maps in a zipped folder.

Dread Metrol: Player Edition is a standalone PDF, included in your supplement download, with "player-safe" information from chapter 1. Be aware that this companion PDF *does* contain some information that might be considered spoilers, depending on how much meta-knowledge you expect in your campaigns.

DREAD METROL

Domain of Mourning and War

Darklord: Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn

Genres: Body horror, dark fantasy

Hallmarks: Arcane science, brutal siege, limited resources, tyranny born of desperation

Mist Talismans: Construct fragment, propaganda poster, ration chit

Dread Metrol is a city enduring an endless siege. The undead legions of Karrnath have maintained their assault for years, and every night, new forces emerge from the Mists. Within the city, Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn tightens her grip, determined to find a way to turn the tide of battle. As resources dwindle, the war machine is consuming the people of Metrol. The bodies of the dead are fused to constructs to create tireless soldiers, while citizens who don't contribute to the war effort are sent to the Vadalis Kennels and subjected to horrific experiments. As terrifying as the undead forces are, the queen's relentless pursuit of victory is the source of the greatest horrors.

CAMPAIGN OPTIONS

This book provides guidance on how to use *Dread Metrol* in any campaign, whether the adventurers stumble into it through the Mists or are citizens living in Metrol themselves.



CONTENTS INTRODUCTION

Dread Metrol can be integrated into a Ravenloft campaign, serving as a traditional Domain of Dread. The adventurers—who could be from Eberron or an entirely different realm—stumble into Metrol after passing through the Mists. In such a scenario, the party may be more concerned with escaping than finding a way to save this doomed city.

Dread Metrol also provides an interesting foundation for an ongoing Eberron campaign. In this case, the adventurers are people who were in Metrol on the Day of Mourning and who have endured four years of horror. While the characters might initially be solely concerned with survival, as they gain power, they may fight to find a way to save the city itself—whether that means working with resistance forces to depose Queen Dannel or somehow finding a way to return Metrol to Eberron.

RAVENLOFT IN EBERRON?

Dread Metrol is a domain torn from Cyre on the Day of Mourning, a mighty city trapped in an endless siege. But what does this mean on a higher level? How do Eberron and Ravenloft relate to one another? There are two easy ways for you to approach the connection between these two settings.

You could decide that the Dark Powers can pull Domains of Dread from across the multiverse, including Eberron. If you take this approach, you can use all the lore of Ravenloft and Eberron exactly as written. Dread Metrol is a Cyran city that has been drawn out of Eberron and into Ravenloft. The people of Metrol know nothing of the rest of the multiverse, but this doesn't matter; the only thing that's relevant to the adventure or campaign is that Metrol is *here now*.

Alternatively, if you don't want to incorporate the rest of the multiverse, you can use Dread Metrol in a purely Eberron-based campaign. In this case, the Domains of Dread are tied to the plane of Mabar, also known as the Endless Night. As a plane, Mabar embodies despair and entropy—the end of all things, including hope. As part of this, the Endless Night consumes pieces of other planes—pulling a piece of another realm into the Hinterlands of Mabar, where its life and hope are slowly consumed until only darkness and death remains. In Eberron, these fragments of Mabar are the Domains of Dread. The people trapped in the fragment don't know what's happening to them, and it's not a struggle they can win. The Dark Powers are the immortal spirits that shape Mabar,

and they savor the slow extinction of the fragments. Mabar and its hinterlands are described in more detail in *Exploring Eberron*.

Regardless of whether Dread Metrol is in Ravenloft or Mabar, things aren't truly as they appear to be. The citizens of Metrol believe they're locked in an existential struggle with the forces of Karrnath, one of the nations Cyre fought during the Last War. And while Karrnath was infamous for its use of necromancy and undead on the battlefield, they aren't responsible here. In fact, the undead forces the citizens of Metrol are facing are manifestations of the Dark Powers. They wear the trappings of Karrnath and carry the wolf banner, but the skeletons massed beyond the walls of Metrol were never clothed in flesh. Consequently, *this war can't actually be won*. The hordes besieging Metrol are endless. Even if Metrol wins a tremendous victory, the "Karrnathi" forces will be back the next night. The only way to truly save Metrol would be to find a way to return the city to Eberron—but right now, the people trapped in the city don't know that they aren't in Eberron.

CONTENT WARNING

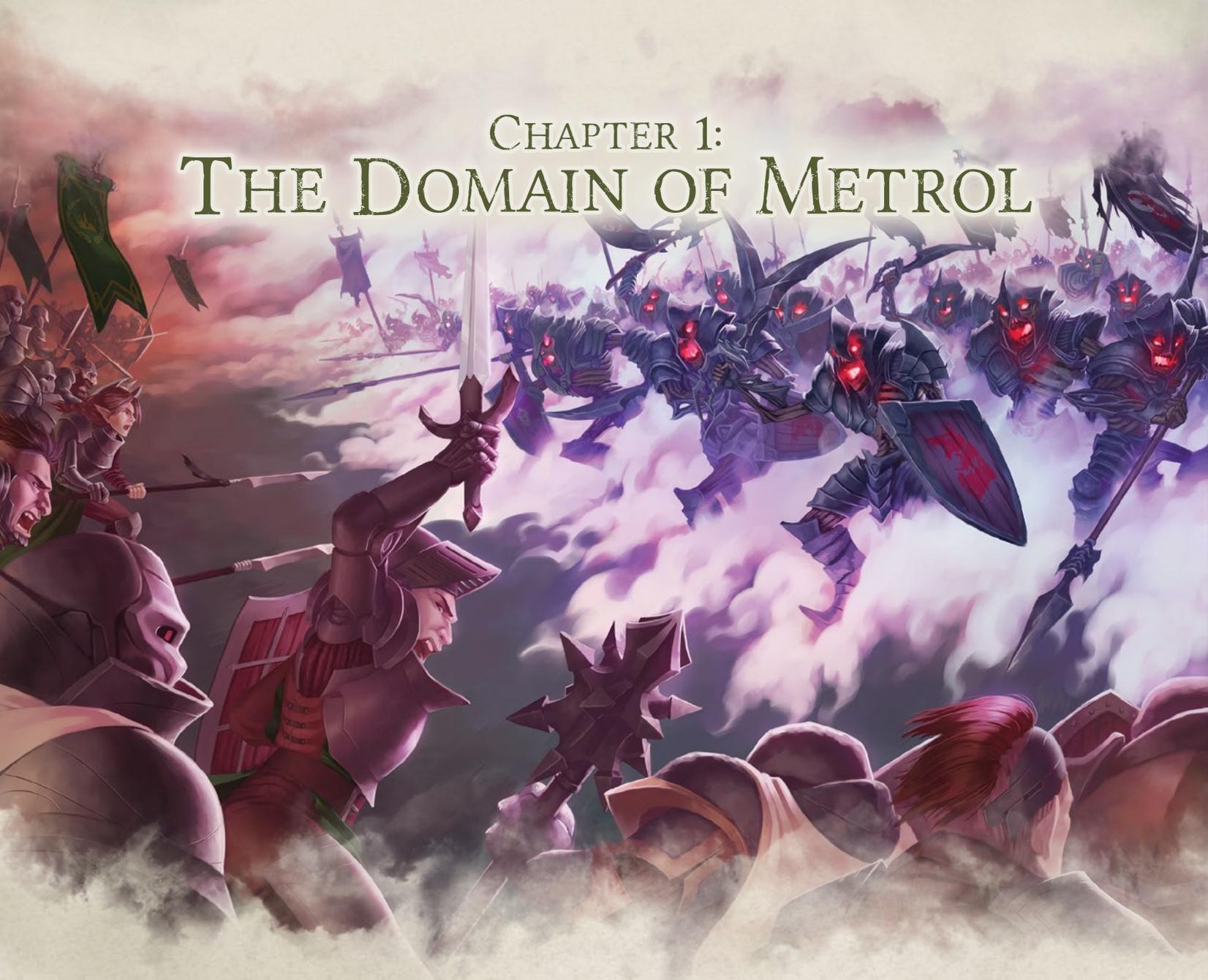
Like many other domains of Ravenloft, Dread Metrol is a terrible place, a city caught in the horrors of endless war. This book and its accompanying adventure delve into dark, challenging topics—several of which player characters themselves may be subjected to.

The domain presented in this book emphasizes the genres of body horror and dark fantasy. It includes themes such as the following: non-consensual human and animal experimentation, abduction, surveillance by an authoritarian state, political propaganda and brainwashing, memory modification, harm and death of children and loved ones, mutilation, cannibalism, corpse-eating, ableism, and psychological trauma.

While this supplement strives to handle this content in a sensitive and respectful manner, these topics are not fun for every table and can be harmful for some players. Before introducing your players to Dread Metrol, we strongly encourage using safety tools to discuss your group's boundaries and comfort level with these and other challenging topics. Such resources are provided in chapter 4 of *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, as well as in the free *TTRPG Safety Toolkit* (by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk) and *Consent in Gaming* (by Sean K. Reynolds and Shanna Germain).



CHAPTER 1: THE DOMAIN OF METROL



THE WOLVES OF KARNNATH HOWL AT our gates. The vile necromancers of the north have brought their armies of the dead. But we are Cyrans. We do not give in to fear. What our dreams imagine, our hands create, and we have dreamt a dream of victory. It will take all that we have to give—even our very bones, so that the Karrns cannot turn our dead against us. But I know the Cyran heart, and I know that we will prevail. If you're willing to wield a sword, report to the Vermishard of War; otherwise, report to the Vadalis Kennels for processing.

—Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn

The siege of Metrol began on the 20th of Olarune, 994 YK. Sentries saw a vast wall of mist rolling toward the capital. It swept over Metrol, and the undead legions of Karnnath came with it. No one knows how the Karrns could bring such a force so deep into Cyre, but the question is moot. Countless skeletal soldiers marched beneath the wolf banner of Karnnath. Slavering ghouls butchered farmers in their fields, pausing to feast on their flesh. And the Mists veiled other horrors; Cyrans heard the deadly cries of banshees and the beating wings of some vast terror. Nothing beyond the sheltering walls of Metrol survived that night, but somehow, the brave soldiers of Cyre held the walls against this nightmare assault. Eventually the Mists withdrew, taking with them the corpses of the fallen

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Cyrans—fodder for the Karrnathi necromancers and the assault that would come on the next night.

The year is now 998 YK. Metrol remains completely cut off from Cyre and the world. A dome of dead-gray mists encircles the city, its shroud rising a mere mile from the city—and none who enter these Mists return. The sun never breaches Metrol's mist-choked sky, its gray days slipping into darkest nights. Every night, the armies of the dead emerge from the Mists. The guardians on the walls hold back the Karrns. The Cyrans suffer losses. And the next night, it happens again ... and again. House Sivis's stonespeakers have sent messages through their *speaking stones*^{RLW}, but they remain unanswered to this day. All *sending* spells fail, as do efforts to scry or teleport beyond the Mists, leaving the city and its queen clueless as to the fate of their nation, Prince Oargev, and the world. The priest now known as Kastor the Mad insists that nothing exists beyond the Mists—that the foul magics unleashed by Karrnath destroyed all living things. But most believe that life goes on, that beyond the unknown depths of the Mists, the Five Nations survive—and above all, that this is a war that can be won.

Dannel ir'Wynarn, queen of Cyre and rightful heir to Galifar's throne, was crowned in 943 YK at the age of seventeen. Though the youngest queen in the history of Cyre, she guided her nation through decades of war with charisma and cunning—supported by an absolute certainty in her destiny as the ruler of Galifar. She knows that her people will endure any hardship in service of their queen, and since the Mists fell, she has put that resolve to the test. There can be no compromise with the forces of Karrnath; Metrol will emerge victorious, regardless of the cost. And the cost of the last four years has been high indeed, as they've weathered an endless siege and relentless assaults of the dead. Today, all citizens of Metrol serve the war effort, fighting for their very existence. Artisans produce weapons and uniforms. Laborers endlessly toil to repair the damage done each night. Those willing to fight defend the walls, while those who aren't contribute in ... *other* ways. The dragon-marked houses compete to produce more effective tools of war—tools that often consume the subjects required in their creation. House Vadalis experiments with strains of lycanthropy and other ways to make monsters. House Cannith strengthens citizens with warforged grafts—or harvests their organs to repair these same golem soldiers. Nothing is wasted in Dread Metrol.

Taken as a whole, Dread Metrol is a vision of the horrors of war. The endless undead assault is a source of bloody carnage and poses an imminent threat of death. But the greater horrors are those inside the walls. Districts have been depopulated by famine and plague, and the Cannith corpse collectors ensure no body goes to waste. Some people accuse their neighbors of being Karrnathi spies, while others don't need any excuse to prey on former friends. Many fear their Queen more than the undead, and the wererat secret police are always alert for any signs of disloyalty. In a happier world, this crisis might inspire people to rally together, united by the common threat—but instead, this foul place draws out the worst aspects of human nature. Soldiers abuse their petty powers, the heartless only help themselves, and the rest become fodder for the war machine. Queen Dannel is the root of this, driving the city's cruelty with her determination to achieve victory at all costs along with her paranoia born of being surrounded by enemies for decades. Perhaps if Dannel could overcome her own pride—or if she could be overthrown—things could change for the better. But for now, Dread Metrol becomes darker by the day ... and it won't be long before there's nothing left worth saving.

THE TRAGEDY OF DANDEL, QUEEN OF CYRE

Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn is known across the Five Nations, respected even by her enemies for her eloquence, intelligence, and grim determination. She has led her people through four decades of bitter, brutal war, overcoming betrayals and fighting enemies on all sides. But this long struggle has taken its toll. It's well known that Dannel is a poet and skilled musician, but fewer realize that she's also a brilliant artificer, and that she contributed to the design of some of House Cannith's most unique creations, such as the warforged colossus. However, Dannel's brilliance has an edge, and her creations often have a cost in innocent blood or life-energy. Over the last four years, she has suffered terrible injuries, and was nearly torn apart when a dracolich breached the Royal Vermishard. But Dannel will never accept defeat; she and Starrin d'Cannith have fused mithral and steel to her flesh and bone, and today, she literally rules with an iron fist. Her people believe that she cannot die—that whatever happens, she'll always find a way to return.



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Everyone knows that the young Dannel took the throne after her father Connos died on the battlefield. Her people were amazed and inspired by her courage and determination to fight, and she proved smarter than generals many times her age. But there is a more sinister side to the story: ever since she was a child, Dannel has heard a voice whispering to her from the dark. The voice told her of her destiny, that she and she alone could lead Cyre to victory. And it revealed the secrets of the people around her—revealing just how weak the people she trusted and respected truly were. At first she had doubts, but everything the voice told her proved true, so she gradually began to trust and believe it. She could see that King Connos was failing to lead the nation to victory as it deserved. While she loved her father, she also saw all of his flaws—and decided to take Cyre’s future into her own hands. Connos’s death on the battlefield was not by enemy hands, as commonly believed; rather, his squire Marson killed him on Dannel’s orders and according to her plans, allowing her to rise to the throne.

In the public eye, Queen Dannel was charismatic and brilliant. But the voice still whispered to her, revealing the weaknesses of those around her and reminding her of every betrayal. It promised that she alone could lead the nation to victory—but only if she was willing to walk a bloody path.

It’s up to the DM to decide exactly how far Dannel has gone in pursuit of victory. It may be that it takes hundreds of Cyran souls to animate a warforged colossus, and Dannel was willing to pay that price. Her first son, Prince Brusst, died as an infant—presumably a natural death, but it’s possible that Dannel herself was responsible, making a bargain with an archfey or even binding his essence to one of her artifice creations (in which case he might still be alive, in some form). It could even be that Dannel is herself responsible for the Mourning. Perhaps she and Starrin d’Cannith were working on an arcane shield that could protect an entire nation, and she ignored the dangers. Or perhaps she knew exactly what she was doing; her voice told her that Cyre was going to lose the war, but showed her a path that would mean she would never have to surrender—even if her pride would destroy the nation itself.

The DM also holds the answer to an important question: who, or what, is the voice Dannel has heard all her life? It’s possible that it’s always just been her own inner voice, and in truth, she and only she is responsible for her own actions

and insights. Another possibility is that it’s the overlord Tul Oreshka, known as the Truth in the Darkness—an overlord known for revealing secrets that can unhinge even the strongest mind. If this is the case, the Mourning might have actually hidden the release of the Truth in the Darkness, and Tul Oreshka is the true ruler of the Mournland. A third possibility is that the voice has always been Dannel—but it’s the *future* voice of Dannel in Dread Metrol, the voice of the Darklord guiding her younger self to follow her path.

Dannel *is* brilliant. She is a skilled artificer, and she’s still a gifted poet. But she has become obsessed with the betrayals, with the failures of those around her, and with the determination that she *will* win the fight—even if she has to sacrifice everyone and everything she loves in the process.

As a Domain of Dread, Metrol is designed to torment Dannel. She is trapped in the last gasp of Metrol—forced to experience

an endless battle against an implacable foe—while also grappling with her own obstinate ignorance and her belief that the battle can be won.

In her pursuit of victory, she’s become the very monster that her people fear. Every moment in Metrol reflects either the horrors of the war—the terror of the endless siege—or the crushing burdens imposed by the queen’s willingness to sacrifice anyone and anything.



THE HORRORS OF WAR

Every Domain of Dread explores different aspects of horror. In the domain of Dread Metrol, the people are trapped between an implacable, terrifying enemy and a ruler willing to sacrifice anything in pursuit of victory. Posters plastered around the city repeat key messages:

DO YOUR DUTY
THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US
DANNEL IS WATCHING

Everyone is searching for some way to contribute to the defense of Metrol. Essentially, you need to appear to be busy—to **DO YOUR DUTY**—or the queen will find a way for you to contribute. This could mean being pressed into service with the army or assigned to a work crew shoring up defenses—these conscripts are the lucky ones. The not-so-lucky find themselves “assigned” to the Kennels or the Forge. In the Kennels, House Vadalis will *change* you, make you harder, better, faster, stronger—at any cost. In the Forge, odds are good that you’ll end up as spare parts for the Reconstructed, the patchwork warforged that defend the city. People live in terror of being sent to the Kennels or the Forge, but no one dares to challenge Dannel: after all, **THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US**. Though many among the common folk are beginning to doubt that Dannel truly does have an answer, the army and the Watch remain devoted to her, and no one dares to speak against her ... for **DANNEL IS WATCHING**. Meanwhile, many citizens still truly believe in the queen. She carried the nation through decades of war—surely she’ll find a way to save her people once more. Such loyalists are quick to attribute any misfortune to the actions of Karrnathi spies and sympathizers, and they report all suspicious activities to the Shepherds.

Here are a few elements to keep in mind while designing or running an adventure set in Dread Metrol.

ENDLESS WAR

Every night, the forces of Karrnath emerge from the Mists to assault the city. Traditionally, Karrnathi armies blend living and undead units, but the forces besieging Metrol are entirely undead; they can’t be reasoned with and don’t accept surrender. When you face them, the only options are victory or death—and dying at the hands of the Karrns means

that your corpse will be raised by unseen necromancers and pressed into service the following night.

Most nights involve a simple, direct assault—masses of skeletons and zombies swarming against the walls of Metrol, scaling the barriers, and clashing with the Cyran soldiers holding the parapets. While brutal and terrifying, it’s something the Cyrans have faced and repelled hundreds of times. But the Karrnathi attacks aren’t entirely predictable, and some nights they bring stranger and more terrifying weapons to bear. Here are a few that have been seen in the past.

SIEGE WEAPONS

The standard attack involves masses of undead infantry attempting to scale the walls through sheer numbers and brute force. But on some nights, the army of the dead employs massive siege weapons. These can be simple, mundane weapons—battering rams, siege towers—or unconventional and terrible ones. The Karrns often use catapults to fling packs of ghouls or other undead forces into the city; while most undead flung in this way are destroyed by the impact, even a few ghouls can wreak havoc in a densely populated part of town. Three years ago, the Karrns dragged a massive *siege staff*^{EXE} into position—an eldritch cannon the size of a mature redwood tree. With it, they shattered the Vermishard of Gold, bringing the massive stone spire crashing down upon the city below. Cyran forces launched a heroic assault and shattered the staff, but they took tremendous losses in the process. The pieces of the shattered staff are still out on the battlefield; the army occasionally sends out forces to harvest wood from the staff, hoping arcane power remains within the wood, but this is dangerous work.

AQUATIC ASSAULT

The River Melandor flows into Metrol, and Starmantle Bay lies at the heart of the city. Queen Dannel has placed barricades on the Melandor, but those have been breached in the past. Typically, an aquatic assault involves a force of undead soldiers—who don’t need to breathe—emerging from the water to strike within the city. Shortly after the Mists surrounded Metrol, an undead dragon turtle emerged from Starmantle Bay, shattering the northwestern docks and wreaking havoc before it was finally destroyed. To help defend the bay, House Vadalis has since stocked the bay with **swarms of shredderfish**, a magebred quipper



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that rapidly destroys even wood and metal; you can learn more about shredders in this book's adventure, "The Mourning After."

AERIAL ASSAULT

While rare, aerial assaults allow the Karrns to directly strike against city leadership on the Vermishards. These strikes usually involve squads of wraiths and shadows, though more dangerous attacks include banshees. Last year, a blue dracolich led a force of zombie wyverns in a devastating attack on the Royal Vermishard, but Dannel has doubled the castle's defenses and the creature hasn't been seen since.

PLAGUES AND CURSES

While most attacks are direct physical assaults, occasionally the Karrns fling plague bombs or unleash mass curses in the city. These can involve mundane diseases or more gruesome effects—swift wasting diseases that consume flesh, curses that turn people into ravenous ghouls. Several districts of the city have been abandoned after their residents were killed, because the lingering curses can't be removed. The Plagues and Curses table provides a few examples of possible curses.

PLAGUES AND CURSES

d4 Threat

- 1 **The Hunger.** Humanoids feel an intense hunger and a drive toward cannibalism. Any who give into this impulse slowly transform into ghouls.
- 2 **Restless Dead.** Any humanoid who dies in the region rises as a specific type of undead creature after one minute. Zombies and shadows are commonly associated with this curse.
- 3 **Hysteria.** Those who sleep in the affected region develop cackle fever, as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Afflicted individuals can spread the disease as normal.
- 4 **Broken Mirrors.** Reflections in mirrors mock the people who cast them, and if anyone gets too close, the reflection may reach out of the mirror and strike at them. These spirits have the statistics of ghosts or shadows, except that they have a speed of 0 and are banished if the mirror is shattered. If mirror ghosts use the Possession trait, the ghost is destroyed as soon as it leaves its host (or is driven from it).



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THE UNKNOWN

Part of the terror of the war is that it's *not* predictable. The people of Metrol know they'll be attacked every night, but they never know if tonight's attack will be a simple skeletal horde or a never-before-seen threat. Will horrifying figures burst out of the river or come boiling up from the sewers? Will the abandoned house next door become infested with the shadows of its former inhabitants? The uncertainty is excruciating. The city's strategists are baffled as to how Karrnath can possibly support and field such a diverse range of attacks; if they have a dracolich, why did they wait so long to bring it to the battlefield? Why don't they use siege equipment every night? The simple fact is that there is no logic to the patterns of attack. Dannel asserts that the Karrns are trying to demoralize the people of Metrol, but these forces don't actually have anything to do with Karrnath; they may fight beneath Karrnathi banners, but they are creations of the Dark Powers.

While the war is a nightly threat, it's not something player characters will generally interact with. It's a clash of armies, and ultimately, the battle can't be decisively won (despite Dannel's determination that it will be). Adventurers may encounter small elements of the nightly attacks—a squad of shadows flying over the wall to wreak havoc, a zombie beast emerging from the river, a mob of ghouls flung by catapult, a building collapsing due to arcane assault. They may venture onto the Bloody Fields during the day to salvage the wreckage of the colossus or the shattered *siege staff*, or pass through districts depopulated by curses or infested with undead. But it's just as likely that adventurers in Dread Metrol will be fighting against the monsters *within* the walls. They'll be dodging corpse collectors and press gangs, clashing with a fifth column that seeks to undermine Queen Dannel, or dealing with Cannith and Vadalis experiments that have gotten out of control. The war is the backdrop, but adventurers aren't fighting the war, they're trying to survive the siege. At the same time, the threat of the war can't be forgotten; the Reminders of War table presents inspiration for ways the player characters might be reminded of the war outside the walls.



REMINDERS OF WAR

d8 Event

- 1 A long, low foghorn blast warns of an attack coming from Starmantle Bay; citizens should retreat from the water.
- 2 The street you planned to travel has been sealed by a makeshift barricade. Something is loose beyond the barricade—a pack of ghouls? a virulent curse?—and Reconstructed soldiers are holding the line.
- 3 You hear a chorus of haunting wails. It could be Cyrans mourning their losses, or a squad of banshees attacking one of the Vermishards that tower above you.
- 4 You smell smoke, and soon after, see the burned-out shell of a building. But this wasn't enemy action—a wererat guides Reconstructed soldiers as they cleanse an infected structure with fire.
- 5 An armored wagon pulled by a massive war-forged tribex moves slowly down the street. It's a Cannith corpse collector, and a cloud of flies swarms around the cart.
- 6 You hear a jingling bell ahead. These plague bells are set all around the town, and citizens are supposed to ring one if they've been infected with a disease or show signs of a contagious curse.
- 7 You find the remnants of a statue or monument shattered by a blast from arcane artillery. If you're from Metrol, you might recognize the monument.
- 8 A long, deep horn blast warns of trouble at the south gate.

SHORTAGES

The siege of Metrol has lasted for years. They receive no supply shipments from the outside world—no food, no raw materials, no luxury items. Most shops have closed, as they have nothing to sell, and the few that remain sell goods of questionable quality or provenance. Taverns make vile rotgut in basement stills, and a handful of shops sell “nearly new” items scavenged from the barricaded districts of the city. Most artisans have been pressed into service assisting the war effort. Masons repair shattered walls. Smiths repair armor and beat plowshares into swords. Cooks prepare Ghallanda’s vile ragout for the soldiers—at least, those soldiers that still require food.

These shortages can affect adventurers in many ways. Many common goods simply aren’t available in Metrol. All smiths and spare steel are dedicated to the war effort, so you can’t easily buy a new sword—and if you find one, it’ll cost dearly. The Currencies in Dread Metrol table presents some of the most common currencies within the city. Citizens receive ration chits for the most basic goods—specifically, Ghallanda ragout. Where you can buy luxury goods (from the scavengers and “grave merchants”), the value of gold, silver, and electrum coins has dropped severely, if the merchant is willing to accept them at all. Meanwhile, most copper coins have been smelted down and turned into weapons, so the few that remain have skyrocketed in value. In general, however, barter is the name of the game, and merchants want something they can use. Novelty and nostalgia are worth more than gold or ration chits—most commoners haven’t seen fresh fruit in four years, and a single fresh strawberry is worth more than a ruby. An entertainer can win goodwill by playing a classic Cyran song; entertainers in lower Metrol are rare, as most were pressed into service as regimental musicians or taken to the upper city to entertain the nobles. Spell components are also a precious resource, as the Watch long ago claimed these for the war effort. Consequently, most of Metrol’s magewrights can only cast cantrips, as their other services require valuable components (typically refined Eberon dragonshards).

These shortages have left the common people in desperate straits. Almost anything that could contribute to the war effort has been seized. Most private businesses have closed, and those that still exist have had to find creative ways to maintain

CURRENCIES IN DREAD METROL

d4 Currency

- 1 **Coins.** Merchants who accept coins generally offer only a fraction of face value—unless it’s copper. A gold piece is only as valuable as a copper piece was before the siege, and a silver is worth only a copper, while a single copper is worth its weight in pre-siege gold.
- 2 **Ration Chits.** Citizens who follow the rules and dwell in designated districts receive ration chits—small pieces of stiff paper which can be redeemed for Ghallanda ragout and other staples. The Watch pays informants in ration chits, and Cannith corpse collectors pay for remains with chits.
- 3 **Food.** After four years of the siege, there’s little to eat beyond Ghallanda ragout. Any preserved pre-siege food—fruit, candy, wine—commands a high price. Even rat meat is better than ragout.
- 4 **Goods.** Jewelry and other once-valuable goods typically command a tenth of their value, like coins. However, practical goods—blankets, weapons, tools—can usually be traded for their full value. Trinkets that evoke pre-siege nostalgia can be worth more than precious gems. Magewrights often require spell components as payment—a little more than needed for the spell being performed.

their supplies. People haven’t bought new clothes for years; everything they own is repaired or recycled, making patchwork cloaks and mismatched boots a common sight. If you’re from Metrol, the DM might ask you to describe the state of your clothing or a particular treasured item; what’s the one thing you own that you’ve kept in perfect condition? If you came to Metrol through the Mists, you may find that things you considered inconsequential are priceless treasures in Dread Metrol.

The greatest shortage of all is *soldiers*. Press gangs are always looking for recruits—if you’re new in town, you should keep a low profile, or you may soon find yourself fighting endless zombies on the South Wall. Every night, soldiers are maimed or killed defending against the Karrnathi assault. House Jorasco does what it can, but standard medical supplies ran out long ago, forcing them to use unorthodox methods. Rather than healing potions, they use enchanted embalming fluids and even stitch together body parts from different



CHAPTER 1: THE DOMAIN OF METROL

victims. Sometimes this procedure simply restores a lost limb, but in other cases, they actually create reborn soldiers from spare parts. Anything Jorasco can't use is passed on to House Cannith, where Starrin d'Cannith is pioneering ways within the Forge to graft warforged components onto injured soldiers ... and ways to graft organic elements onto damaged warforged. The results are the Reconstructed; it's often difficult to tell whether they began as human or warforged. Meanwhile, House Vadalis experiments with ways to turn civilians into living weapons—lycanthropy is an obvious start, but in the Kennels, they also experiment with troll's blood and other vile infusions. These attempts have produced powerful creatures, but the tortuous process can overwhelm the strongest of minds, and many times the victims become more dangerous than the enemy they were created to fight.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

In an ideal world, the outside threat would draw everyone together to face this common foe, and indeed, Queen Dannel calls for unity and sacrifice in her daily speeches. But despite these calls to action, the people of Metrol are more divided than ever, driven by desperation and placing their own survival over the needs of their neighbors. To justify this, people latch on to the slimmest of excuses: *Halfings are all criminals. Changelings can't be trusted. The Church of the Silver Flame is responsible for this. I've heard those Aerenal elves practice necromancy, I think all elves are to blame.* Not everyone gives into such petty bigotry, but many do. In this time of senseless horror, people are desperate for something to hold onto, and instead of holding onto each other, they look for someone they can blame.

This simmering aggression is further amplified by the fear that there are Karrnathi agents within Metrol—a fifth column working to undermine the queen and to destroy Metrol. Queen Dannel herself embraces these rumors as an easy way to deflect from her own failings. Surely she'd have broken the siege for now—if not for the traitors hiding within the city. Though anyone with obvious ties to Karrnath would have been rooted out long ago, there is no shortage of rumors about hidden agents. *People can be possessed by Karrnathi ghosts! Karrnath's queen is an elf—maybe all elves are working for the Karrns! And what about vampires?* Any action that impedes the war effort in any way could be interpreted as intentional sabotage and

treason. And can you prove you *weren't* possessed by a Karrnathi ghost? The Suspicious Behavior table provides examples of actions that people might find suspicious—and that the adventurers might notice in the people around them.

Metrol is protected by the loyal soldiers of the Queen's Watch. These warriors and wandslingers patrol the streets looking for signs of treason and crime. Since the siege began, Dannel has supplemented the Queen's Watch with a secret police force—officially known as the Queen's Vigilant Wardens, but more commonly known as the Shepherds. Anyone could be a Shepherd, but you'll never know until they show their teeth; thanks to the disturbing experiments of House Vadalis, the Vigilant Wardens are wererats. Only the most loyal Cyrans are chosen to join the Shepherds, and Lady Vera Seryan d'Vadalis swears that the wererat strain she's developed has no adverse effects on the subject's personality. And perhaps that's true, but the Vigilant Wardens are ruthless in their pursuit of treason; most seem to delight in the cruelty with which they carry out their work, and they never seem to run out of traitors to expose. While questioning the actions of the Shepherds is itself an act of treason, most of the people of Metrol fear the Shepherds more than the Karrns.



SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR

d8 Someone is ...

- 1 ... talking to the crows and rats.
- 2 ... muttering to a locket or a portrait.
- 3 ... scavenging in an abandoned district.
- 4 ... sharpening a Karrnathi dagger they claim they took as a "souvenir."
- 5 ... whispering to someone else in a language you don't recognize.
- 6 ... flexing their fingers as if casting a spell.
- 7 ... missing a finger.
- 8 ... watching you a little too intently.



THE SHAPE OF METROL

Metrol, one of the largest cities in the Five Nations, was once the jewel of Galifar, a place of music and light. The Arcane Congress of Aundair perfected the *everbright lantern*, but Metrol was the first city whose streets were lit with them, while flower petals fell from the floating towers, drifting across the city below. Today, Metrol is a shadow of its former glory. One of the great Vermishards has fallen. Entire districts have been abandoned and barricaded—an attempt to protect the city against the ghosts and ghouls that remain. The eastern quarter has been claimed by the enemy. The soldiers of Cyre and the tireless Reconstructed hold the line as best as they can, but inch by inch, Metrol is being claimed by the dead.

Before the siege, Metrol was thriving and beautiful. It was designed to be a showpiece, an idealized vision of Galifar, though in many ways, the city planners cheated to achieve this. The worst parts of town—slums for the working poor—are hidden underground. There is little visible industry, for Metrol was built to be the administrative and cultural heart of Galifar, and it always relied on imports for goods and food rather than focusing on production itself. Fortunately for the present-day inhabitants, during the Last War, the commanders recognized the dangers, stockpiling supplies and skilled mageswrights in preparation for a lengthy siege. Nonetheless, Metrol has always contained more merchants than artisans; it's a place where people sold goods to diplomats and tourists, not a center of production. This leads to its current desolate appearance, because with no goods to sell, those businesses have either been abandoned or repurposed.

While the city is still largely held by the people of Metrol, attacks regularly breach the walls—arcane bombardment, undead emerging from the water, aerial assaults, and even foul creatures flung into the city with catapults. Beyond that, the trials of the last four years have led to desperate looting. The army has stripped anything that could possibly be used for the war effort, including metal and wood. Furniture has been incorporated into barricades, metal statues have been melted down to forge weapons, even stone cobblestones have been torn up to be flung at the enemy.

When walking through Metrol, you can see that it was once beautiful, but you can *feel* its

current desperation. Windows are boarded up. Shops are abandoned or converted into homes for people forced to flee from their original districts. Wondrous art installations have been stripped down for parts or shattered by arcane bombardment. The Random Locations in Metrol table gives examples of what you might find if you duck into a doorway in this city under siege.

RANDOM LOCATIONS IN METROL

d6 Location

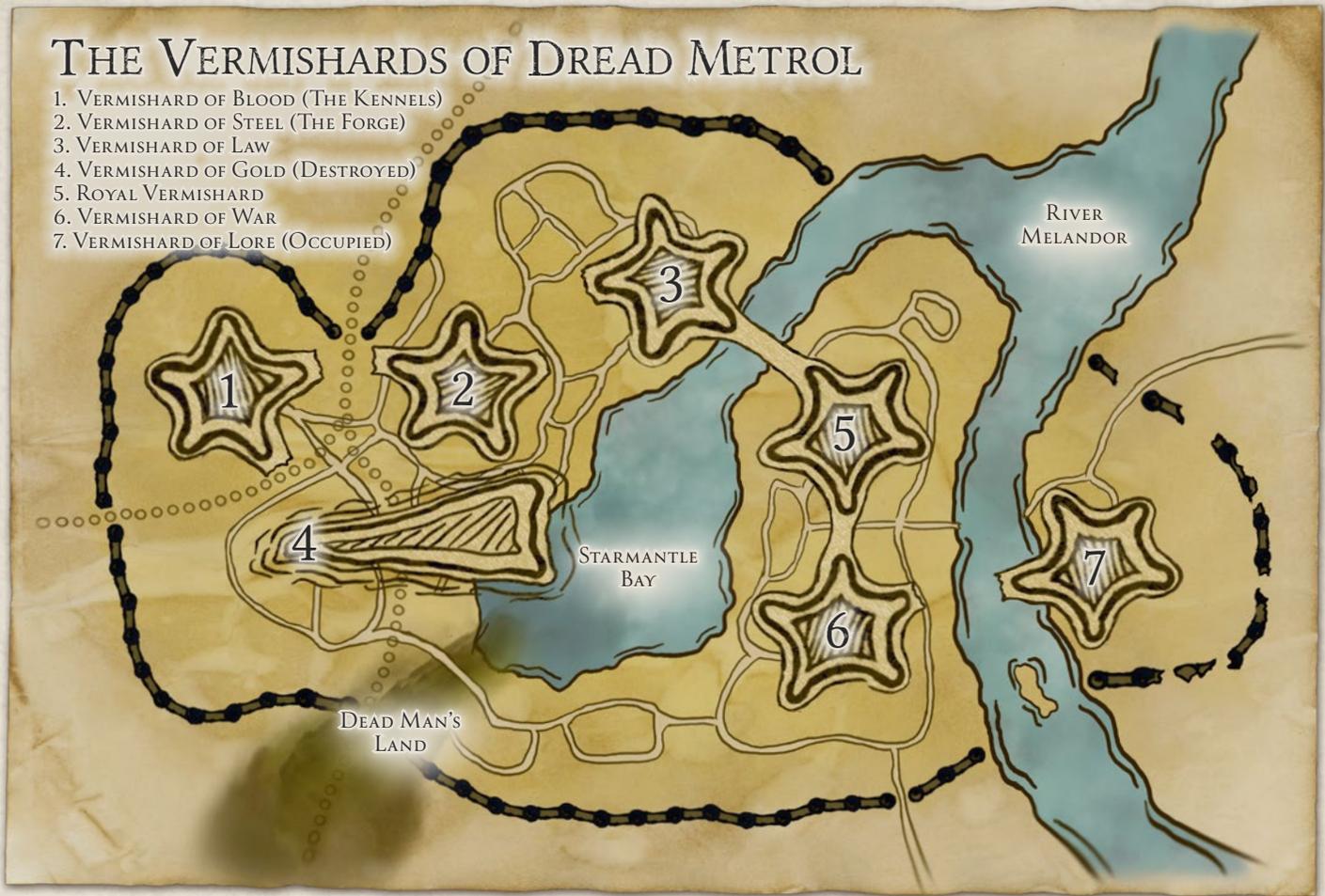
- 1 Once an inn for wealthy diplomats, this building has been claimed by families displaced from their homes by the dead. These refugees fiercely defend their claim and treat outsiders with suspicion.
- 2 This small art gallery was struck by a pack of ghouls, and some of the creatures may still linger here. It's hard to say if the blood splatters on the canvases ruin the paintings or add to the effect.
- 3 This shop once sold *everbright lanterns* and art objects infused with magical light. All of its shelves have been stripped bare, and someone even pried the lightstones out of their settings in the ceiling.
- 4 This former restaurant has become a makeshift infirmary treating victims of a necrotic plague spread by undead. A masked healer urges you to leave.
- 5 This once-pleasant townhouse has boarded-up windows. From behind barricades made of broken-down furniture, the inhabitants demand to know why you're here.
- 6 This tavern has been turned into a gruel kitchen. Three soldiers protect a Ghallanda halfling who's distributing the day's meal.

The following sections provide an overview of the city's important regions, intended as a foundation for the DM to build on. In running an adventure in Metrol, don't get bogged down by specifics. Decide what region the scene takes place in: Northshore? One of the Vermishards? The Undercity? Think about a specific element that matters in the scene: an abandoned shrine, a stripped monument, rats scurrying into the sewers. The tone of the city—a beautiful metropolis worn down by years of siege—is more important than the name of a store that's been closed for years.



THE VERMISHARDS OF DREAD METROL

1. VERMISHARD OF BLOOD (THE KENNELS)
2. VERMISHARD OF STEEL (THE FORGE)
3. VERMISHARD OF LAW
4. VERMISHARD OF GOLD (DESTROYED)
5. ROYAL VERMISHARD
6. VERMISHARD OF WAR
7. VERMISHARD OF LORE (OCCUPIED)



THE VERMISHARDS

When people call Metrol the “Rising City” or swear by the seven spires of Metrol, they aren’t talking about towers made by human hands. One of Metrol’s most stunning features is its seven stone columns that loom above the city. Known as the Vermishards, these spires are over eight hundred feet tall, each widening at the top into a flat star-shaped plateau. The Vermishards are too perfect to be entirely natural formations. The stone that forms them is supernaturally dense, and they predate the fallen empire of the goblins. The commonly accepted story is that the Vermishards were created by dragons in the first age of the world, before the mighty wyrms withdrew to Argonnessen. Today, they are the deep heart of Metrol. Nobles and dragonmarked heirs look down from their heights, while soldiers defend the fortresses carved into the spires themselves.

At a glance, the Vermishards appear to be spikes of solid stone. But there are halls and chambers carved throughout the shaft of each Vermishard, as well as subterranean chambers below. In this, they are not unlike the mighty towers of Sharn,

except that the halls of the Vermishards were carved into the stone, not built from it. The Forge of House Cannith is filled with foundries and factory workings, while the Vermishard of War is a fortress garrison. Each of the spires is topped with a plaza, and these hold the grandest institutions of Metrol—an array of glittering palaces gazing down on the city below. Until recently, these plazas were connected by a network of massive skybridges. However, between the Last War and the constant bombardments and assaults of the last four years, many of these bridges have been destroyed. Today, only the bridges connecting the Royal Vermishard to the Vermishard of War and the Vermishard of Law remain intact.

Metrol isn’t in a Syranian manifest zone, so flight isn’t as easy as in Sharn. House Vadalis has always kept stables of hippogriffs and eagles to provide quick access to the heights, but the main way to reach the Vermishard palaces is through the base. Each shard has a central levitating lift, which works much like the lifts of Sharn. Failing that, reaching the top of a Vermishard requires climbing hundreds of stairs through hallways that can easily be sealed off or flooded with oil. For the most part,

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the nobles in the heights have always considered themselves to be unassailable. The Karrnathi banshees—and more recently, the dracolich—proved that to be arrogant and incorrect.

Each Vermishard serves as the heart of a district devoted to the theme of the spire; before the siege, the Vermishard of Gold was the heart of the Market district, while the Vermishard of Lore was the center of the Lycaeam. While the Vermishards are large and impressive, they aren't as large as the towers of Sharn; as a result, while the Vermishard Academy is atop the Vermishard of Lore, most of the schools and museums of Metrol are in the district around the spire. Likewise, most of the soldiers of Metrol are garrisoned around the Vermishard of War.

The following sections provide a quick overview of the seven Vermishards.

THE FORGE

House Cannith has a long history with Cyre, and centuries ago, the house was granted one of the seven Vermishards. While officially named the Vermishard of Steel, it's commonly known as the Forge. Many of the Forge's most important facilities lie below ground; in these depths, the house produces the infamous Reconstructed. The spire that rises above the city contains vaults of wonders produced over the ages, along with barracks for the many magewrights and artisans that work in the depths. The top of the Forge is the Palace of the Gorgon, the personal domain of Starrin d'Cannith.

THE KENNELS

Before the siege, this spire was known as the Vermishard of Blood. While the title might sound ominous, it merely referred to the noble blood of the inhabitants; the spire held the mansions of many of Metrol's noble families. During the first year of the siege, Queen Dannel seized the Vermishard of Blood and displaced the nobles, granting the space to three dragonmarked houses that previously only had minor facilities in Metrol. The base of the spire belongs to House Vadalis, and it is here that they create their living weapons—leading to the spire being dubbed the Kennels. The upper spire is shared between House Ghallanda and House Jorasco, and it is here that they work their magics creating food and developing experimental medical techniques. The public has no access to the upper levels of the Kennels; these are research and production

facilities, not clinics or soup kitchens—and the restriction keeps the greatest minds and magewrights of both houses out of the reach of raiding ghouls or desperate citizens.

THE ROYAL VERMISHARD

The grand palace of Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn is heavily fortified, matched only by the Vermishard of War. Once, its halls were filled with illusory exhibitions and beautiful artwork; now, these treasures have been cleared away to make room for soldiers and siege equipment. Only at the top of the spire has the royal palace been preserved in all its grandeur, surrounding Queen Dannel and her courtiers with gold and light as they dwell in a lingering vision of Cyre in its glory. Here, you can still find a gallery with the works of Galifar's greatest artists. In the grand hall, magewright chefs serve conjured meals the people on the streets below could hardly dream of. There's even a hall of artifice—an arcane workshop that rivals anything in the Forge, where Dannel herself crafts weapons and rebuilt her own ruined body.

THE VERMISHARD OF GOLD

Once the golden heart of Galifar itself, this Vermishard held the Royal Treasury of Galifar—the royal mint and the vault holding the greatest treasures of the united kingdoms. Three years ago, the Vermishard of Gold was broken by the most devastating arcane bombardment Metrol has experienced. The spire collapsed to the east, crushing the markets of Metrol as the Vault itself fell into Starmantle Bay. Over the last few years, people have scavenged everything that could be easily salvaged from the fallen Vermishard, but there are vaults and sections of the Vermishard that remain sealed—some protected by powerful wards and traps that even the Queen's Watch can't undo.

THE VERMISHARD OF LAW

The Royal Vermishard is the royal estate, but the Vermishard of Law is the practical center of civic administration and the seat of the Queen's Watch. Lesser courtrooms and other public-facing facilities are housed within the lower spire, with archives, offices, and Watch garrisons above. At the summit, the Palace of Law holds the chambers of the City Council, the mansion of the mayor, and the great hall where nobles and other important figures face justice. Meanwhile, Metrol's prisons—known as the Deep Prison—descend below the



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spire. Since the siege, the subterranean prison has been filled to bursting with suspected spies and accused traitors, and there is a constant stream of executions on the plaza around the spire.

THE VERMISHARD OF LORE

The heart of the Lycaenum district, the Vermishard of Lore held the royal library of Galifar. Its spiraling corridors contained volumes of poetry, arcane treatises, and much more—including the original manuscript of Karrn the Conqueror's famed *Analects of War*. Atop the spire lies the Vermishard Academy, where the nobles of Galifar studied magic; while not as versatile as Arcanix, the Academy was considered the finest place to learn the arts of enchantment. The Lycaenum was lost to the enemy in the second year of the siege, and the current status of the Vermishard of Lore is unknown. By now, it is likely infested with wraiths and shadows—and it's possible that some of the Vermishard Academy's greatest enchanters still survive as undead terrors.

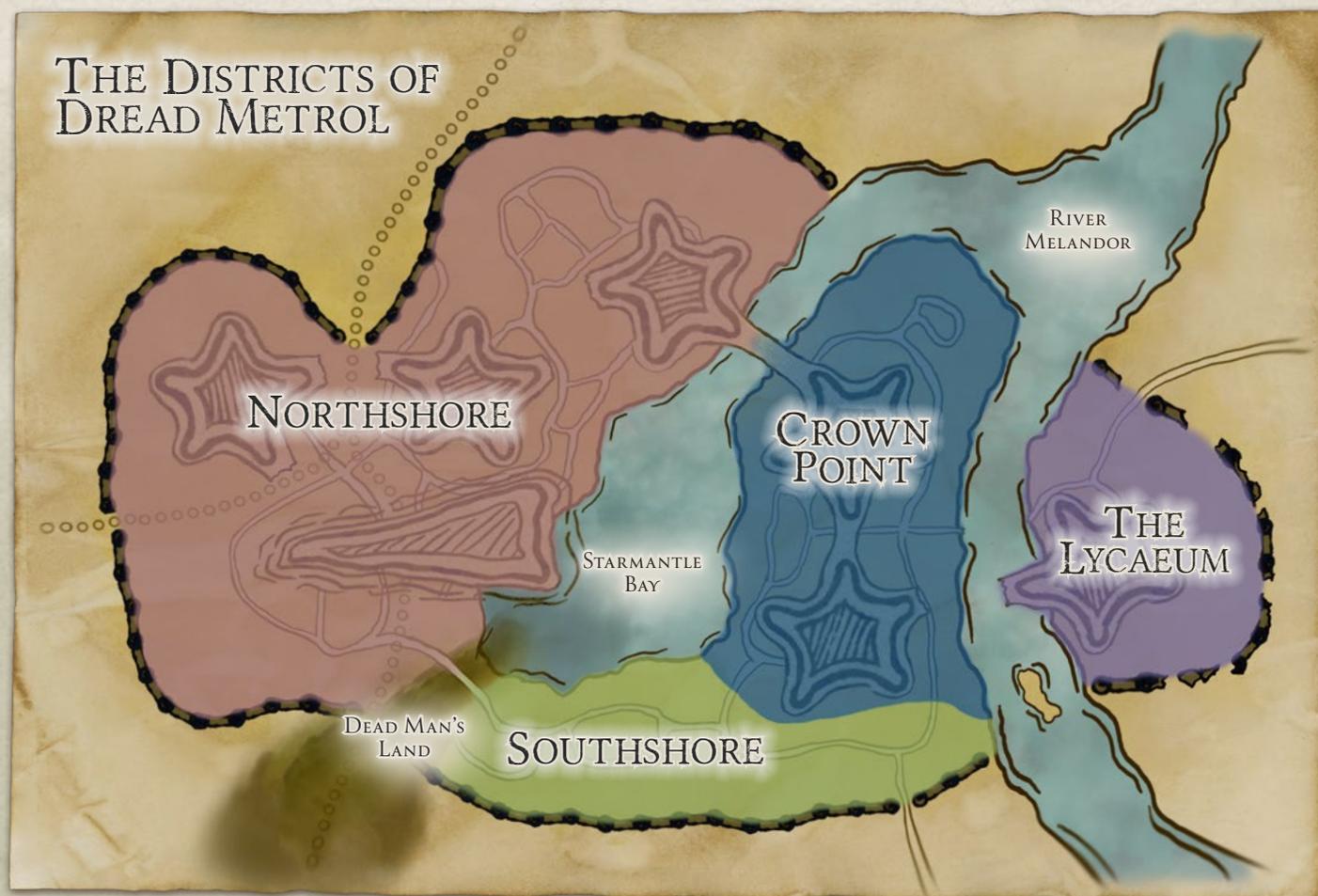
THE VERMISHARD OF WAR

The Palace of War is the seat of Cyre's military leadership, where commanders plotted the course of the Last War. The spire below the palace is a fortress, and the Vermishard is surrounded by garrisons and drill yards. In many ways, the Forge is the cornerstone of Metrol's defense, as the city relies on the Reconstructed and the weapons produced by the Forge. But the Vermishard of War is the heart of the traditional army, and this is where people pressed into service are brought.

CROWN POINT

The peninsula of Crown Point extends between Starmantle Bay and the River Melandor. It serves as the seat of the Royal Vermishard and the Vermishard of War. While the civic administration of Metrol is largely based in the Vermishard of Law, Crown Point was once the heart of Cyre and Galifar itself. Each of the Five Nations and grand duchies had embassies in Crown Point, though these were shuttered early in the Last

LAURA HIRSBRUNNER



War. The Vermishard of War always maintained garrisons in the quarter, and over the last four years, almost every available building has been converted to military use. Crown Bridge—which once connected Crown Point to the Lycaenum—has been destroyed, and anyone entering from Southshore must pass through a host of checkpoints and barricades. Though much of Metrol still operates as a city, Crown Point is effectively an active military camp.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

The Royal Palace stands at the summit of the Royal Vermishard, where Queen Dannel watches the city from her high perch.

The Armory of Galifar once held the most impressive engines of war possessed by the Five Nations. While most everything with any value has long since been deployed, the Armory holds some interest as a museum containing obsolete weaponry and the regalia of former monarchs.

THE LYCAEUM

The Lycaenum is the easternmost quarter of Metrol and has much in common with the University district of Sharn. Cut off from the rest of Metrol by the River Melandor, it is a city within a city designed to support the student population. The Lycaenum was the first section of Metrol to suffer significant breaches, and in 996 YK Queen Dannel declared it indefensible. All surviving citizens of Metrol were evacuated and the Crown Bridge—the only bridge to the western city—was destroyed. For the last two years, it has been left to fester and rot.

The Lycaenum, clustered around the Vermishard of Lore, included a large public school, a few smaller boarding schools, and several universities—the most prestigious of which was the Vermishard Academy atop the central spire. The area also included taverns catering to the student population and housing for the staff (some of which was in the Lycaenum's Undercity). To the east, the wall surrounding the Lycaenum has been shattered in multiple locations. Many major structures have been completely destroyed by arcane bombardment, and the streets are overrun with undead.

The primary undead found in the Lycaenum are ghosts, zombies, and shadows. Most of the



zombies are infectious; any humanoid killed by a Lycaenum zombie rises as a zombie after one minute. Scouts report that most of the undead continue to go through the basic motions of their lives; the zombies aren't sentient and don't speak, but they still shuffle between classrooms and gather in the taverns. However, as soon as they catch sight of any living creatures, they immediately become hostile.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

The Demesne of Shadow was one of the largest and most important enclaves of House Phiarlan in Khorvaire. Aside from being the seat of the house matriarch, it was the finest institution for studying what Phiarlan calls the “arts of deception.” This encompasses the artistic applications of illusion magic, as well as the broader elements of playing a role and deceiving an audience—vital skills for both actors and orators. The fate of the demesne is one of the great mysteries of Metrol. Following the first night of the siege, the Demesne of Shadow was discovered to be completely abandoned—there were no Phiarlan heirs left in the enclave, and precious few left elsewhere in Metrol. They disappeared with their meals still at the table and performances left half-staged. Most people believe this proves the Phiarlans were traitors working with the Karnathi forces, and they slipped out before the siege. But shadows move strangely in the empty demesne, and some say that the Phiarlans are still there, trapped within the shadows.

Olladra Smiles was a tavern and performance hall beloved by the students of the Wynarn Institute, who often called it just “the Smile.” While far smaller than similar establishments on Southshore, many famous entertainers played their first shows on their stage.

The Royal Library of Galifar was located in the spire of the Vermishard of Lore. Its grand shelves held both literature and historical records dating back a thousand years.

The Wynarn Institute of Art was a respected arcane academy specializing in illusion magic and the artistic applications of magic. The institute contained a remarkable museum, including its famous Hall of Kings that allowed visitors to interact with illusions of great leaders of the past.

NORTHSHORE

Northshore is the largest quarter of Metrol, encompassing everything northwest of Starmantle Bay, including four of the Vermishards. In pre-siege Metrol, the Market Triangle—the region between the Kennels, the Forge, and the Vermishard of Gold—was the center of commerce and home to the enclaves of the dragonmarked houses. East of the Forge, the North Docks were primarily devoted to commercial traffic and the bulk of Metrol's industry. Northshore also contained three major residential wards. Boldrei's Hearth, west of the Vermishard of Gold, primarily housed merchants. Gilded Arch surrounded what is now the Kennels, but once contained many noble estates. North Point lay adjacent to the Vermishard of Law; most of its residents were career civil servants, members of the Queen's Watch, and others distinguished by their service to Cyre or Metrol.

Today, Northshore holds the bulk of Metrol's civilian population. Gilded Arch and the Kennels were seized and devoted to the war effort; House Vadalis breeds living weapons in the Kennels, and the army has established garrisons here to support the western walls. Most of the businesses in Market Triangle have been repurposed to house refugees—both survivors evacuated from the Lycaenum and from compromised neighborhoods. The Vermishard of Gold collapsed due to bombardment, falling into Starmantle Bay and crushing the Kundarak enclave and a host of other businesses. The Forge and the North Docks have ramped up industrial production, focusing on salvaging offensive and defensive resources—including people, as the Cannith corpse collectors regularly deposit their bounty at the Forge. The Vermishard of Law is the seat of the Queen's Watch and the infamous Shepherds, and suspected traitors are regularly executed in the plaza around the spire. North Point is the neighborhood least affected by the siege; many residents have taken in refugees, and there are barricades and Watch checkpoints, but it largely functions as it always has.

In the past, passage between Northshore and Southshore was simple, but during the first year of the siege, the southwestern gate of the city fell. Thousands died in the subsequent battle, including most of House Deneith and House Tharashk's elite forces. However, the troops were able to stem the tide and ultimately raised new walls sealing off the two quarters. This has left a narrow strip between

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the two districts known as Dead Man's Land. This cursed region is covered by a low fog that obscures visibility—not as thick as the Mists, but enough to hide deadly threats. Dead Man's Land is infested with ghouls and other undead, and any humanoid who dies within the area rises as a ghoul after one minute. The Bridge of the Dead—described below—is the sole overland passage across Dead Man's Land. Traffic between quarters must either cross the Bridge of the Dead, cross the high bridge between the Royal Vermishard and the Vermishard of Law, or travel across Starmantle Bay in one of the remaining boats. It's also theoretically possible to travel between quarters through the Undercity, but the sections below Dead Man's Land share its curse and are infested with ghouls.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

The Bridge of the Dead is a grisly relic of the brutal battle that occurred when Karrnathi forces breached one of the southern gates. The monstrous mercenaries of House Tharashk played a crucial role in containing the breach. During their heroic last stand, a squad of medusas created a makeshift wall from the bodies of the attackers—a barrier formed from intertwined, petrified skeletons and zombies. In the months that followed, Cannith engineers used mortar and quickstone to build a bridge on this gruesome foundation. The Bridge of the Dead is the only safe passage between Northshore and Southshore. All traffic must pass through heavily secured checkpoints, and people without official business may have to bribe guards in order to cross the bridge.

The Vault was atop the Vermishard of Gold, embedded into the spire. This held many of Galifar's greatest treasures, along with the Royal Mint. When the Vermishard collapsed, the Vault fell into Starmantle Bay. A properly equipped team could salvage wonders from its extradimensional vaults, but its magical wards are still in place and there could be undead horrors in the depths of the bay.

Osserak Manor. Located in Gilded Arch, this was once the estate of a wealthy Aurum Concordian, but it was seized early in the Siege and converted into a western command center for the army. Concordian Dalen Osserak had many secrets hidden in their mansion, and adventurers working with the Unbroken resistance might infiltrate the estate to recover these.

SOUTHSHORE

Running along the southern edge of Starmantle Bay, this small quarter was the entertainment hub of Metrol and a center for tourism. It contained a host of inns, theaters, and restaurants, as well as the major temples and shrines of Metrol. Most of Southshore's permanent residents were associated with the businesses found here.

Southshore has been hard-hit by the siege. While not entirely abandoned, several neighborhoods—notably the temple ward—have been ravaged by plague and lingering curses, and the Queen's Watch has sealed many of the grand theaters. However, some of the faithful are willing to risk the dangers to remain close to the seat of the Sovereigns and their faith, and the sealed buildings can be an excellent place for the Unbroken to meet in secret.



To the east, Southshore merges directly with Crown Point. To the west, the cursed stretch known as Dead Man's Land blocks passage to Northshore. Travelers who wish to reach Northshore must cross the Bridge of the Dead or find a way across Starmantle Bay.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

The Cathedral of the Sovereign Host was the grandest temple to the Sovereigns in Khorvaire, expanded over the centuries by kings and queens seeking to show their faith. Around it stand colossal statues of the Sovereigns. Two years ago, it was struck by a malevolent curse that animated the statues of Dol Dorn and Dol Arrah. These two massive golems laid waste to much of the cathedral and the surrounding area, then turned on one another and fought until they were shattered. Most believe the temple remains infused with lingering deadly magics, and the Queen's Watch has sealed it. The Shepherds urge the people of Metrol to place their faith in Queen Dannel; however, many defy this edict and continue to make offerings around the cathedral.

The Metrol Arena, the largest outdoor colosseum in the Five Nations, was once the site of grand sporting events and performances by House Phiarlan's most celebrated entertainers. Now the arena serves as an emergency relief center. Here, House Ghallanda distributes gruel to the hungry, and House Jorasco provides basic medical services as well as offering a quick end to those whose suffering is too great—while Cannith corpse collectors stand by to collect the bodies.

The Bastion of the Silver Flame was a fortress temple that maintained a garrison of templars in addition to conducting religious services. The templars served with distinction during the initial siege, but challenged many of the steps Queen Dannel took in the year that followed—notably, weaponizing lycanthropy and infecting the Shepherds with it. In the weeks that followed, the templars were declared to be traitors and agents of Thrane working to overthrow the Queen. Almost all of them were killed, and the Bastion is now a stronghold of the Queen's Watch.

THE UNDERCITY

Metrol was designed to be a showpiece, a vision of what Galifar could be—and its less attractive aspects were pushed underground, making use of old Dhakaani foundations. There are no slums on the surface of Metrol because they're all hidden below the surface. The Undercity contains the sewers and the actual workings of the city, along with vast tenement housing and anything considered too unsightly to have on the surface. The Undercity stretches across Metrol, each section largely reflecting the character of the quarter above it. So the Undercity beneath Market Triangle houses seedy businesses, while the Undercity beneath Southshore includes both cheap housing for actors and venues for the lowest forms of entertainment. The Lycaenum has an Undercity of its own, but it's still separated from the rest of the city by the River Melandor.

While the Undercity is largely protected from direct bombardment, it has suffered outbreaks of plague and contagious curses. There have also been a few cases where undead—typically ghouls or shadows—have somehow penetrated into the Undercity. It's relatively easy for the Queen's Watch to seal off affected sections, and they've done so in response to several outbreaks ... often leaving the potentially infected residents to die.

VENTURING BEYOND THE WALLS

The gates of Metrol are sealed and heavily fortified. Adventurers working with the army or the Queen's Watch can leave the city and return, though it's no trivial affair; the Shepherds closely examine anyone who returns from the Bloody Fields to ensure that they haven't been contaminated by Karrnathi forces. The resistance movement known as the Unbroken maintains a few secret passages beneath the walls, though these are well hidden, lest they be found by the Watch and shut down. Adventurers operating on their own can potentially find a way out of the city—diving into the River Melandor or dropping down a wall between patrols—but they'll have to convince the suspicious guards to allow them back through the gates.

The Bloody Fields show the traffic of four years of constant war. There are no corpses or bones; all remains are taken by the Karrnathi forces each night, sure to return as undead soldiers or fused to horrifying engines of war. However, the fields lie



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strewn with ruined siege engines, scraps of armor, shattered weapons, and other signs of war. The scarred and pitted landscape holds several massive craters scattered across the fields, along with a few makeshift fortifications and command centers, though the Karrns never hold their positions.

The Karrnathi forces attack every night, but as dawn approaches, they retreat back into the Mists, which surround the city at a distance of about one mile. During the day, Metrol's army regularly sends patrols out in hopes of salvaging whatever can be recovered immediately along the walls. However, these patrols won't venture any further away from the city; even during the day, there are many dangers in the Bloody Fields. Any adventurer brave or foolish enough to brave the fields may encounter hidden blast disks—mystical mines that may explode or trigger spell effects. Any “corpses” they spot are surely dormant undead and need to be burned from a distance. There may also be skeletons and zombies buried just below the surface, corpses that will burst from the soil if they are disturbed. There are tormented ghosts and specters, remnants of Cyrans killed early on. And there are other regions that are simply tainted by malign curses, which can cause disease or have other lingering negative effects. Casting the *detect magic* or *detect evil and good* spell can help explorers avoid many of these threats, but it's always a dangerous journey.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

The Colossus is a towering warforged colossus that was stationed at Metrol when the siege began. The Karrnathi forces somehow managed to bring it down, though no one is sure exactly how. Some people hold out hope that while the colossus's crew is long dead, the warforged itself might still be alive—laid low by some malevolent curse, but potentially able to be restored and returned to service. Many expeditions have been sent to either repair the colossus or salvage supplies over the course of the siege, but none have returned—which suggests that there are undead forces or worse residing within the colossus itself.

The Staff is the remnants of the massive *siege staff*^{EXE} the Karrns used to bring down the Vermishard of Gold. The weapon shattered, and the Karrns haven't fielded such a powerful weapon since. When intact, the Staff was over two hundred feet long and nearly twenty feet in diameter. The wood from the Staff is extremely useful for creating *long rods*^{EXE} and other smaller weapons, so the army occasionally sends out squads to salvage pieces of the Staff.

The Wreck of the Morning Star. The *Morning Star* was a Lyrandar airship that was shot down during the first day of the siege. The ship crashed near the edge of the Mists and its wreck has never been explored. It's possible that the *Morning Star* was carrying a valuable secret cargo, and if the elemental core is intact, either the Forge or the Unbroken might be able to find a use for it. However, the wreck could easily be haunted or occupied by other hostile undead.

The Mists are an unbroken dome that surrounds Metrol at a distance of about a mile. No one who's ventured into the Mists has returned—at least not alive, though most do eventually return after being bound into undead service as part of the Karrnathi forces. The Mists block all forms of divination and teleportation magic, and no one knows if they are just a thin barrier or if they extend indefinitely. Clearly the Karrnathi forces have a main camp, but is this within the Mists or beyond them?

BREAKER MAXIMUS



QUEEN DANDEL: DARKLORD OF METROL

A casual scholar might wonder why Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn would become the Darklord of Metrol. Crowned at seventeen, Queen Dannel—whose story is told at the start of this chapter—has guided her nation through four decades of war. Throughout her reign, Dannel has been beloved by her people, celebrated as a champion who stood firm against the enemies of the nation. But the iron was always within Dannel; the siege of Metrol simply peeled back the skin and revealed the iron fist that lies beneath it.

Dannel is convinced that she alone can save both Metrol and Cyre. She genuinely believes in Cyre, and in the courage and capabilities of the Cyran people. She's certain that all true Cyrans support her and are willing to make the sacrifices required to triumph—and this means that anyone who doesn't support her is no true Cyran. Dannel is a remarkable person—a brilliant strategist and an exceptional artificer—but her hubris and paranoia are consuming her. This is reflected by her physical transformation, as she replaces weak flesh with leather and steel. There's still a part of her that cares about her people and hates to see them suffer; but this is being squeezed out by her need to achieve victory, whatever the cost.

The common people love Dannel, but they don't know that she arranged the death of her father, that she may have sacrificed Prince Brusst, or that she might even be fueling the warforged colossuses with Cyran souls—and these are just a few particularly dramatic examples. Across those forty years, Dannel's pride has driven her down ever-darker paths. Even before the siege, she had come to believe that only she could lead Cyre to victory and that any sacrifice was justified—and it is entirely possible that she set the Mourning in motion, that she was willing to risk the destruction of the entire nation for a chance at victory.

The tragedy is that Dannel—a brave, bold military commander—truly does love her people and her nation. But looking down from the Royal Vermishard, she approaches the siege as a game of Conqueror or Chess, becoming obsessed with victory and losing sight of the cost. She loves her people in the abstract but doesn't realize that she has become a greater threat to them than the



enemies she battles. She believes that the people of Cyre are willing to make any sacrifice, and many of them are—but she doesn't realize just how horrifying those sacrifices are.

Dannel ir'Wynarn is the absolute ruler of Metrol. She has the loyalty of the army and the Queen's Watch, and the dragonmarked houses follow her lead. She addresses the people daily, and most of the common folk believe that **THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US** and that **DANNEL IS WATCHING**. And she *is* watching—but from a great height, from which it's easy to see people as pawns. Dannel hasn't left the Royal Vermishard in over three years, always requiring her generals and commanders to come to her. It's possible that she *can't* leave—that there is something in her arcane workshop that is sustaining her half-construct form. However, it's more likely that she doesn't want to see what's become of her city—while she can look down from on high, she doesn't want to face the suffering people endure on the streets.

DANNEL'S TORMENT

Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn, as the queen of Cyre and monarch of Metrol, wields absolute power—and yet she remains burdened by the following things.

Victory. Dannel is absolutely convinced that she can defeat the besieging forces, and more specifically, that *only* she can defeat the besieging forces. And yet, despite her best efforts and the countless sacrifices she has made, she's been unable to win any sort of decisive victory.

Paranoia. Because of her failures, Dannel is plagued by paranoia. She believes herself betrayed by traitors or incompetent underlings, and these must be purged so she can save her people. Likewise, she hates what she sees as her own weaknesses getting in the way, which ties to her continuing efforts to replace her flesh with steel. She must be harder and stronger, because only she can save her people.

Sacrifice. On a rational level, Dannel knows that she is feeding her own people to the war machine, killing even more of them than the attacking forces are. But she refuses to truly acknowledge this even to herself, convincing herself that the Cyrans are willing to make these sacrifices and that they are on the verge of turning the tide.

DANNEL'S POWERS AND DOMINION

Queen Dannel is a terrifying figure. She has always been charismatic and imposing, a proud woman with long dark hair and piercing green eyes. Since the siege began, she has suffered grievous injuries, consequently replacing her flesh with steel and wood. Today, almost half of her body is constructed, including one of her arms and one of her

legs. While Dannel believes that her remarkable reconstruction is the result of her own talents as an artificer, it's actually the result of the nightmare logic of the domain; were you to cut away her existing flesh, you would find steel beneath. Dannel's condition is as much allegory as artifice; the bitter battle of the siege is revealing the steel that was always hidden within the glove.

Dannel's stat block, provided in the "Roleplaying Dannel" section, represents her skill as a gifted artificer combined with the remarkable physical abilities of her reconstructed form. She has several additional powers, as described below.

THE VOICE OF METROL

While Dannel never leaves the Royal Vermishard, she regularly addresses her people. Using her Voice of Metrol trait, her voice can be heard throughout Metrol. This acts much like a *magic mouth* spell; it's not that it's thunderously loud, but rather that it emanates from the city itself. Even someone sealed in an Undercity vault can hear Dannel's address.

In addition to her ability to speak publicly, Dannel can speak directly to any individual with whom she is familiar that is within the walls of Metrol. She often uses this ability to issue orders to her minions. When Dannel speaks in this way, there is no word limit. The creature hears and understands the message in their mind, recognizes her as the sender, and can answer in a like manner immediately with a short message of 50 words or less.

So even if the adventurers don't meet Dannel for a while, they should still feel her presence. For example, the DM could open or close a game session with a public address from Dannel. On a more personal level, if one of the adventurers draws Dannel's interest, she could use the Voice of Metrol to have an ongoing conversation with them—likely trying to win them to her side. Dannel truly believes in the righteousness of her cause, and such conversations would likely take the form of Dannel justifying her decisions and challenging the character's interpretation of events. Dannel can't see what's going on around the people she speaks to, but she may play up the fact that she can "find" them wherever they are.



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Many of the common people still believe, as the propaganda posters say, that **THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US**. Others fear the queen and her Shepherds even more than the undead, but few will voice these sentiments out loud ... after all, **DANNEL IS WATCHING**. Despite what people believe, however, Dannel isn't always watching and there's no way for a player character to initiate a conversation; they can only talk when the queen chooses to reach out to them, and Dannel can't actually see where the adventurers are or what they're doing.

This ability is a part of Dannel herself, and not a tool that others can use; however, she has an eldritch machine in her workshop that she treats as the source of this power. She goes to her audience chamber whenever she wishes to speak to the masses, and she even believes this is a device she has created—but in actuality, the Voice of Metrol is part of her, reflecting her deep bond to the Domain of Dread.

SEALED BORDERS

Dread Metrol is surrounded by dead-gray mists—none who have ventured into them ever returned. If the adventurers brave the Mists, they'll likely discover it's impossible to leave, eventually reemerging on the Bloody Fields—though they might first encounter undead forces within the fog. While it is Dannel's obstinate pursuit of victory that holds the borders closed, she is not aware of this and can't consciously choose to open them.

NEVER SURRENDER

Dannel cannot conceive of her own defeat, and even if she wished to die, Metrol wouldn't allow it. Her body will eventually regenerate from even grievous injuries, further replacing flesh with steel. If her body were completely destroyed, a new Dannel would be constructed within her workshops; if the workshops were destroyed, she would appear in an unknown workshop hidden in the Undercity. She cannot be truly defeated until she chooses to give up the fight.

ARCANE SCIENCE

Dannel doesn't possess the Mark of Making, but she's a brilliant arcane scientist in her own right, and holds a special appreciation for constructs and the power of the soul. This isn't precisely necromancy, as she doesn't animate the dead, but she understands how souls can be tapped and used as a source of power. She's always been a remarkable artificer, but thanks to the nightmare logic of Ravenloft, her abilities have dramatically increased; she can produce extraordinary weapons and tools that impress even Starrin d'Cannith. When encountered in the Royal Vermishard, there's an excellent chance that she'll be working in her laboratory.

ROLEPLAYING DANNEL

Queen Dannel is proud and imperious. She believes that she is the rightful queen—not only of Cyre, but of Galifar—and she believes that she *will* overcome all obstacles and lead her people to victory. With that said, she is charismatic, confident—and beyond that, she is Cyran. She appreciates art and wit. She's clever and quick to laugh. She doesn't *feel* like an iron-handed tyrant (never mind that she literally has an iron hand). It's only when she is pressed or when her beliefs are deeply challenged that her pride and arrogance come to the fore; then it becomes clear that she is clinging to her confidence in defiance of logic, and she won't accept any reality that conflicts with this.

Personality Trait. “I embody the Cyran appreciation—our love of art, magic, and culture. I will fight to preserve these things, and I will win.”

Ideal. “I alone can save the nation. I am Cyre, and the nation lives or dies with me.”

Bond. “I care deeply about my people, but I know that they'd willingly sacrifice for my victory.”

Flaw. “I can overcome any obstacle. If I'm denied victory, it's the work of traitors or incompetent underlings, and I will deal with them.”

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LAIR ACTIONS

While Dannel is in her palace in Dread Metrol, she can take lair actions as long as she isn't incapacitated. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Dannel can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. She can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- Dannel binds life to her domain. Each living creature of Dannel's choice within her palace that she has seen at least once before must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, Dannel knows that creature's location, any magical effect causing the creature to be invisible or able to move to another plane of existence is dispelled, and if the creature is hidden from Dannel, it is no longer hidden from her.

- Dannel exerts her control over constructed beings. One construct or warforged of Dannel's choice that she can see must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target must make a melee weapon attack against one creature of Dannel's choice within reach.
- Dannel's royal requests carry great weight. She innately casts *command*. Her spellcasting ability for it is Intelligence (spell save DC 18).
- The queen's memories of a grander age of Cyre bring light and majesty to her realm—for just a moment. Creatures that Dannel can see must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target is charmed by Dannel until the end of its next turn. When the charmed condition ends, the target is frightened of Dannel until the end of its next turn.

DANNEL IR'WYNARN, RECONSTRUCTED QUEEN

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +9, Int +10, Cha +8

Skills Athletics +9, Arcana +15, History +10, Insight +6, Perception +6, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8

Damage Resistances poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish, Giant

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Dannel fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Reconstructed Contingencies (Recharges after a Short or a Long Rest). If Dannel is reduced to 0 hit points, she doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, she regains 1 hit point and 40 temporary hit points, and she assumes a more complete construct form with the following benefits, which last for 1 minute or until she is reduced to 0 hit points:

- Her type changes to construct.
- She gains immunity to poison and psychic damage.
- She gains 40 temporary hit points at the start of each of her turns.
- She is surrounded with an antilife aura. Each creature other than undead and constructs that starts its turn within 10 feet of her must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it is pushed 10 feet away from her and is unable to move within 10 feet of her until the start of its next turn.

Spellcasting. Dannel is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following artificer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *mage hand*, *message*, *fire bolt*, *shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *absorb elements*, *alarm*, *Tasha's caustic brew*^{TCE}

2nd level (3 slots): *arcane lock*, *enhance ability*, *heat metal*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *haste*, *intellect fortress*

4th level (3 slots): *fabricate*, *freedom of movement*, *stone shape*

5th level (1 slot): *Bigby's hand*, *wall of stone*

Through the Mists. As a bonus action, Dannel can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space she can see.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dannel makes three weapon attacks.

Battlefist of Dorn. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage, plus 4 (1d8) force damage and the target is pushed 15 feet away from Dannel.

Battlefist of Azur. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage, plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Dannel. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Battlefist of Arrah. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage, plus 4 (1d8) fire damage and the target is set aflame. While aflame, the target takes 3 (1d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns until it uses an action to douse the flames.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Overload. Dannel makes one weapon attack.

Artifice Mastery. Dannel casts a spell of 3rd level or lower with a casting time of one action.

Majesty of Cyre (Costs 2 Actions). Dannel casts a spell of 5th level or lower with a casting time of one action.

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FORCES IN METROL

Four years ago, Metrol was a thriving metropolis with all the intrigues you could find in Fairhaven or Sharn. Over the course of the siege, many of these institutions have either been eliminated or greatly reduced in influence. Aurum Concordians have had their estates and assets seized. Criminals have been killed or pressed into service—some of the most zealous inquisitors in the Queen’s Vigilant Wardens were criminals before the siege. No one can find a way to get messages through the Mists, and agents of the Dreaming Dark are stranded just as everyone else is; it seems that even the citizens’ nightmares are manufactured in the Mists, and sleep allows no escape. So while there are still criminals, cultists, and spies in Metrol, most are now lone wolves cut off from their former resources and operations. Some could ally with adventurers or the Unbroken; others may be desperate and just as dangerous as the undead.

The queen is essentially a faction in her own right; the army and the Queen’s Watch follow her commands, but she may also have her own personal agents—troubleshooters she trusts more than the major institutions. A party of adventurers could fill this role as the queen’s own elite agents—or their rivals could.

Beyond Queen Dannel herself, this section discusses a few other forces that play significant roles in Dread Metrol.

THE ARMY

Metrol is a city under siege. Soldiers are stationed on every wall and watchtower, and troops constantly prepare for the nightly assault. Engineers repair damaged barricades and ready the defenses. Guards patrol the streets, searching for any signs of a new incursion. And as always, press gangs look for folk who aren’t serving a useful purpose; soldiers are killed every night on the walls, and the army is constantly being forced to lower its standards as it looks for warm bodies.

The army is an omnipresent force in Metrol, but it’s likely to remain in the background, since within the city, adventurers are more likely to have problems with the Queen’s Watch. The army is focused outward, on guarding and maintaining the walls and readying for the next assault. The main threat that they pose to adventurers is the danger of press

gangs, who may try to force competent adventurers into service. However, press gangs recognize their limitations and aren’t likely to threaten adventurers who look *too* dangerous—though a recruiting sergeant may certainly urge such adventurers to volunteer to aid the city.

Half-starved volunteers can’t be expected to be a match for the Karrnathi undead, so the backbone of the Cyran defense is the Iron Tide. Once, these were elite soldiers and exceptional warforged troops, but over the course of the siege, the line between the two has blurred. House Cannith has fitted maimed soldiers with warforged grafts and repaired damaged warforged using alchemically infused organs and limbs. As a result, it’s often hard to tell whether a member of the Iron Tide began as a warforged or a creature of flesh and blood; these blended soldiers are known as the Reconstructed. While they serve in the army, there are always rumors that Lord Starrin d’Cannith has implanted subtle enchantments while working on the Iron Tide—and that should it ever suit his needs, the Gorgon could seize control of the soldiers.

Adventurers could choose to work with the army. However, at the moment, the army doesn’t have any strategy that could lead to victory. They have no knowledge of the full strength of the Karrnathi forces or any idea what lies beyond the Mists, and for the moment, they are focused solely on defense. Adventurers could be charged with special missions—salvage the Colossus! Explore the Mists! However, generally speaking, the army should be an obstacle more than an ally. Dread Metrol embodies the horrors of war, not its triumphs, and the army is plagued by arrogant officers, low morale, poorly distributed supplies, and any other problems you can imagine.



DRAGONMARKED HOUSES

The dragonmarked houses operate independently of all nations and took no sides in the Last War. However, within the first year of the siege, it became clear that survival outweighed any concerns of commerce. For now, the houses are staunch allies of the queen and provide their services free of charge ... though you can be sure that if the siege is ever broken, Starrin d'Cannith and Vera d'Vadalis plan to send Dannel a bill. Members of House Cannith, Ghallanda, Jorasco, and Vadalis are considered vital to the survival of the city. Active heirs have uniforms and are usually shown leniency by press gangs and the Watch—but only as long as they are carrying out the business of their house, which player characters may find disturbing.

Many of the traditional dragonmarked services aren't currently available in Metrol. However, the houses have accomplished many remarkable—and troubling—things over the past four years. House Vadalis creates monsters in the Kennels, and House Ghallanda has developed a seemingly inexhaustible source of food. In part, these discoveries have been enabled by techniques that were banned and suppressed in the pre-siege world, and they're also a testament to the genius of the people involved. But it's also quite likely that these breakthroughs are tied to the Dark Powers—that these techniques *couldn't* have been developed in Eberron and don't entirely follow the laws of arcane science. Can this knowledge be taken back to Eberron by the people who escape the Mists? Could House Ghallanda add ragout to the standard menu of the Gold Dragon Inn, or can it only be created in Dread Metrol?

HOUSE CANNITH

House Cannith has always had a strong presence in Metrol and occupied the Vermishard known as the Forge long before the war began. Today, the house is absolutely vital to Metrol's survival. Cannith magewrights in the Forge and North Docks work tirelessly to maintain the equipment of the army and the Watch, along with constantly searching for resources they can turn into new weapons. Since the start of the siege, those resources include people. As mentioned above, the army relies on Cannith's Reconstructed, a fusion of warforged and organic soldiers. Cannith corpse collectors patrol the city, trading ration chits for

the bodies of the dead. The collectors don't care where a corpse comes from or how it died; they're just here to collect.

Cannith's primary production facilities lie at the base of the Forge and below the ground, and it's there that the Reconstructed are created and maintained. Cannith has taken over all of the smithies and other facilities in Northshore; here, magewrights mend damaged arms and armor. The higher levels of the Forge hold laboratories where Cannith continues to develop new innovations. These are usually new weapons to help with the siege, but if anyone is working on an eldritch machine that could return Metrol to Eberron, odds are good it's in the Forge.

House Cannith operations are managed by Starrin d'Cannith, the last baron of the house. He's called the Gorgon, even among members of his own house, in part reflecting his powerful physique and imposing personality—but beyond that, the gorgon is the symbol of House Cannith, and to many people, Starrin *is* House Cannith. A skilled artificer, he's been involved with many of the key weapon developments of the past decade, all while helping the house maintain its delicate course as it sells weapons to all sides. He's a charismatic man who can somehow convince a ruler that he's their best friend even as he sells weapons to their enemies—and so it is with Starrin and Queen Dannel. In the present day, Starrin may be Dannel's closest confidant, trusted even over her generals and the commander of the Queen's Watch. Starrin respects Dannel's skills as an artificer and he's worked with her to perfect the techniques used to create the Reconstructed—techniques both Starrin and Dannel have used to strengthen their own bodies. So Starrin truly considers the queen to be a friend—but the Gorgon has always put his house above any friendships. It's possible that Starrin has the ability to seize control of the Reconstructed; he has no reason to turn on Dannel at the moment, but if he could find a way to return the Forge to Eberron, he would do so without hesitation, even if it meant abandoning the queen.

HOUSE GHALLANDA

House Ghallanda was always well represented in Metrol, but its members were scattered innkeepers and tavernmasters. When the siege began, it quickly became apparent that House Ghallanda would play a vital role in the city's survival. Metrol



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was never a self-sufficient city, and it relied on the surrounding farms and villages for food. Queen Dannel had stockpiled dried meat and other staples in preparation for a siege, but these supplies were never intended to last for years. This is where Ghallanda comes in. The Mark of Hospitality allows its bearers to purify spoiled food and even to conjure food and water from empty air. Working with the queen, the local Ghallanda viceroy—Lady Jola, better known as the beloved innkeeper of the Rusty Crown—gathered together all of Ghallanda’s marked heirs in Metrol. Dannel granted them the estates of the ir’Delias family in the Vermishard now known as the Kennels, and they converted the residences into a house enclave. From the heights of the Kennels, Jola and her battalion of chefs fight famine.

This may sound innocent enough, but the truth is a little more disturbing. The powers of the Mark of Hospitality are limited. Using the powers of their marks and the focus items they have available, the heirs can conjure delightful meals capable of feeding up to three hundred people ... and these delicacies are reserved for the queen, her favored advisors, and other leaders of Metrol. So someone dining with the queen can eat roast tribex—it’s not real, but it *feels* real, and that’s enough for most people. The house can also produce around a thousand goodberries each day, most of which are distributed to workers at the Forge and the Kennels. What about the tens of thousands of other people unaccounted for? To feed the masses, House Ghallanda has developed something it calls ragout—a bitter gray gruel with soft chunks of unknown provenance. Ragout is deeply unpleasant, but two bowls of ragout each day provide the nutrition needed to survive. Only a few people refuse to eat it (including many heirs of House Ghallanda, who instead live on goodberries), and House Ghallanda distributes ragout across the city. The largest food bank is in the Metrol Arena in Southshore, but many inns and taverns that were directly operated by Ghallanda—including all of the Gold Dragon Inns in Metrol—also serve as gruel kitchens. The supply of ragout isn’t entirely limitless; people have to have ration chits, and some are victims of theft or prefer to trade their chits for other things. So while it’s keeping famine at bay, there are still people starving in Metrol.

The recipe of the ragout is a closely guarded secret. While ragout is prepared in gruel kitchens across the city, the base is made in the Kennels enclave then distributed to the final chefs; most Ghallanda heirs don’t actually know the secret, and those who do almost never leave the Kennels. The truth might be horrifying, or it could simply be disgusting—but if there wasn’t *something* disturbing about it, Ghallanda wouldn’t keep it a secret. The What’s In The Ragout table provides a few possible answers.

Lady Jola d’Ghallanda was the most beloved innkeeper in Metrol before the siege, and she remains the perfect hostess. She can light up any room, and always has something positive to say. At the same time, it’s possible that her delightful demeanor is a carefully polished facade—and that beneath that mask, she’s a ruthless manipulator who’s always ready to throw an enemy into the ragout.

WHAT’S IN THE RAGOUT?

d4 Secret Ingredient

- 1 Whatever the Cannith corpse collectors can’t find a use for.
- 2 Troll! Ghallanda acquired trolls from House Tharashk and worked with Jorasco to develop a form of Droaamite grist.
- 3 A newly developed strain of rapidly growing fungus. It may have a hive-mind sentience, but Lady Jola is certain there are no side effects to eating it.
- 4 Waste products reclaimed from the sewers. It’s disgusting, but there’s nothing actually wrong with it.



ISWENYI

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HOUSE JORASCO

While House Jorasco is celebrated for saving lives, throughout the history of the house, there have been heirs who have found ways to twist the gifts of their dragonmarks, using their powers to create diseases or cause wounds. In the past, these “nosomatic surgeons” have been condemned whenever they have been found, their work destroyed and their lives forfeit. But that was before the Last War. Over the last century, some within Jorasco have learned how to use their marks to craft tailored plagues and other magical bioweapons. When Beldane d’Jorasco’s nosomatic work was discovered, he was excoriated from the house and sentenced to execution, but the Champions of the Bell extracted him before he could be killed. Since that time, he has been a secret guest of the queen, conducting his experiments in the arcane workshops of the Royal Vermishard. He concealed his identity for years, but when the siege began, he shed his disguise and suggested a course of action to the queen. Dannel gathered all of the Jorasco heirs in Metrol, establishing a new enclave in the Vermishard now known as the Kennels (displacing the ir’Acabra family from their estates). Beldane—or Lord Pale, as he prefers to be called—was installed as the commander of this facility.

Under Beldane’s leadership, Jorasco has established triage centers across Metrol, the largest of

which is in the Metrol Arena in Southshore. These are largely operated by unmarked heirs, proficient in mundane medicine but lacking the magical powers of their marked cousins. Because medical supplies are so limited, these heirs are tasked with judging both who can be saved and who is worth saving. Should a patient fail these criteria, the heirs—who have become known as the Mercies—provide a swift death and pass the body to the Cannith corpse collectors. The Mercies are also responsible for evaluating plague outbreaks and afflicted curses, determining whether the threat can be eliminated or if the affected area must be abandoned and sealed off.

Those heirs with magical talents aren’t wasted on the masses. Some serve with the army, healing soldiers wounded during the nightly sieges. Others are assigned to work with the Watch. Beldane has been teaching other heirs his nosomatic techniques, and those who work with the Watch use their gifts to torture prisoners and draw confessions from suspected traitors. The most gifted heirs remain in the Kennels with Beldane, working on entirely new techniques. Sadly, Lord Pale’s talent for crafting diseases is no use against the undead attacking the city, but Beldane is a deeply disturbed genius and is always exploring new ideas. He’s been working on plagues that infect victims based on ideology. He’s been trying to create a fleshy garden that grows humanoid organs. He’s even been developing non-necromantic methods of giving life to the dead, and has created halfling flesh golems using these techniques. It’s up to the DM to decide exactly what Lord Pale has managed to create, but you can be sure that whatever it is, it’s horrifying.

While Beldane swiftly eliminates anyone who openly speaks out against him, many of the Mercies and other heirs hate the work they are doing. However, there are some who have entirely embraced this new path and revel in the power that they wield. Beldane himself has no desire to return to Eberron, where he knows the house would condemn him and his work; he is quite happy to be trapped within the Mists.

HOUSE LYRANDAR

There are no ships left in Metrol. Arcane bombardment and aquatic attacks have destroyed all but a handful of small boats. But while there may be no travel or trade, House Lyrandar still has an important role in Metrol. Lord Baeran d’Lyrandar maintains the small Lyrandar enclave on the top

of the Forge Vermishard. The airship docking tower stands empty, but the enclave also includes a *storm spire*—an eldritch machine that allows powerful heirs with the Mark of Storm to control the weather. Unfortunately, the Mists interfere with the *spire* and Baeran can't use its power to disperse the Mists—but he *can* summon lightning, and House Cannith needs that power. Cannith normally fuels magic items with refined Eberron dragonshards, but dragonshards are in short supply, so Starrin d'Cannith has created an arcane capacitor that can be charged by bolts of lightning, and Lyrandar ensures that there is a constant storm crackling around the top of the Forge.

Lyrandar heirs are rarely seen in the city below. It's possible that Lord Baeran and his kin are actually prisoners in their tower, forced to generate power for Cannith. If this is the case, it may be that pushing the *spire* to this extreme takes a toll on the heirs who operate it—that there are only a few marked heirs left, and that Starrin and the Queen are willing to burn them all out if necessary.

HOUSE VADALIS

House Vadalis primarily works with beasts. Its famous magebreeding techniques usually take generations to produce results—incorporating magic to create a superior creature, but in a slow and subtle manner, not taking a goat and a lion and stitching them together to create a chimera. But there have always been factions within the house that have yearned to push the boundaries of arcane science—to use the magic of the daelkyr and other dangerous techniques to create powerful monstrosities. During the War of the Mark, the Seryan family of House Vadalis unveiled an array of terrifying living weapons they'd created with these techniques—stirge swarms, enhanced lycanthropes, and other terrors. After the War of the Mark, these creatures were destroyed and the Seryan techniques were buried and forbidden.

House Vadalis never had a strong presence in Metrol. Its local heirs were primarily merchants and farriers, selling mounts and providing stabling and care. But when the siege struck, a Vadalis negotiating team happened to be at the Royal Vermishard—emissaries from Varna, working out the details of some long-term contracts. This team included a magebreeding consultant, Lady Vera d'Vadalis—a scion of the Seryan line and a student of their forbidden arts, with a particular interest in the curse of lycanthropy. In the aftermath of the



siege, Vera approached Queen Dannel with a proposal, painting a picture of what would ultimately become the Queen's Vigilant Wardens—agents of the queen with the strength of lycanthropes and the ability to move unseen through the populace. She promised Dannel that if she was given sufficient resources, wererats would be the least of the wonders she could create.

Queen Dannel was delighted with this proposal. The Vadalis heirs within Metrol were brought together and placed under Vera's command. Vera—who now calls herself Vera Seryan d'Vadalis, and prefers the honorific “Lady Seryan”—worked with Starrin d'Cannith to create magebreeding facilities unlike anything found in Passage or Varna. It took time and several harsh lessons for the Vadalis heirs to accept Lady Seryan as their leader, but over the last four years, the Kennels have become an important part of Metrol. Their greatest contribution is the wererat lycanthropy employed by the Shepherds, but they are constantly experimenting to create horrifying and deadly living weapons. Lady Seryan seized the surviving monstrous mercenaries who were working for House Tharashk—including trolls, gargoyles, ogres, and a few medusas—and

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has used this stock as the foundation of several bizarre creations. Their work is more dramatic than anything traditionally seen from House Vadalis; it remains to be seen if these techniques could be replicated in Eberron, or whether they rely on the dark influence of the Domain of Dread.

At this point, there's no telling exactly what Lady Seryan is working on in the Kennels. She quickly began experimenting on humanoid subjects, including the Vadalis heirs working in the Kennels; even if they aren't lycanthropes, many of the Kennels' staff are no longer entirely human. Suspected traitors and violent criminals are often sent to the Kennels as fodder for Seryan's work—along with any other citizens deemed “unnecessary.” The Kennels have produced some remarkable successes, though many can't be reproduced; sorcerers, barbarians, or other player characters from Metrol could describe their class abilities as being the result of Vadalis experiments.

Unlike Lord Pale of House Jorasco, Lady Seryan is eager to return to Eberron. She believes that her successes in Metrol will vindicate her family—that when she returns, Vadalis leadership will surely be amazed by what she has accomplished. This may or may not be true, but if adventurers do find a pathway back to Eberron, Lady Seryan could be a dangerous ally.

OTHER HOUSES

The other dragonmarked houses have little significant presence in Dread Metrol. Their commercial operations were shattered by the siege, and most of their capable heirs and resources were incorporated into the Watch or the army. While heirs of these houses remain in the city, the houses themselves aren't powerful factions.

House Deneith's surviving mercenaries have been incorporated into the army. Queen Dannel has three Blademark heirs who serve as her personal bodyguards. There are rumors of a lone Sentinel Marshal who's been operating as a vigilante in the Undercity, protecting innocents from both the undead and the Watch.

House Kundarak's enclave was crushed when the Vermishard of Gold collapsed. Some of the surviving Kundarak heirs now work as jailors in the Deep Prison below the Vermishard of Law; others help with the defenses on the walls and maintain the wards in the Royal Vermishard.

House Medani's most capable members have been incorporated into the Queen's Watch. Daera d'Medani was a renowned inquisitive before the siege; she now serves as the acting commander of the Shepherds, both a wererat and the public face of these secret police.

House Orien's leadership was accused of fomenting treason and working with the Karrns in the early days of the siege. Almost all members of the house have been executed, and an Orien heir would be wise to keep their mark hidden.

House Phiarlan's matriarch once guided the house from the Demesne of Shadow in the Lycaenum, but all Phiarlan heirs in the Demesne disappeared on the night of the siege. It's possible that they were traitors who fled the attack, but something stranger may have happened—some whisper that the elves have been trapped in their own shadows. The few Phiarlan heirs left in the city know nothing of what happened that night, but they're often still treated with fear and suspicion.

House Sivis's lines of communication with Eberron have all been cut off by the Mists. The heirs of House Sivis now work in the Vermishard of Law, producing ration chits and other official documents.

House Tharashk's force of monstrous mercenaries, which was stationed in the city before the siege, played a crucial role in containing one of the most significant breaches of the first year. Tharashk medusas created the foundation of what's now known as the Bridge of the Dead, which connects Northshore and Southshore. Most of Tharashk's mercenaries died in this battle; the remainder were seized by Queen Dannel and given to Lady Seryan of House Vadalis to use as she saw fit. Surviving Tharashk heirs have either joined the Watch or gone underground to work with the Unbroken. The half orc Arul'aashta, a peerless tracker and deadly warrior, is a former Tharashk bounty hunter who now tracks down accused traitors for the Watch.

House Thuranni never had a strong presence in Metrol, but it maintained a few hidden safehouses to support agents in the field. These sanctuaries could be valuable resources for adventurers or the Unbroken ... but there's no telling what traps Thuranni left behind.



THE FIFTH COLUMN

Throughout the siege, the people of Metrol have been warned to watch for the enemy within—Karrnathi sympathizers and spies, cruel traitors who hate everything Cyre stands for. It's likely this fifth column is just an urban legend, a straw man for the Watch to use to justify raids. After four years, it's likely that such saboteurs would've either been caught or accomplished something significant—but it's not impossible that this threat is real. Perhaps there *are* Karrnathi agents hidden among the innocent. The Fifth Column Agents table provides a few ideas for such threats. If it suits the campaign, the DM might even decide that the fifth column is a significant menace—that its members have been biding their time and gathering resources, and are finally getting ready for a campaign of terror.

FIFTH COLUMN AGENTS

d4 Agent

- 1 An elite team of deep-cover Karrnathi commandos, possibly **spies** or even **assassins**
- 2 A Cyran **priest** of the Blood of Vol who is sympathetic to the Karrnathi cause, either working alone or supported by a flock of **cultists**
- 3 A talented **necromancer** who has been crafting curses and unleashing undead from a hideout in the Undercity
- 4 One or more innocent citizens who have been possessed by Karrnathi **ghosts**

THE QUEEN'S WATCH

Four years ago, the Queen's Watch pursued criminals and enforced taxes. Since the siege, the Queen's Watch has become the steely eyes and the iron hand of the queen, watching for any threats within the walls of the city. While these threats include undead and other supernatural forces that manage to get past the army, the Watch first and foremost watches the people of Metrol, ever vigilant for any signs of treason. If you believe the rumors, Metrol is brimming with Karrnathi spies, murderous criminals, plague victims willfully spreading their deadly afflictions, and people possessed by evil spirits. Under the guise of crushing these threats, the Watch also suppresses any dissent. **THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US**, and as a citizen of Metrol, you must **DO YOUR DUTY ...** because **DANNEL IS WATCHING**.

Metrol was never as corrupt or crime-ridden as Sharn, and prior to the siege, most members of the Watch were truly dedicated to keeping the peace and protecting the common people. Over the last four years, this has slowly changed. The myth of hidden traitors quickly became the way to explain any failure. Nothing could be the fault of the queen, as **THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US**; all hardships could be blamed on the traitors who would undermine her rule. Rather than protecting the people, the Watch subtly shifted to protecting the city *from* the people. This culminated in the creation of the Queen's Vigilant Wardens, also known as the Shepherds: a secret police force to root out treason wherever it might hide. In addition to the most dedicated members of the Watch, the Shepherds incorporated heirs of House Medani, House Tharashk, and even a few heirs of House Thuranni—people whose magical gifts help them identify, find, and eliminate threats to Metrol. The next critical evolution was when the Shepherds were “enhanced” by House Vadalis—which is to say, infected with wererat lycanthropy. Thanks to Vadalis, a secret network of wererats operates across the city. Lady Seryan of the Kennels insists that the wererat strain doesn't affect the loyalties of those infected, but it certainly seems to suppress empathy. The Shepherds strike without mercy and take a savage joy in rooting out supposed treason—and somehow, there always seem to be more traitors in the wings.

The common people of Metrol are terrified of the Shepherds, and even members of the Watch are unnerved by their wererat comrades. There are many members of the Watch who truly do want what's best for the common people and are still driven by compassion. So while the Watch is often a tool of oppression, there are good people and potential allies within its ranks. However, they know better than anyone that **DANNEL IS WATCHING**, and avoid any act that could be seen as treasonous.

Lord Graven ir'Acabra is the commander of the Queen's Watch. He's held this post for a decade, and with the changes since the siege, has done his best to keep his head above water. But the real power within the Watch is Lady Daera d'Medani, the acting commander of the Vigilant Wardens. Always a brilliant inquisitive, Daera was initially happy to help Queen Dannel root out potential traitors. While she was a good person once, the wererat curse has sharpened her



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heart. Today, she's cruel and calculating, a hunter who enjoys playing games with her prey. It's quite possible that she knows many of her targets aren't actually traitors, but she enjoys playing on the queen's paranoia and building the myth of hidden threats to the city. The Shepherds are a secret police force and most of its members remain undercover throughout the city, but Daera is the public face of the order. She's the person who accepts reports from informants and speaks on behalf of the Shepherds. The Queen's Watch Officers table can be used to generate Watch officers when one is needed.

QUEEN'S WATCH OFFICERS

d10	Nickname	Species	Detail
1	Chuckles	Human	Undercover Shepherd wererat
2	Dirk	Human	Drinks too much
3	Sunshine	Half-Elf	Dislikes adventurers
4	Grim	Dwarf	Angling for a bribe
5	Mumbles	Halfling	Hardworking and virtuous
6	Blue	Goblin	Deeply religious
7	Maul	Shifter	Smart, but nervous
8	Junior	Elf	Secretly working with the Unbroken
9	Scrappy	Gnome	Expert wandslinger
10	Lucky	Warforged	Getting too old for this

THE UNBROKEN

Life in Metrol is difficult and dangerous. If you catch the wrong kind of attention, you're liable to be conscripted into the army—or worse, be sent to the Kennels. You don't know what's in the stew that you're eating, but you know that if you complain, a hidden wererat in the room could have you dragged off to the deep prisons as a traitor. And after you're dead, the corpse collectors will chop you up for spare parts. Beyond this: even if you wanted to fight the queen, what would that accomplish? The undead are at the gates, and Queen Dannel is the only thing keeping them at bay. It's enough to break even the strongest spirit, and yet there are some who remain unbroken, who feel that they must fight the injustices they see in Metrol, even in the face of the Karrnathi apocalypse.

The Unbroken are the most organized resistance within Metrol. They're a loosely structured force because they have to be—it's impossible to evade the Shepherds forever, and they need to be sure that no one prisoner can expose every cell. They walk a precarious line, because every night the city is attacked, and they don't want to expose innocents to slaughter at the hands of the undead. But they try to target the evils they can eliminate. The Unbroken free prisoners being sent to the Kennels, save innocents being tortured in the deep prisons, free people trapped in plague districts in the Undercity. They hide those unjustly accused of treason and kill Shepherds who are clearly abusing their power. And whenever possible, they target supernatural threats within the city, doing what they can to exorcise hauntings, kill ghoulish packs, and bring an end to dangerous curses.

All of this means that an Unbroken cell is an obvious patron for a group of player characters in Dread Metrol. Each individual cell has limited resources, and a group of adventurers can allow a cell to accomplish greater things. This is the underlying plot of "The Mourning After," the adventure in the next chapter of this book. With that said, the Unbroken may not live up to their altruistic ideals. Dread Metrol embodies the horrors of war, and these include greed and vengeance. While they speak of fighting injustice, Unbroken leaders may actually be pursuing personal agendas. They could be seeking vengeance against old enemies or trying to stockpile goods and gold in the hopes of making a profit once the siege is broken. An Unbroken leader could be loyal to a foreign power, working to bring down Dannel regardless of what it means for Metrol. Any member of a cell could be a spy for the Shepherds, trying to identify as many traitors as possible before leading the cell into an ambush. The Unbroken *can* be a point of light in a dark world, but a DM who wants to emphasize the horror aspects of a campaign can highlight that in Dread Metrol, what appears to be a point of light may just be an oncoming lightning rail.

Unbroken cells are constantly changing; if any member were too well known, they'd quickly be brought down by the Shepherds. The Unbroken Secrets table provides inspiration for cell members, personal quirks, and potential secrets—but keep in mind that not every agent has a secret. Those provided here are extreme, and most likely only one member of a cell would have such a secret.



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UNBROKEN AGENTS

d8	Name	Quirk	Secret
1	Dalen Osserak, human merchant	Survived torture in the deep prisons	A former member of the Aurum, they want to reclaim their fortune when this is over.
2	Brass, dwarf smuggler	Served in the Watch	Their judgment is impaired by a personal tragedy.
3	Malas Min Dorian, gnome sage	Mutated by Vadalis experiments	Secretly serves as a Brelish Dark Lantern, a Royal Eye of Aundair, or an agent of Karrnath.
4	Nyra Tass, human templar of the Silver Flame	Escaped a plague	An agent of the Dreaming Dark, possessed by a quori, and desperate to find a way back to Eberron and Dal Quor.
5	Tulan Ilayne, halfling priest of the Sovereign Host	Knows Shepherds killed their family	A wererat and spy for the Shepherds, waiting for the right moment to betray the cell.
6	Eloquence, changeling entertainer	Hates the Karrns	Possessed by the ghost of a Cyran who died in the siege, determined to complete unfinished business.
7	Maen Heston, elf ex-soldier	Relentlessly optimistic	Secretly a rakshasa agent of Sul Khatesh, content that all of this is part of their plan.
8	Root, shifter farmer and possible druid	Always has a story to share	A shapechanged adult gold dragon and Chamber agent, planning to guide the adventurers to bring down Dannel.

The Unbroken are the most organized and idealistic resistance in Metrol, but other dissidents certainly hide in the shadows: criminals and spies, people who were dangerous even before the siege; nobles and merchants, angry about losing their wealth and influence; idealists making a principled stand; cultists gripped by delusions. Such random dissidents don't have any sort of unified agenda or goal. While the Unbroken are loosely organized, cell leaders do have ways to pass messages and are working toward an overall goal, whereas the remnants of the Red Knives (a street gang before the siege) are just looking out for themselves.

ADVENTURES IN DREAD METROL

Metrol is locked in a bitter conflict between Queen Dannel and the besieging forces. The undead attacking Metrol are effectively endless. They aren't actually Karrnathi, but manifestations of the domain itself. As such, defeating the attacking forces isn't truly an option. Adventurers can help the city survive a particularly bad night—defeat a dracolich, destroy a *siege staff*^{EXE} that threatens to shatter the Vermishards, or battle invaders striking from Starmantle Bay. These would be significant victories and save innocent lives—but there'll always be another attack the next night. This war can't be won, so adventures in Dread Metrol will likely follow one (or more) of the following paths:

Survival. The main challenge is simply to survive another day. Adventurers can help whoever can be helped, working with the Unbroken or pursuing justice on their own. But there is no grand scheme: the ultimate goal is to *live* and hope that tomorrow might be the day that things get better.

Escape. The adventurers want to leave Metrol and return to Eberron (or wherever they came from). They could simply be trying to find their own way out, working to help others escape, or even trying to find a way to return Metrol itself to Eberron. This could involve an experimental Cannith device, a bargain with the Dark Powers, or finding the perfect time and place to enter the Mists. It could even require them to ...

Defeat Queen Dannel. Ultimately, Dread Metrol is a prison for Queen Dannel. The Queen, determined to win at any cost, is trapped in a war that can't be won. It's likely that the only way that Metrol itself could be returned to Eberron is if Dannel found peace. This could mean destroying her, but this would be no simple task; the adventurers will likely need to force her to face her past, realize her mistakes, and truly regret them—sacrificing her ultimate victory to save the innocent people of Metrol.

When beginning any adventure in Dread Metrol, the first question is that of how the adventurers get there. Metrol is a Domain of Dread like any



other, so the traditional means for being pulled into Ravenloft can work here. The DM will have to decide if the adventurers emerge in the city itself—perhaps finding themselves in Starmantle Bay and defending against shredderfish as they make their wet and miserable way to Southshore—or whether they emerge on the Bloody Fields and have to find their way in. During the day, it’s possible they might convince the guards to open one of the gates. As new arrivals, they would attract a lot of attention and interest; they could be welcomed and celebrated, but it’s just as likely that they could immediately be arrested and sent to the Kennels as fodder for experiments (which is what happens in “The Mourning After”). On the other hand, they might find a way to sneak into the city—the guards don’t expect attacks during the day, and there are weak points in the defenses, allowing the adventurers to enter the city with less fanfare. You could also start a campaign with the adventurers already in Dread Metrol, saying that they’ve been there since the siege began—this approach is discussed in more detail later in this section.

A Metrol adventure generally begins as a struggle for survival as the adventurers explore the city and find their place in its story. The player characters could operate alone or find a patron

to provide them with shelter and guidance. The simplest option is for the adventurers to work with an Unbroken cell, as they’re altruistic—at least on the surface—and need people with the skills that the adventurers possess. Ultimately, the Unbroken might help the adventurers find a way to escape, or the player characters might work with the Unbroken to save Metrol itself. However, another interesting option is for the adventurers to serve the queen herself. Newcomers to the city may not know that Dannel is an iron-fisted tyrant, so she could tell them that she can’t trust her own agents anymore and needs fresh eyes. As the adventurers carry out her orders, perhaps they discover that Dannel is the true enemy, or perhaps Dannel is beginning to have doubts about the righteousness of her cause; it’s possible that by working from within, the adventurers can both minimize the damage caused by her orders and lead her back to the light.

“The Mourning After”—presented in chapter 2 of this book—is an adventure set in Dread Metrol. If you don’t plan to use this or if you’re looking for further ideas, the Dread Metrol Adventures table provides inspiration for other Metrol adventures—roll once on each column to create a quick random hook.



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DREAD METROL ADVENTURES

d8	Goal	Location	Unexpected Twist
1	Escape from ...	the Vadalis Kennels, but ...	someone is possessed or an imposter.
2	Recover a relic or magic item from ...	the deep prisons below the Vermishard of Law, but ...	something is stalking the adventurers.
3	Rescue someone from ...	the Vault, sunk in Starmantle Bay, but ...	an adventurer has disturbing visions.
4	Defeat an undead champion in ...	a sealed, cursed section of the Undercity, but ...	innocents are in danger.
5	Escort someone to ...	the fallen colossus in the Bloody Fields, but ...	Shepherds are already there.
6	Sabotage or destroy ...	the long-abandoned Vermishard Academy, but ...	unexpected undead appear.
7	Obtain information from ...	the Cathedral of the Sovereign Host, but ...	a powerful or dangerous artifact is found.
8	Stop a ritual in ...	a Cannith workshop in the Forge, but ...	it's a trap!

NEWSTEACH

NIGHT TERRORS: THE SIEGE

The Karrnathi forces that besiege the city are endless. Bold adventurers can win a battle with the undead, but they can't win the war—and because of that, adventures in Metrol generally won't focus on the siege itself. However, you don't want adventurers to forget about the siege. Queen Dannel's tyranny is at least partially justified by the ongoing existential threat to Metrol; to understand the queen's actions, people need to remember that the undead wolves are baying at the gate.

The undead attack every night. Though the Mists hide the sun, the city still has a basic day/night cycle ... and as the light slowly fades from the sky and the darkness sets in, the undead emerge from the Mists. The Night Terrors table can help you quickly generate the dramatic features of a particular night. These can inspire encounters as adventurers deal with the fallout of a particular attack—if there's an aquatic assault, adventurers may have to deal with a squad of zombies emerging from the water. If it's an aerial attack, the characters could clash with a force of specters or undead stirges. Or this can just be something the DM describes while the adventurers are taking a long rest, as they hear the banshees in the sky and feel the vibrations of the bombardment.



NIGHT TERRORS

d6	Siege Focus	Noteworthy Element	Within the City
1	Massive ground assault	A powerful enemy leads the attack	Undead break through the walls
2	Ground assault with siege weapons	Never-before-seen weapon or champion emerges	Citizens experience a wave of horrific nightmares
3	Aerial attack	The Mists close in	Dangerous fires spread
4	Aquatic assault	Many Cyran undead appear	A district suffers a plague outbreak
5	Arcane bombardment	Little bloodshed, but suspense and horror intensify	The Shepherds make city-wide raids
6	Attack on multiple fronts	Violent storms accompany the attack	Unbroken or traitors take action

Generally, the army is able to hold the attackers at bay. If it's an aerial assault, characters may see blasts from the defensive *siege staffs*^{EXE} mounted on the Vermishards, or an army patrol on strange flying mounts created in the Kennels. If it's a ground assault, it's sure to be a hard night on the walls, but the walls will likely hold. The siege has been going on for years; even a bad night generally results in the loss of a district, not the entire city. Here are a few elements to keep in mind as your adventure progresses.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

As time passes, damage from the siege can impact areas the adventurers have grown accustomed to. A character's tenement has lost the top floor, so they'd better stay with someone else for a while. The tavern where the party gets their moonshine has been destroyed. The Metrol Arena has been targeted with a lingering curse and abandoned. You want players to have the sense that there are consequences to the attacks—a real, serious threat at work. Adventurers could even be caught on the edge of a necrotic blast (Constitution save for half damage) or struck by falling rubble (Dexterity save for half damage); just set the damage according to the desired threat and character level.

TIMELESS TERROR AND SOULLESS SHELLS

This supplement assumes that Metrol was taken in 994 YK and that time has progressed at the standard rate since then—that if characters from Eberron travel to Dread Metrol, it will have been under siege for four years. For the citizens of Metrol, there is both a sense that time is passing and that things are getting worse. However, many of Ravenloft's Domains of Dread don't experience time in the same way as the Material Plane. People can die and be reincarnated, and little actually changes.

As a DM, you might take this approach with Metrol; if so, no one remembers exactly how long the siege has been going on or when it began. There are always desperate shortages, yet nothing ever fully runs out. There's always a district that's just been lost to the undead, but somehow the overall ratio of inhabited space never changes. And crucially, this allows the idea that a significant percentage of the population of the city are soulless shells, effectively set dressing for the drama.

The passage of time is important if the DM wants to play with the idea that Metrol could be returned to Eberron, and that in the meantime, the population is slowly being consumed—so if things continue as they are, Dannel will eventually devour Metrol from within. But if adventurers are just passing through Metrol, it can be presented as a timeless, endless siege.

BARRICADES AND SECURITY PROTOCOLS

Even if an area isn't destroyed, adventurers can lose access to it. A district might be sealed off by the Queen's Watch because it's cursed, infested with undead, harboring plague, or suspected of harboring traitors. Likewise, a tavern the party frequents could be closed because its owner is pressed into service, accused of treason—whether or not it's true—or hauled away to the Kennels or the Forge.

NIGHTMARES

Everyone in Dread Metrol is plagued by nightmares; the city may be cut off from Dal Quor, but the Mists have no shortage of terrors to share. If there's no dramatic siege event to report during a long rest, the DM could ask one of the players—if they're comfortable doing so—to describe a nightmare their character has. This is a chance for a player to reveal things that their character fears—and an opportunity for the DM to get ideas for future horrors they might eventually encounter.

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Alternatively, the DM can describe a nightmare that a character experiences, allowing the DM to foreshadow future threats.

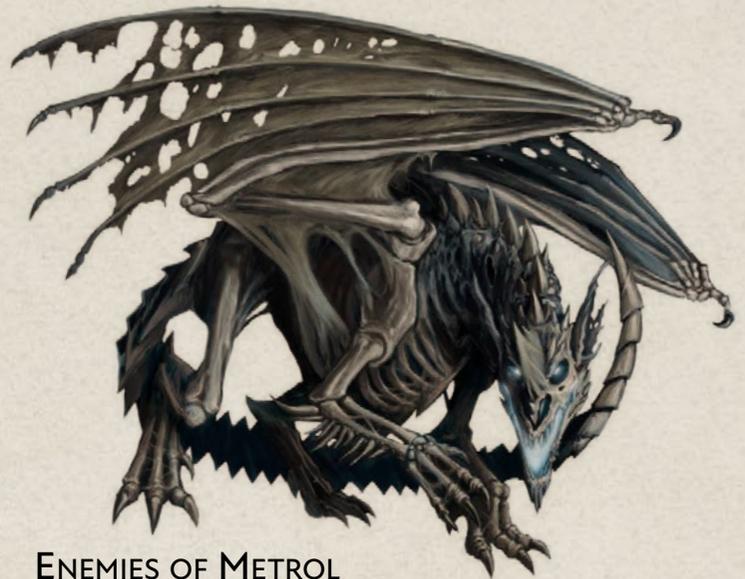
Occasionally, a group of people—whether an entire district, a particular family, or all members of a certain species—are gripped by a wave of unnaturally powerful nightmares. Should this occur, all victims must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature takes 3d6 psychic damage and gains no benefits from the rest. However, creatures reduced to 0 hit points by this effect don't die, but instead fall into comas (stabilizing at 0 hit points), and NPCs who suffer this fate may be comatose for days or weeks.

PLAGUES

Plagues and curses are described earlier in this chapter. While a plague can be the natural result of the difficult conditions imposed by the siege, most plagues have an unnatural origin and are unleashed as a weapon. Adventurers may hear of neighborhoods being sealed off because of a new outbreak or encounter a sobbing victim who's just been infected with an unnatural disease. Jorasco Mercies lead the hunt for such victims, accompanied by Watch patrols—generally with the intent of killing them before they can spread their infection.

VILLAINS

The attackers are usually a vast faceless force, an endless horde of undead marching under Karrnathi banners. However, occasionally a particularly noteworthy leader might draw attention during the attack. The Enemies of Metrol table provides a few ideas, reflecting the baffling unpredictable nature of the Karrnathi forces—if the Karrnathi have a dracolich working with them, why don't they use it every night? This ties to the likelihood that the attacking forces are just manifestations of the Mists, ultimately existing to torment Queen Dannel. For example, adventurers who come from Eberron in 998 YK would know that the mummy lord Malevanor has been in the city of Atur—so he couldn't have been leading a siege in Metrol for the last four years! These villains likely have some personal significance for Dannel. Marhya is her lost daughter. Shaeras Vadallia betrayed her (or perhaps she betrayed him ...). It may be that Malevanor and Valynne ir'Tura—the two most commonly seen commanders—also have some personal significance for Queen Dannel.



ENEMIES OF METROL

d6 Enemy

- 1 **Marhya ir'Wynarn.** This **banshee** appears to be Princess Marhya, Dannel's youngest daughter. She died on the first night of the siege, and this spirit has haunted Metrol ever since.
- 2 **Provost Ralan ir'Delias.** This **wraith** was a Cyran noble and respected sage at the Vermishard Academy. He died when the Lycaenum was lost, and his estates were claimed for the war effort. He lingers in the Vermishard of Lore, hungry for revenge.
- 3 **Commander Valynne ir'Tura.** This **vampire** is one of the commanders of the Karrnathi forces. Long before the siege, she was infamous on the Karrnathi-Cyran front for her cruelty and love of terrorizing her foes.
- 4 **Lord Malevanor.** This **mummy lord** is a priest of the Blood of Vol. He serves as a commander of undead forces, and is known for making dramatic and disheartening speeches mocking Dannel.
- 5 **Shaeras Vadallia.** The undead aren't all Karrnathi. One of the deadliest forces is a warband of Valenar mercenaries, led by a **death knight** who claims to be Shaeras Vadallia—the High King of Valenar, who stole the land from Dannel. Fortunately, these elves are rarely seen.
- 6 **Tashalaryx.** This **adult blue dracolich** has only been seen once during the siege, when it led a devastating aerial attack on the Royal Vermishard. There's no record of a dracolich working with Karrnath, and this mighty creature's history and motivations remain a mystery.

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SAVING METROL

In Dread Metrol, victory is often measured by survival. While this Domain of Dread takes the form of a siege, in truth it's a tool for tormenting Dannel ir'Wynarn. The Karrnathi forces aren't real and can't be truly defeated; a battle may be won, but new forces always emerge from the Mists when night falls. Dannel herself can't find respite in death—like many Darklords, Dannel is effectively immortal. She can be defeated in battle, but she will eventually regenerate; even if her body is destroyed, the arcane machinery in her workshop will build her an entirely new body. With each such rebirth, she may lose a little more of her humanity, but she can't be destroyed by brute force.

Because of this, the focus of a Metrol campaign will often be escape—whether the adventurers are purely concerned with their own safety or if they're trying to rescue innocents too. But just because it's difficult to defeat Dannel doesn't mean it's impossible. Ultimately, Dannel is driven by three key elements:

- She believes that only she can save her people.
- She will never surrender or accept defeat.
- She always pursues victory—regardless of what it costs her or her people.

This began with courage and love of Cyre, but Dannel has let her pride drag her down dark paths. The Dark Powers have set her against an unbeatable foe, and in the face of that threat, *she* is the one destroying her people. To truly defeat Dannel and save Metrol, the adventurers must break through her obstinate ignorance. She must recognize the cost of her actions, feel remorse for what she has done in her pursuit of victory, and realize that the survival of her people means more to her than victory. It is Dannel's refusal to accept defeat—her willingness to consume her citizens rather than find a way for them to escape—that has trapped Metrol in the Mists. The player characters can't defeat Dannel any more than she can defeat the undead forces; the adventurers have to convince her to *accept* defeat, to recognize that the price of her potential victory is simply too high.

Accomplishing this will be no simple task. Though adventurers may be forced

to face Dannel in battle, defeating her in combat won't cause her to surrender. Instead, they'll likely have to draw Dannel down from the Vermishard. She needs to *see* the suffering of her people, to face the cost of her edicts and actions. It could be that the adventurers can simply share stories of the horrors they've seen, or they may have to lead Dannel to these things—to take her through the Kennels and the Forge, to see her people being consumed by the engine of war. Ultimately, it's up to the DM to decide what can break through the wall of Dannel's pride.

If Dannel accepts defeat, the Mists might lift, returning Metrol to Eberron—but what happens next? This is always in the DM's hands, but here are some ideas.

DANNEL'S FATE

Most likely, Dannel would not survive the transition back to Eberron. Her existence is fundamentally unnatural; the construct components that sustain her are based on nightmare logic, and her relentless pursuit of war has ultimately kept her alive. She would likely live just long enough to know that she has at last saved her city and her people, and then pass peacefully.

METROL'S ARCANES BREAKTHROUGHS

Likewise, most of the arcane innovations of the Kennels and the Forge are driven by nightmare logic and can't be replicated in Eberron. However, it's possible that some of the breakthroughs made over the last four years can be maintained or adapted to the Material Plane, and if so, how this might affect the relevant houses.



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THE MOURNLAND

The effect of Metrol's return to Eberron—in the middle of the Mournland—depends largely on whether Dannel was in some way responsible for the Mourning. If so, Metrol's return could very well mark the end of the Mourning—though it likely wouldn't be an instant transformation. The dead-gray mists would probably disperse and the unnatural energies pervading the region fade, preventing further unnatural transformation of creatures and restoring their ability to heal. But this wouldn't reverse the damage that's already been done or destroy the hordes of deadly creatures that roam the Mournland. The end of the Mourning would make it possible to reclaim the Mournland—but someone would still have to do that work!

Alternatively, if Dannel wasn't involved in the Day of Mourning, the return of Metrol is unlikely to have any effect on the Mournland—in which case the Cyrans have leapt out of the frying pan and into the furnace. However, the Mournland won't produce a new army every night and the Cyrans will finally be able to call for aid, so while it'll be a difficult and deadly situation, this fight for survival can be won.

OTHER CHARACTERS' FATES

Upon their return to Eberron, what becomes of other major NPCs like Starrin d'Cannith, Lady Seryan, and Lord Pale? Starrin was the patriarch of House Cannith; could he reforge his fractured house? Even if the return of Metrol doesn't immediately undo the Mourning, it could be that Starrin had a hand in it and could help to undo it ... or, in seeing what his handiwork has wrought, Starrin could instead go down an even darker path and seeks to create a second Mourning. Meanwhile, Seryan and Pale practice techniques forbidden by their houses and could be excoriated or imprisoned—or find supporters and cause schisms of their own!

THE RECONSTRUCTED

For decades, Metrol has been defended by the Iron Tide, an elite legion of warforged soldiers. However, within the first week of the siege, the army had suffered significant casualties—countless human soldiers died in the initial attacks, while many warforged were seriously damaged, including those of the Iron Tide. While the arcane facilities within the Vermishard workshop are impressive, the

Forge doesn't contain a *creation forge*, so Starrin d'Cannith can't create entirely new warforged or warforged components. Metrol would almost certainly fall without restoring the strength of the Iron Tide and the city's army, and this desperation drove Starrin and the Queen in an unorthodox direction. They couldn't create new soldiers. But perhaps, by using the components of the dead and destroyed, they could preserve the soldiers they already had ... or create new soldiers with the capabilities of warforged, even if they began as human.

House Cannith's past experiments with warforged grafts met with little success—such grafts were often rejected or simply couldn't be controlled. Working together, Starrin and Dannel were able to overcome countless obstacles, ultimately finding ways to fuse construct components not only to the body of the subject, but to their soul. It could be that this is a case of necessity driving innovation, or maybe it's purely the nightmare logic of the domain that makes this possible—because the process of reconstruction is horrific. It's not as simple as just attaching a new limb. Warforged tendrils burrow deep into flesh and bone. Internal organs are replaced with chunks of engraved wood or stone, and blood blends with alchemical fluid. Whether they began as organic creatures or pure warforged, the Reconstructed are less *alive* than either, and are a truer construct. The process of reconstruction doesn't destroy the subject's identity, but it is an agonizing process that can cause memory loss and a flattening of emotion. Soldiers who have undergone reconstruction multiple times often find that they can no longer remember their earlier life—sometimes even forgetting whether they began as creatures of flesh or steel.

If a player wishes to create a Reconstructed character, they can represent this transformation either using warforged racial traits or the reborn lineage from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*; the warforged path reflects a creature whose body is largely construct components (allowing armor to be attached) while the reborn lineage reflects a creature that's still mostly organic—at least on the outside. For such characters, being Reconstructed is largely a matter of how the character is described; while they may have the abilities of a warforged, they have organic elements, and could have a human face or limb. The Reconstructed template below presents a way for the DM to create Reconstructed NPCs; in contrast, Reconstructed player characters don't have



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the full abilities of this template, reflecting the idea that the character isn't yet as rebuilt as the typical Reconstructed soldier, and because of this, they retain more of their emotions and personality.

RECONSTRUCTED TEMPLATE

A beast, humanoid, or giant can be fitted with magical steel and stone limbs to become a Reconstructed. When a creature becomes a Reconstructed, it retains its statistics except as described below.

Saving Throw Proficiency: Constitution. The Reconstructed can add its proficiency bonus to Constitution saving throws.

Damage Resistances. The Reconstructed has resistance to poison damage and psychic damage, in addition to any resistances it had prior to becoming a Reconstructed.

Condition Immunities. The Reconstructed is immune to exhaustion and the paralyzed and poisoned conditions, in addition to any immunities it had prior to becoming a Reconstructed.

Construct Nature. The Reconstructed counts as a construct in addition to its other creature type, and it no longer requires air, food, drink, or sleep.

Reconstructed Contingencies (Recharges on a Short or Long Rest). When the Reconstructed is reduced to 0 hit points, it doesn't die or fall unconscious, and instead assumes a more complete construct form. It regains 1 hit point and a number of temporary hit points equal to four times its proficiency bonus. Additionally, it gains that same number of temporary hit points at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute or until it is reduced to 0 hit points.

RECONSTRUCTED CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Damage Resistances poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Reconstructed Contingencies (Recharges on a Short or Long Rest). When the captain is reduced to 0 hit points, it doesn't die or fall unconscious, and instead assumes a more complete construct form. It regains 1 hit point and 8 temporary hit points. Additionally, it gains 8 temporary hit points at the start of each of its turns for 1 minute or until it is reduced to 0 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Alternatively, it makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.





ADVENTURERS FROM METROL

Adventurers can stumble into Metrol through the Mists, but if you're just starting a new campaign, you might instead choose to make the adventurers natives of Metrol. This section presents considerations to discuss during session zero, along with a new artificer subclass, the Mastermaker—an artificer who excels at merging steel and flesh, reflecting the disturbing work being done in the Forge.

The opening arc of such a campaign will be in Dread Metrol, regardless of whether the adventurers remain in Metrol only until they find a way to escape, or whether they stay and become powerful enough to topple Dannel and save the city itself. Either way, you could choose to start a campaign on the Day of Mourning—letting the adventurers experience the first night of the siege and fight through the chaos that follows—or you can start your campaign at the usual time of 998 YK, meaning that the adventurers have already endured over three years of the nightmare siege. The latter approach is the one we're going to explore here, as it allows characters to have close ties to the city and its people, and can also provide interesting explanations for character abilities.

To get the most out of such a campaign, the players should understand the concept of the setting before they settle on their character ideas, so they can think about how their characters relate to Metrol and to one another. Whether this happens in a live session zero or over time, here's a basic pitch for the DM to share with their players:

In 994 YK, a wave of mist rolls across the Cyran capital of Metrol. A legion of Karnathi undead emerges from these mists, determined to breach the city walls. The mists have cut the city off from the rest of Eberron—no communication is possible, and all teleportation and divination magic fails. But the forces of Karnath remain, as strong as ever, and every night, the dead assault the city anew. This siege has continued for nearly four years, and Metrol has had to adapt in terrible ways. Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn holds the city in an iron grip, diverting all resources to defense and conscripting ever more people into the army with each day.

Meanwhile, those who don't fight may suffer far worse fates than conscription. In the Kennels of House Vadalis, magebreeders create monsters from the citizens of Metrol. In the Forge of House Cannith, artificers blend constructs and organic creatures in ways never imagined by the original creators of the warforged. And the horrors only continue. The Karnathi forces bombard Metrol with arcane powers, pure force, and lingering curses that can twist their victims. Metrol is haunted by the tortured spirits of those who've died during the siege, and their lingering ghosts cry for vengeance.

You were in Metrol when the siege began, and you are in Metrol still. You have survived years of this horrific war, and it's changed you in terrifying ways. In creating a character for this campaign, work with your DM to consider the impact the siege has had upon you. It could be that your scars are purely psychological—that your fighter has seen terrible things, but they are still entirely human. Or it could be that your character's class and ancestry features reflect experiences you've been through. As a warlock, your "patron" could be the ghosts that haunt you, demanding vengeance. As a barbarian, your rage could stem from experiments House Vadalis performed on you—experiments that have made you half-beast. This is an opportunity to create a character you couldn't find in Sharn—a character shaped by the siege of Metrol and the terrors you've endured.

PATRON: UNBROKEN OR QUEEN?

Before players create characters, the DM should decide on a patron or driving force for the party: what's bringing them together and driving them to go on adventures? A simple option that gives considerable flexibility is for the adventurers to be the members of a newly formed Unbroken cell that's just starting its work for the resistance. If you want to follow this path, add the following to the initial pitch:

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As bad as things are in Metrol, some people still fight for the greater good. The Unbroken is a resistance movement that seeks to protect the innocent from both the threat of the undead and the crushing horrors the queen inflicts on the city in her quest for victory. As members of a new Unbroken cell, you'll be working together to save Metrol—or, at least, to save as many people as you can.

Tying the adventurers to the Unbroken has several advantages. It can unite characters from different walks of life—the adventurers may not have known each other before the siege, but the resistance brings them together. You can tie nearly any adventure concept to the Unbroken's goals, whether gathering information or resources, investigating potential threats, or fighting Karrnathi forces and agents of oppression. This is as heroic a path as you can walk in Dread Metrol (though as noted in the "Forces in Metrol" section, the DM can add shades of gray). The adventure in chapter 2 follows this path.

While working with the Unbroken is an easy path for a campaign, there are other alternatives. One interesting option is for the adventurers to begin as elite troubleshooters serving the queen herself. In this case, here are details to add to the pitch:

You and your fellow adventurers have loyally served Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn since the siege began. Your team of elite troubleshooters operate independently of the army and the Queen's Watch, investigating mysteries and dealing with problems that can't be solved with soldiers. While the queen has taken drastic and sometimes brutal actions over the last four years, you know she's trying to protect the people of Cyre—but even you wonder if she is going too far in her pursuit of victory.

Having the adventurers begin as servants of the queen gives the campaign a clear structure. They aren't part of the Watch or army, and answer only to the queen herself; this gives them considerable freedom, although they don't have authority over the Watch or the army. In such a campaign, the characters start off believing that the queen's brutal measures are necessary—sacrifices must be made. But as they descend from the Royal Vermishard and see what people endure in the streets, as they witness the cruelty of the Queen's Watch and the horrors unfolding in the Kennels, they may choose a different path; the question then is whether they'll turn and fight the queen, or simply seek a way to escape. In this style of campaign, it's important that the characters are all plausibly the queen's servants. It's an excellent path for a soldier (who still holds

military rank despite not serving the army), a noble (whose family has served the crown for centuries), or an investigator (who formerly served with the Watch); it's not as logical for a criminal or an urchin.

BACKGROUNDS

Once the players understand the basic concept of the campaign, it's time to develop characters that belong in Metrol. While players don't have to establish details about their characters, horror stories are more effective when characters have depth—when we know where they're coming from, what they've got to lose, and what they care about. You can discuss these details as a group during session zero, or players can develop their stories independently.

Each character should have a background: what were they doing before the Day of Mourning and how has the siege impacted this? For example, if the character is a noble, what's their standing with the queen, and are they from one of Metrol's noble families or are their family (and estates) outside of Metrol? If the character is an entertainer, were they renowned across the Five Nations but now trapped in Metrol, or a nobody who gained tremendous popularity during the siege by bringing solace in the midst of suffering? The Metrol Background table offers a few ideas to consider; the final two options are backgrounds from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, so roll a d10 if you aren't using that book.

If you're from a dragonmarked house, being a house agent also carries interesting possibilities. Many of the houses—Sivis, Deneith, Tharashk, Medani, Phiarlan, Thuranni, Kundarak, and Orien—don't play a significant role in the present day. As a house agent from one of those houses, you may have been an important member of your house before the siege, but what remains has likely been seized by the crown and devoted to the war effort. You're still trying to serve the interests of your house, but you're a lone wolf. The other houses—Cannith, Jorasco, Ghallanda, Vadalis, and to a lesser extent, Lyrandar—are powerful forces in the city. If you are an active agent of one of these houses, you have some authority, but are also subject to the orders of your house head and expected to support their unsavory activities. On the other hand, you could play a former house agent who served your house loyally until those unsavory practices began. So you could be a Vadalis agent who refused to work with Lady Seryan, or a Jorasco agent repulsed by what Lord Pale is doing in the Kennels.

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METROL BACKGROUNDS

d12 Background

- 1 **Acolyte.** Did you tend the Cathedral of the Sovereign Host or the Bastion of the Silver Flame before they were shut down? How has the siege affected your faith?
- 2 **Criminal or Charlatan.** The Queen's Watch has brutally cracked down on crime. Your Criminal Contacts would give you ties to the black market and scattered lone wolves—what crimes did you specialize in?
- 3 **Entertainer.** Were you famous before you were trapped in Metrol? Have you primarily played for the nobles in the Vermishards or the people on the streets?
- 4 **Folk Hero.** Were you celebrated as a hero before the siege, or have you earned your reputation over the last four years by protecting the common people?
- 5 **Guild Artisan/Merchant.** You own a business in Metrol. Has it been seized by the Queen for the war effort? Shut down by the shortages? Or are you still able to operate it?
- 6 **Noble.** Is your family in favor within Metrol, giving you a Position of Privilege? Were your estates stripped or are you from abroad? If so, you might take the Retainer feature—a last remnant of lost glory.
- 7 **Sage.** Did you teach or study at the Vermishard Academy or the Royal Library? Both are in the Lycaenum, which is currently overrun by undead—so what do you do now?
- 8 **Soldier.** As an adventurer, you're not currently serving with the army. Why not? Did you desert or were you discharged for some reason? Why do soldiers still show respect for your Military Rank feature?
- 9 **Spy.** What nation did you serve? Are you a Dark Lantern or a Royal Eye? You've been cut off from your people since the siege began, but you likely have a safehouse and a few useful contacts.
- 10 **Urchin.** Your family is dead and your home is in a sealed part of the Undercity. Was your family killed by undead or plague—or were they declared traitors and executed by the Queen's Watch? Who do you hate more, the Karrns or the queen?
- 11 **Haunted One.** You're the only survivor of a horrific event. Do you remember what happened, or is it a mystery? People pity you and offer charity, but there are always whispers that you were to blame ...
- 12 **Investigator.** You served with the Watch in the past. Why aren't you part of it today? Did you refuse to work with the Shepherds or to become a wererat yourself? Do you still have friends on the force?

THE TWIST

A Dread Metrol campaign allows you to play a character you couldn't find anywhere else in Eberron, a person who's been transformed by the siege and their experiences of the last four years. *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* provides two concrete ways to approach this: lineages and Dark Gifts. When creating a character, a player and DM can also work together to change the flavor and story associated with their mechanical benefits.

Think about the features you receive from your class, race, and feats, then consider if there's a story that could explain those abilities in an unusual way. For example, despite your character having a warforged's racial traits, your story could be that you're a human soldier whose body has been almost entirely replaced with construct components—to the point where you no longer have to eat or breathe, and your armor is fused to your body. Likewise, your barbarian could be

infected with an unusual strain of lycanthropy—not enough to fully change you, but when you use your rage, you become more bestial in appearance, and you're afraid you might lose yourself to the beast. Clerics traditionally get their spells from a deity, but what if you get your cleric spells from the ghosts of the former inhabitants of your district, who were killed during the siege and now only exist through you? On paper, you're still a cleric, but the story is very different.

In developing a character twist, consider the following questions.

- If you were part of an experiment, was it a success or failure? Do you know what the people who worked on you were trying to do and whether they achieved their goal?
- Is your condition stable or is it still evolving? When you gain new class abilities, will that reflect further transformation, or just you gaining additional skills (like any normal character)?



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- Do you suffer unusual side effects because of the strange source of your powers? Are you searching for a cure? Do you believe you only have a certain amount of time before your gifts kill you?
- If you were part of an experiment, did your creators release you or did you escape? Are they searching for you, do they think you're dead, or consider you a failed experiment? Do you want vengeance or believe you need their help?

The Metrol Character Twists table provides six options to inspire you, though feel free to explore other ideas too! Remember that a character twist doesn't provide any additional benefits, and it should be decided on with your DM to make sure it fits the wider story. Twists are an alternate way to explain the abilities you already receive from your class or lineage, nothing more. And in the end, characters don't have to have a twist! If you want to play an entirely traditional character who's survived the siege largely unscathed, that's fine. This is a collaborative process, and players should always end up with characters they want to play.

METROL CHARACTER TWISTS

d6 The Twist

- 1 **Cursed.** The ongoing effects of a curse can occasionally be a blessing.
- 2 **Haunted.** Lingered spirits torment you—but also grant you useful abilities.
- 3 **Insider.** You used to work for Vadalis, Cannith, the queen's Vigilant Guardians, or another unpleasant group.
- 4 **Kenel-Born.** House Vadalis performed experiments on you, imbuing you with bestial or monstrous traits.
- 5 **Medical Miracle.** House Jorasco "saved" you, in a manner of speaking.
- 6 **Reconstructed.** House Cannith fused component elements to your flesh.

CURSED

Every night the Karrnathi forces lay siege to Metrol. Some nights the attacks are purely physical, as hordes of skeletons and zombies claw their way up the walls. Other nights involve arcane bombardment, deadly volleys of magic—sometimes just fire or force, but these can include slower and more terrible effects. Perhaps a lingering curse petrified your family, but for some reason, the petrification is occurring more slowly with you; as a cursed monk, you could say that your flesh is slowly turning to stone, explaining your Unarmored Defense and the increased damage of your Unarmed Strikes. If you're a warlock, you could say that your patron is preventing the curse from killing you—but only if you continue to carry out the tasks they assign you. If you want to play a dhampir from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, you could say that your condition is the result of a curse—one that seeks to overwhelm you with your hunger and force you to prey on your friends. Similarly, if your campaign is using Dark Gifts, Living Shadow and Touch of Death could be the result of curses.

HAUNTED

Ever since the siege began, Metrol has been plagued by the restless dead. As a haunted character, you could use the reborn lineage or the Echoing Soul Dark Gift from *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft* to reflect that you're a ghost inhabiting a new body. Who were you in your first life? How did you die? What was your relationship with the body you now inhabit? Alternatively, you could play a living character who has an ongoing relationship with one or more ghosts. As a warlock, your ghosts could fill the role of your patron; while the Undead patron is a logical choice, any patron's features could be explained as spectral gifts. As a cleric, your personal retinue of ghosts could be the source



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of your divine magic. As a barbarian, your rage could reflect channeling vengeful spirits. The Gathered Whispers Dark Gift is also appropriate here. With any haunted character, the key question is who these attendant spirits are and what they want. It could be that they have a very specific mission: they blame Queen Dannel for their deaths, and they are driving you to punish her. Or it could be that they are the ghosts of your family members or loved ones; their greatest concern is protecting you, and you're their last anchor to the world.

INSIDER

You weren't the subject of experiments: you're the person who performed them. As an artificer or a wizard, you may have learned your skills at the Forge or in the Kennels. If you're a rogue, you could have been an enforcer hunting traitors for the Shepherds. Why did you work for one of the oppressive forces that terrify the common people, and what changed between then and now? Were you horrified by the cruelty of the experiments being performed, or were you driven out by internal politics? Do you seek redemption or believe your actions were justified?

KENNEL-BORN

Within the Kennels, House Vadalis and House Jorasco work together to infuse humanoids with monstrous traits. This could explain a Dark Gift, such as Second Skin or Symbiotic Being. As a monk, you could say that your Unarmored Defense and Unarmed Strike reflect ways in which you've been changed. As a sorcerer, you could say that your Sorcerous Ancestry is something they implanted within you—they infused you with dragon's blood, and now you're manifesting claws, scales, and mystical powers. This could also be the basis for an unusual lineage, such as hexblood, dhampir, or tiefling; you weren't born like this, you were transformed into your current form. Are you unique, the only one to survive these experiments? Or are there others like you in the Kennels?

MEDICAL MIRACLE

Above the Kennels, Lord Pale of House Jorasco conducts vile experiments as he tries to break the walls of death. If you're playing a reborn character, it could be that Pale brought you back ... at least, *mostly* back. Or maybe you're the subject of a

radical brain transplant—and your current body isn't the one you were born with. So now you're an elf wizard, but you were born as a gnome. Do you know the previous identity of your current body? You might have to deal with lingering impacts from their life, even starting to remember things they knew, which could be a blessing or a curse. If you're using *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, this could explain the reborn lineage or the Echoing Soul Dark Gift.

RECONSTRUCTED

In the Forge, Starrin d'Cannith experiments with merging constructs and humanoids in ways Merrix d'Cannith never considered. The Reconstructed include people born of flesh and blood who are now largely constructs, as well as warforged who have been reverse engineered until they're almost human. This is a logical origin for a warforged character; how much of you is warforged? Did you begin as a construct or humanoid? Or you could instead play a character who's not warforged, but whose features reflect construct implants. For example, your sorcerer might have a metal arm imbued with a range of enchantments and assorted wands. Or as a monk, your Unarmored Defense could reflect actual steel skin. The Mastermaker artificer subclass presented in the next section specifically reflects the work being done with the Reconstructed; if you choose this archetype, you're following in the path of Starrin d'Cannith and Queen Dannel herself.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE?

A final question for each player to consider is what their character has to lose. Fear and suspense are essential elements of horror, but adventurers are characters who choose to put themselves in harm's way. As a player, you don't *want* your character to die, but we all know that the prospect is on the table ... and death itself is a very final option. To create a deeper and more horrific (and immersive) experience, it helps to give the DM more tools than simply life or death. What does your character care about? What can you lose aside from hit points? The Potential Losses table presents some ideas. As an adventurer in Dread Metrol, perhaps you're choosing to face danger to help your sickly brother—to find a way to break the curse that's



CHAPTER 1: THE DOMAIN OF METROL

causing him to waste away. Or perhaps your best friend is an entertainer who's starting to sing dangerously political songs; you keep telling her to shut up before the Shepherds come for her, but she won't listen. Perhaps you have a family business—a struggling tavern selling basement-brewed moonshine, or a shrine that your mother still tends. Perhaps you're afraid of losing your reputation; you're a folk hero, still celebrated for deeds you performed before the siege, but if you don't do something now to fight the injustices in Metrol, how long will it be before the people instead despise you?

On the one hand, giving the DM these details may feel counter-intuitive; you're providing them with a way to threaten or hurt your character. But the DM isn't your enemy—in fact, players and DMs are working together to create a compelling story. What is the story you *want* to experience? This is a horror campaign, and it's *supposed* to be frightening ... So what will actually frighten you? What chips are you willing to place on the table?

POTENTIAL LOSSES

d6 Potential Loss

- 1 **Family.** You have family in Dread Metrol. Are they safe, or currently threatened by plague or the Watch?
- 2 **Property.** You own a home or business in Dread Metrol. It may not currently be open, but you love it and want to get back to it.
- 3 **Friend.** You have a close friend who's not an adventurer—perhaps an old mentor, former comrade-in-arms, apprentice, or servant.
- 4 **Reputation.** You've developed a reputation and don't want to lose it. What are you known for? Heroism? Intellect? Generosity? Courage?
- 5 **Lover.** This could be a long, deep relationship, or someone you just met last night, but it's someone you truly care about.
- 6 **Power.** Your character's abilities are somehow at risk. This fits well for a cleric or warlock—if you don't follow the proper path, you could lose your magic—but depending on your twist, it could work for any character.



ARTIFICER SPECIALIST: MASTERMAKER

At 3rd level, an artificer gains the Artificer Specialist feature, which offers the choice of a subclass. This section presents a new specialist option, the Mastermaker.

A Mastermaker specializes in integrating flesh and steel, creating powerful construct limbs and replacing weak organs of flesh with components of metal and stone. The actions of a few renegade Mastermakers have caused House Cannith to shun this path in Eberron, but an artificer might learn these techniques in Dread Metrol or develop them on their own.

TOOLS OF INTEGRATION

3rd-level Mastermaker feature

You gain proficiency with heavy armor and smith's tools. If you already have this tool proficiency, you gain proficiency with one other type of artisan's tools of your choice.

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MASTERMAKER SPELLS

3rd-level Mastermaker feature

You always have certain spells prepared after you reach particular levels in this class, as shown in the Mastermaker Spells table. These spells count as artificer spells for you, but they don't count against the number of artificer spells you prepare.

MASTERMAKER SPELLS

Artificer Level	Spells
3rd	<i>absorb elements, thunderous smite</i>
5th	<i>enhance ability, lesser restoration</i>
9th	<i>blinding smite, haste</i>
13th	<i>freedom of movement, stone shape</i>
17th	<i>banishing smite, greater restoration</i>

PROSTHESIS EXPERTISE

3rd-level Mastermaker feature

Whenever you finish a long rest, you can touch a nonmagical object and imbue it with your power, creating a permanent magical item that replaces a lost limb—a hand, arm, foot, leg, or similar body part. While the prosthetic is attached, it functions identically to the part it replaces. The wearer can detach or reattach it as an action, and it can't be removed against the wearer's will. It detaches if the wearer dies.

BATTLEFIST

3rd-level Mastermaker feature

You replace one of your arms with a battlefist, a magical prosthetic you created. Your battlefist is a simple melee weapon, and you can use it as a spellcasting focus for your artificer spells. While your battlefist is a magical weapon, it can be infused as if it were a nonmagical weapon.

When you attack with your battlefist, you can use your Intelligence modifier instead of Strength for the attack roll. If you hit with it, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d10 + your Strength or Intelligence modifier. At 9th level, the damage dealt by your battlefist increases to 2d10 + your Strength or Intelligence modifier.

Additionally, you can choose one of the following weapon properties to add to your battlefist: finesse, thrown (range 20/60), or reach. When you finish a long rest, you can replace this property with a different weapon property from the list.

EXTRA ATTACK

5th-level Mastermaker feature

You can attack twice, rather than once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

IMPROVED BATTLEFIST

9th-level Mastermaker feature

You have modified your battlefist in both mundane and magical ways. It gains the following benefits:

- When you infuse your battlefist, you can apply two infusions to it at a time. If both infusions grant bonuses to your attack rolls or armor class, you gain only the greater bonus.
- Your battlefist is also a shield, increasing your armor class by 2. You can wield it as a weapon even if you are using it as a shield. You can infuse it as if it were both a simple melee weapon and a shield.
- The maximum number of items you can infuse at once increases by 1, but the extra infusion must be applied to your battlefist.

CONSTRUCT APOTHEOSIS

15th-level Mastermaker feature

You have modified your form, becoming nearly impervious to the weaknesses of flesh. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain resistance to poison damage and psychic damage, and you are immune to the poisoned condition.
- If you are affected by a spell or magical effect, you can choose to consider yourself a construct instead of your other creature types.
- You can cast the *antilife shell* and *investiture of stone*^{XGE} spells without expending a spell slot, without preparing the spell, and without material components, provided you use your battlefist as the spellcasting focus. Once you cast either spell with this feature, you can't cast that spell with it again until you finish a long rest.





CHAPTER 2: THE MOURNING AFTER

ULTIMATELY, THIS BATTLE IS between life and death. Our people are wracked by hunger and tormented by disease, while our enemy fears neither. But as a smith sharpens a sword, we can improve our flesh. We must change our people, give them the strength they need to withstand the plagues. And if our people are starving, we must find a way to change their appetites.

—Lady Vera Seryan d’Vadalis

ABOUT THE ADVENTURE

“The Mourning After” is an 8- to 12-hour starter adventure for a party of four to six 1st-level characters, who advance to 4th level by the adventure’s conclusion. It is set in Dread Metrol and serves as an introduction to this Domain of Dread. This can be the beginning of a longer campaign in Dread Metrol, or the characters can return to their plane of origin—or another Domain of Dread—at the end of the adventure.

BACKGROUND

The people of Metrol have endured nearly four years of isolation and siege. Every night, the undead forces assault the city; meanwhile, within Metrol’s walls, people fight famine, plague, and all too often, one another. Queen Dannel ir’Wynarn has instituted draconian measures to bolster Metrol’s defense. One of the most horrific is her decision to let House Vadalis use her people as fodder for their experiments as they seek to create living weapons.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure requires the fifth edition D&D rulebooks, including the *Player’s Handbook* and the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*. You can learn more about the settings of Ravenloft and Eberron in *Van Richten’s Guide to Ravenloft*, *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*, and *Exploring Eberron* (available on the Dungeon Masters Guild), though they aren’t needed to run this adventure.

Before DMing this adventure, you should read this entire chapter first, taking special note of the

CHAPTER 2: THE MOURNING AFTER

two story hooks offered in part 1 and choosing the path that fits your group the best. If you'd prefer to play instead of serving as DM, don't read any farther!

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a special circumstance, as described in the text.

LEVEL ADVANCEMENT

This adventure assumes that you are using milestone leveling for your campaign, beginning with a party of 1st-level characters. The characters advance from 1st to 2nd level when they have finished their first long rest in Metrol and are ready to cross the Bridge of the Dead. They advance from 2nd to 3rd level after rescuing Crane from the convoy and obtaining his "key." They advance from 3rd to 4th level at the end of the adventure, after they have destroyed or recovered the cure from the Vadalis laboratory.

OPTIONAL MECHANIC: STRESS

While this adventure is designed to be played as written, particularly well-tuned parties may like a greater challenge. If you and your players would enjoy it, consider introducing the Stress rules from chapter 4 of *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, which can add weight to in-world events.

The Stressful Events table gives examples of events throughout the adventure that might affect a character's Stress Score. However, adding stress for all the listed events would likely prove deadly—so use these judiciously! And consider allowing characters to remove all stress after a long rest. Not all players want a harrowing or deadly experience, so discuss the desired difficulty with your group first.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is divided into five main sections:

Part 1: Into Metrol. This section offers two paths for introducing the adventure. If the player characters are citizens of Dread Metrol itself, a night at the tavern turns into disaster when they're caught up in a Vadalis raid. If the player characters are adventurers from Eberron, they're hired to investigate experiments at a Vadalis ranch, only to find themselves drawn into the Mists and deposited in Metrol.

Part 2: Herded. The adventurers find themselves prisoners about to be processed in the Vadalis Kennels. An assault by the Unbroken resistance provides an opportunity to escape—and in the process, they meet a valuable ally.

Part 3: State of War. The party makes their way across besieged Metrol's brutal landscape, searching for a safe haven. To reach relative safety, the adventurers must cross the Bridge of the Dead—but the price of passage is high.

Part 4: The Unbroken. The player characters make contact with the resistance. After aiding the Unbroken in rescuing a valuable informant, tragedy strikes.

Part 5: The End Is the Beginning is the End. To earn sanctuary, the adventurers embark on a deadly mission into the very compound they so recently escaped, infiltrating a high-security research lab in search of a mysterious serum.

Two appendixes follow the adventure, containing further resources for DMs:

Appendix A: Friends and Foes contains creature statistics for all adventure encounters.

Appendix B: Maps provides full-page versions of the maps in this adventure. Your supplement download also includes high-resolution copies of these maps in a zipped folder.

STRESSFUL EVENTS

Section	Event
Part 2: Volunteers	Being abducted
Part 3: A Concerned Citizen	Being betrayed by the citizen
Part 3: Climbing Over Each Other	Seeing Grovaine execute the patsies
Part 3: Apartment Hunting	Killing the clerks
Part 3: A Bird in the Hand	Betraying Ping or Eyrena
Part 4: Doves of War	Doves torn apart by deadwings
Part 4: Delivering Crane	Bursters burst
Part 5: The Kennels	Vomiting from the froghemoth eggs
Part 5: Arachnoquestrum	Seeing Maxille cut away her arm
Part 5: "Opera" House	Killing one of the harpies
Part 5: The Cure (or later)	Drinking a potion with a negative effect
Part 5: Getting Out	Failing to rescue patients

PART 1: INTO METROL

This adventure offers two different opening paths for introducing players to Dread Metrol. While the opening scene you choose influences the motivations of each player character, the rest of the adventure develops the same way regardless of which path you select here. Either way, players should begin with 1st-level characters.

If you plan for the player characters to already be residents of Dread Metrol at the beginning of the adventure, run path A, “Denizens of Darkness.” Before choosing this path, it’s essential that you clearly communicate with your players about the horrors their characters would have endured over the last four years in this grim starting scenario.

If you plan for the player characters to be from Eberron (or any other setting) and stumble into the Mists, run path B, “Into the Mists.” This offers players a less horrific experience, along with the opportunity to play more traditionally heroic characters—albeit in a grim and deadly setting.

Regardless of which path you choose, remember to implement safety tools to ensure the game stays fun for everyone. The “Content Warning” in this book’s introduction suggests resources you can use.

PATH A: DENIZENS OF DARKNESS

Only run this path if the player characters are native to Dread Metrol. Otherwise, run path B, “Into the Mists,” instead.

In lieu of traditional adventure hooks, this path focuses on providing players an opportunity to intimately and dramatically tie their characters to Dread Metrol. After players have a chance to establish their ties to each other and the city, the real action will begin in part 2, “Herded.” If you prefer, path A could easily take place as part of your session zero or be conducted in text via group chat, as it primarily sets the scene for the events in part 2.

For the last four years, Metrol has been besieged by the undead forces of Karrnath. Though food and spirits are in short supply, a few taverns remain open—after all, people still crave companionship in the darkest of times. The Titan’s Shoe is just such a tavern in the Market Triangle district of Northshore. It is not a Ghallanda tavern; most of the house’s own franchises have been converted into gruel kitchens that distribute the vile ragout. The Titan’s Shoe is a small local tavern; if one of the player characters is a former guild merchant, it could even belong to them. Otherwise, it’s just a place that each of the characters feels a connection to—and one where they’ll be targeted by a Vadalis squad looking for test subjects for the Kennels.

CHARACTERS FROM DREAD METROL

In path A, the player characters were in Metrol on the Day of Mourning when it was taken by the Mists. In the four years since, these unfortunate souls have led desperate lives, subject to the cruel whims of the regime’s horrific unending war against the Karrnathi hordes. As the adventure opens, the characters don’t think of themselves as adventurers—they’ve got enough problems struggling to survive, and likely haven’t yet considered trying to change the way things are. Yet these characters have connections: friends, relatives, comrades-in-arms, or simply kind strangers they’ve shared bread with during times of hunger.

If you are starting this adventure using path A, “Denizens of Darkness,” begin character creation by following the process in the “Adventurers from Metrol” section in the first chapter of this book. This gives the players a basic understanding of the situation and guides them through creating characters that have concrete ties to Metrol. Consider the possibility of characters being Kennel-born—subjects of Vadalis experiments—which will make the early events of the adventure feel quite personal.

While creating characters for this path, it’s recommended that nobody begin with a connection to either Queen Dannel or the Unbroken—the characters will develop their ties to the Unbroken over the course of this adventure.

PART 1: INTO METROL

THE TITAN'S SHOE

At this moment in time, the player characters don't think of themselves as adventurers—they're simply survivors. But they may also be friends, relatives, or business partners. The one thing that's certain is that they all like to drink in a tavern called the Titan's Shoe. Read or paraphrase the following:

The Titan's Shoe tavern smells of whatever desperate people in war-torn bars smoke. It's been a long time since the establishment had any ale or wine, but the owner brews a serviceable moonshine ... and beyond that, people crave company as much as drink. A scarred shifter with burnt-orange fur perches atop a wooden table, playing an upbeat tune on her well-worn fiddle. In a circle around this makeshift stage, a half-dozen patrons sit cross-legged on the floor, picking at the gruel in their rough bowls in respectful silence, while other patrons make conversation at nearby tables.

If the players haven't already done so, you can take a moment for them to discuss their characters, how they know each other, and what brings them to the tavern today. The amount of time you spend with this section depends on how much your players enjoy improvisation and collaborative storytelling. The goal is to establish strong bonds between at least a few of the characters, and to give them a few personal ties to Metrol. For suggestions for character backgrounds, twists, and bonds, see the "Adventurers From Metrol" section in chapter 1.

Once the players have established their characters and you're ready to move on, read or paraphrase the following. Feel free to work in details that the players developed through collaboration.

Three colorful lights spring up—seemingly out of nowhere—and begin to dance fairylike across the smoke, punctuated by a child's laughter from a dark corner of the common room. There, a young elf woman twirls her thin fingers in rhythm with the lights and the music—and under her collar, the glowing strands of a dragonmark can be glimpsed. Near her, two small children stand with eyes wide, raptly watching the dancing lights. The older man beside them—perhaps their father? grandfather?—smiles in grateful relief at the joy in their faces. He cautiously drops a potato and an egg, rare treasures in these times, into a bowl at the elf's feet.

The touching sight is blocked by the figure of the burly dwarf server finally making his way to your table. Whatever he was about to say is interrupted suddenly by the sound of a breaking window. Yellow smoke fills the room, and the dwarf's eyes widen. "Vadalis knockout gas," he grunts just before his legs buckle beneath him.

And then, as the debilitating gas takes hold, bright lights overwhelm your vision as once-hidden glyphs scrawled across the tables activate. As their magic takes hold, you're unable to resist and quickly slip from consciousness.

When augmented by the glyphs hidden on each of the tavern's tables, the Vadalis knockout gas can't be resisted, and it even affects creatures that don't need to breathe. Once the characters are unconscious, agents slip in and abduct them for experimentation; proceed to part 2, "Herded."

UNHOLY VAULT DESIGNS



PATH B: INTO THE MISTS

Only run this path if the player characters are from Eberron (or another world), not from Dread Metrol. Otherwise, run path A, “Denizens of Darkness,” instead.

This adventure opening takes place in current-day “Eberron proper.” The characters find themselves at the gates of a Vadalis magebreeding facility on the outskirts of the city of Gatherhold, on a covert mission to investigate it without raising suspicion.

In contrast with path A (which simply sets the scene for the post-abduction action in part 2), this path starts off with a traditional encounter. It’s designed to be played freeform, short and sweet, with no combat. The adventurers should poke around the ranch just long enough to raise their suspicions, with the tension slowly ramping up as they do. The Mists then transition them to the main storyline in part 2, “Herded.”

ABOUT THE RANCH

Established over two decades ago, House Vadalis’s Gatherhold Uplands Animal Research & Development Facility transitioned from wartime operations to an innocuous magebreeding ranch, catering mainly to rich tourists and adventurers wishing to explore the Talenta Plains astride an unusual mount or beside a trusty animal companion. The facility’s public name was changed to the more friendly Whitewood Ranch, but longtime employees still often refer to it as “the facility.”

Though always looked at with suspicion by the nomads, the ranch’s primary operation is exactly as it seems, its various stables and kennels containing many expensive and well-bred animal specimens.

One nondescript building of the ranch contains a secret underground laboratory where more exotic experiments take place; some of these were once conducted at a facility in Metrol, but Vadalis fortuitously transitioned many operations to Gatherhold shortly before the Day of Mourning. The building can only be accessed by authorized personnel with a Mark of Handling, protecting House Vadalis’s proprietary magics; most of Whitewood’s employees aren’t privy to the research that takes place there.

The secret lab’s most recent magebreeding experiment focuses on the creation of a hybrid spider-horse. The Vadalis team was on the verge

of breakthrough with their most recent test subject, but an unexplained event involving a strange mist caused a specimen—along with one of the magewrights, Serna d’Vadalis—to disappear entirely. Internal investigations into this have been fruitless and the disappearances kept carefully under wraps.

Unbeknownst to the researchers, the disappearance was a result of the Mists pulling Serna and the spider-horse into Dread Metrol—where other Vadalis researchers had simultaneously succeeded in their own plan to create the spider-horse. Serna remains stuck in Dread Metrol, unreachable by *sending* or any other magic. Meanwhile, the Mists altered the spider-horse in nightmarish ways, then deposited it in the wilderness near the ranch, where it has been hunting clawfoot raptors and taking them to its underground lair.

CHARACTERS FROM ANOTHER SETTING

In path B, the player characters come from another setting (likely Eberron, but the Mists can draw in wayward folk from all across the multiverse). They know nothing of Dread Metrol at the beginning of the adventure and are drawn into the setting by mysterious mists.

For characters from Eberron, things start out as any other day—the Mourning happened four years ago, Metrol is nothing but a distant ruin, and it’s another day for adventure.

The characters on this path still experience the dark world of Dread Metrol, but they begin as observers, strangers thrust into unending terror. There is still darkness and horror, but it is newly discovered. Apart from survival, these characters’ motivations will likely focus on exploring the strange new world, then escaping it. In knowing that another, better world lies just beyond the Mists, there is hope. Meanwhile, in this grim city, the characters have no anchors, no friends. Help comes at a cost and trust is hard to buy.

Instead of coming from Eberron, characters might be brought to Dread Metrol from worlds as distant as the Forgotten Realms, Ravnica, Theros, and beyond. A visit to Dread Metrol can serve as an introduction to the horrors of Eberron, and might even serve as a stepping-stone to crossing into Eberron proper. If you wish to take this route, you’ll need to make adjustments to path B’s characters and locations to fit your campaign’s original world—ultimately, the most important part is that they somehow enter the Mists, pass out, and wake up in the opening of part 2.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventurers might be drawn into investigating the ranch through any of the following hooks:

Missing Clawfoots. A tribe of Talenta nomads reports that several of their clawfoot raptors have recently gone missing. They suspect the Vadalis magebreeding facility on the outskirts of Gatherhold may be responsible, and have asked House Ghallanda to investigate. To avoid diplomatic tensions, House Ghallanda has quietly engaged a team of adventurers in the guise of potential buyers to snoop around the facility.

Talenta Halfings. A Talentan player character might personally know a nomad whose clawfoot was stolen, or they could simply hear of it through the grapevine and be offended by the raptor-rustling. The bond between nomad and mount is sacred, and the idea of foreigners stealing raptors and experimenting on them is deeply offensive.

House Vadalis. Serna d'Vadalis is an acquaintance or former colleague of a player character from House Vadalis, and they became worried when Serna fell out of contact several weeks ago. When the player character attempted to check into it within the house, they found themselves being suspiciously stonewalled. This is an opportunity to take a look in person.

House Ghallanda. House Ghallanda has heard of the raptor disappearances, and between their interests in Gatherhold and the potential involvement of a rival dragonmarked house, they'd like eyes on the situation. They're very clear with the characters that they're "entirely uninvolved" with the mission and want to keep it that way. However, should the party *happen* to discover anything of particular interest, they would appreciate being personally apprised.

A DAY AT THE RANCH

Regardless of the individual adventure hooks, the characters find themselves as part of a group tasked with—quietly and diplomatically—snooping around Whitewood Ranch, a Vadalis facility in the Talenta Plains. The ranch stands on the northern outskirts of Gatherhold, within easy walking distance of the city. The party has an appointment to ostensibly procure mounts for traveling into the Talentan wilds, as adventurers are wont to do, but their secret goal is to look for signs of suspicious activity at the ranch—especially regarding clawfoot raptors. Although the characters would've had a chance to meet each other (or possibly even adventure together) prior to visiting the ranch, their arrival at the gates provides an opportunity for the players to introduce themselves in character.

When the party arrives at the ranch, read or paraphrase the following:

Whitewood Ranch stretches north from the city proper, its snow-white wooden fence marking its territory near the road and lightning rail that run parallel all the way to Karnnath.

Behind the fence, horses can be seen grazing on a hilly grassland, while beyond them, pristine white buildings peek out from the terrain. The gate you find yourselves at is made of the same white wood as the fence, its only decoration the brown and green of House Vadalis's heraldic hippogriff.

A middle-aged human, sporting a trim red beard and white shirt neatly tucked into tan pants, brings his bareback horse to halt on the other side of the fence. He hops nimbly off before approaching to escort you into the ranch. "Welcome to Whitewood! Eizek d'Vadalis at your service," he says with a polite smile.



NPC: EIZEK D'VADALIS*lawful neutral human, he/him*

Eizek d'Vadalis (**noble**) is polite, professional, and unquestionably loyal to House Vadalis. In his role as Head of Whitewood Customer Relations, he is chiefly responsible for showing the facility and the house in a good light, regardless of whether a purchase is made. Eizek is genuinely friendly, albeit in a salesmanlike manner. He loves the sound of his own voice and can go on endlessly about the virtues of this facility, House Vadalis, their stock, fine Talenta weather, and so on.

What Does He Know? Eizek knows a lot about a great deal of many things, none of which are of particular interest or import to the characters. He has no idea about any clawfoot abductions, and despite knowing not to discuss Vadalis secrets, truly doesn't know what is happening in the secret area. While Eizek is quite insightful when it comes to customer needs, he's genuinely not expecting any sort of "spy group" and is used to customers asking odd questions, so he doesn't grow suspicious even if the characters pry.

During casual conversation, he mentions how thankful he is that much of this facility's research was moved from Metrol before the Mourning, and "just in the nick of time."

What Does He Want? Satisfied customers, and to protect the good name and reputation of Whitewood and House Vadalis.

BRED FOR PERFECTION

The facility's main buildings lie a few hundred yards from the gate. After introducing himself and allowing the same opportunity for the characters, Eizek sends his horse away and accompanies the characters to the compound, regaling them with tales of fine Vadalis work all the way. Eizek may ramble on about topics like the following:

- "You probably wonder about the white fences! It's a proprietary Vadalis enchantment—we breed the trees to grow with white wood, and it never fades, no painting required! Once we're over that hill, you'll see a small grove in the distance, just there."
- "My horse—like all our animals, of course—is magebred. Obedient, quick, intelligent. That large building there is our equine area, and I have some excellent specimens to show you. While the locals sing the praises of raptors and tribex, for my money, a well-bred horse is still unsurpassed for most long-range journeys!"
- "Will your adventures have you sleeping in the wilderness? If so, consider one of our alarm animals. We offer a wide array of creatures bred

to wake you—loudly or quietly as you wish—in case of danger! They won't help you pull on that heavy armor though, haha!"

As the tour continues, Eizek eventually escorts the characters into a large area with buildings, each made of the same pristine white wood. The buildings are quite large and spread out, some hundreds of feet from others. The ranch includes a stable with horses, barns containing tribex and fastieths, a kennel for mastiffs and other canines, and another building with smaller, familiar-like animals—these are the "alarm animals" that Eizek is particularly proud of, an innovation of Whitewood.

The character in the party with the highest passive Intelligence (Investigation) score notices that one of the buildings has a different door than the others. While all the buildings are made of white wood, this building's door is made of white-painted metal, and above the door handle, where a lock would typically be, there's instead a black plate with a dragonmark symbol engraved in it. With a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check, a character can identify it as the Mark of Handling. Characters from dragonmarked houses succeed on the check automatically.

If asked about the building, Eizek very matter-of-factly answers, "That's our Proprietary Research Laboratory! It's where the magic happens, if you will. It is unfortunately off-limits to unauthorized personnel," then continues the tour. Eizek is blissfully ignorant of the goings on in the Proprietary Research Laboratory.

Throughout the various buildings, there are occasional Whitewood workers; while they're friendly enough, they're not particularly talkative, as they have work to do, and yield no useful information.

WHITWOOD BUILDINGS

Neither the tour nor the contents of individual buildings are of particular significance for this adventure. If characters ask about a specific type of animal or creature that could reasonably be found at a Vadalis facility in the Talenta Plains (this includes local dinosaurs other than clawfoots—which the facility notably has not yet started working with), you can add another building that contains such creatures and have Eizek take the party there. The overall theme is that everything here is incredibly pristine, orderly, and very corporate—the area is suspiciously devoid of anything that would raise suspicion.

PART 1: INTO METROL

GETTING INTO THE LAB

The characters will need to either distract or get rid of Eizek so that they can snoop around the Proprietary Lab's entrance. In order to progress the adventure through the Mists to Dread Metrol, any reasonable attempt to do this should succeed with minimal cost. For example, a successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception) or Dexterity (Stealth) check could enable a character to distract him or slip away without being noticed. If the characters fail repeated attempts, see the "Caught!" sidebar.

CAUGHT!

If the characters sufficiently arouse Eizek's suspicions, blatantly fail their escape attempts, or are otherwise unable to sneak or bluff their way to an encounter with the spider-horse in the lab basement, they must still be scooped up by the Mists. Fortunately, the mysterious nature of the Mists allows the characters to be taken at any time, anywhere, interrupting unexpected activities if necessary.

In this case, the malformed spider-horse instead escapes its confinement and bursts in on the player characters as they argue their innocence (or go about their business elsewhere in the ranch). Read the description of the spider-horse given below, including the Mists enveloping the characters, then continue to part 2.

Once the party gives Eizek the slip, they easily find the Proprietary Lab. The custom *arcane lock* on its door allows a human with the Mark of Handling to enter by tracing a preset symbol across a black metal plate.

Conveniently, there is occasional traffic in and out of the building, and if a character wishes, it's not difficult to wait around the corner and prevent the door from closing—those who work here don't expect spies or subterfuge, so they aren't paying particular attention. Characters can enter the lab unnoticed with a successful DC 10 group or individual Dexterity (Stealth) check or Charisma (Stealth) check.

It is possible that the party may split here, with only a single character going below to investigate. While you can give them an opportunity to get the rest of the party inside, it's not a problem for the adventure if only one character goes in.

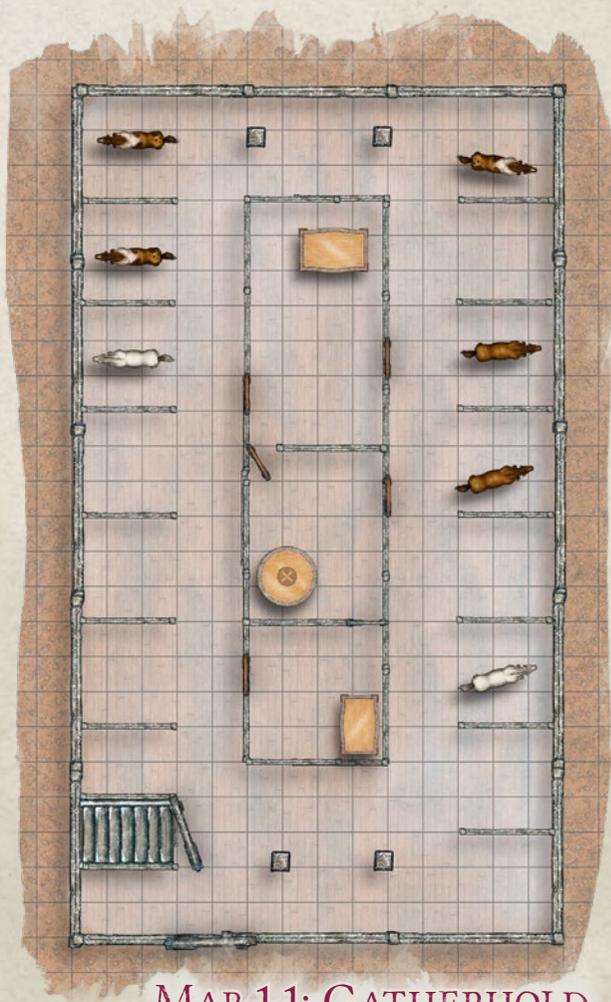
THE PROPRIETARY LAB

The main floor of the lab is a large stable-like structure with many stalls. While this scene doesn't require a battle map and the contents of individual rooms don't matter, you can use map 1.1 for reference. The interior is once again pristine, with only one oblivious worker on the main floor. There are lots of partitions and columns for the characters to keep themselves out of view if they so wish.

Not far from the entry door, a metal stairway leads down, soon turning into older stone stairs. As a character descends the steps, read or paraphrase the following:

The older stone stairs lead down to a maze of corridors. Everbright lanterns light the stone walls with a white, clinical light that flickers occasionally into shadows as figures pass by them.

The halls echo with unintelligibly muffled conversations coming from a distance. A sound of soft moaning comes from beyond one of the doors, although the echoes make it difficult to tell which.



MAP 1.1: GATHERHOLD LAB, LEVEL A

INKARNATE / ANDREW BISHKINSKYI

PART 1: INTO METROL

The unmarked walls, identical doors, and echoing make the corridors disorienting and hard to navigate. Regardless of which way the characters explore, they soon come upon a room where the soft moaning is coming from. While this scene doesn't require a battle map and the contents of individual rooms don't matter, you can use map 1.2 for reference.

When the door is opened, read or paraphrase the following:

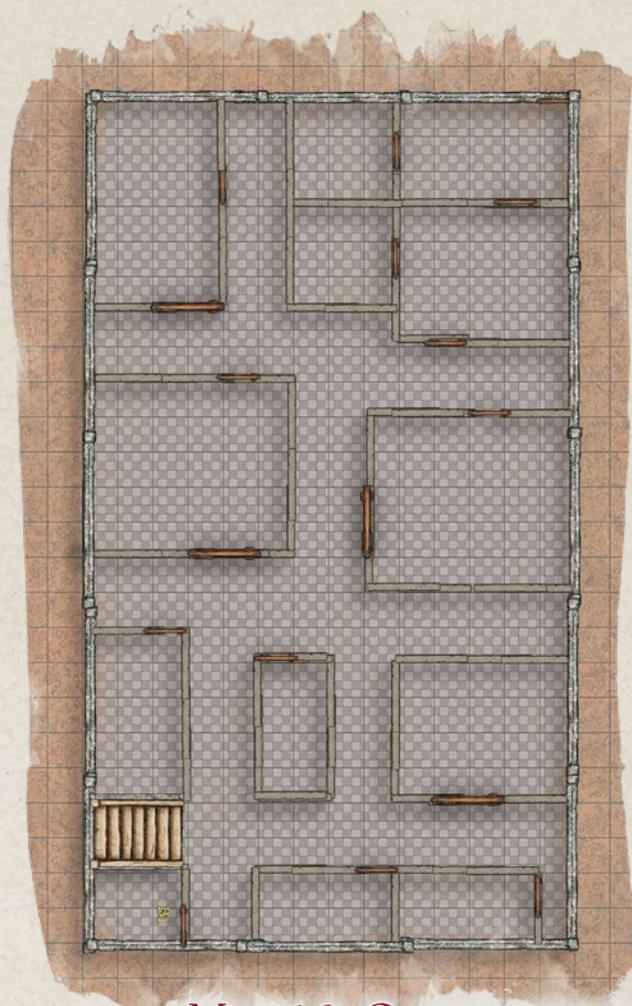
The light inside this room is a softer incandescent color. A gurgling cough and moan come from a large grotesque creature lying in a pool of fetid liquid on the floor. The creature looks toward the door, its many bulbous insectoid eyes turning atop its horse-like head.

The creature's mane merges into a moist chitinous spider thorax, and behind that, a pulsating abdomen. Folded limply beneath the monstrosity lie eight malformed spider-like legs—each ending in hooves. The creature attempts to drag itself toward the door using these limp appendages, but in vain. It succeeds only in getting them stuck in the thick liquid that looks to be a combination of blood and white silk.

Suddenly, spreading all around the malformed spider-horse, a dark mist begins to appear. The creature moans louder and tries to buck in alarm, seemingly panicked by the phenomenon. In an instant, the mist explodes, flowing everywhere—in the room, in the corridor—wrapping itself around you like a cold tendril.

After that, darkness claims you.

When the Mists appear, they appear not only inside the room, but anywhere where the characters may be—even if not all characters went to investigate the Proprietary Lab. There is no escaping the Mists. As the characters are spirited away, the scene fades to black. Proceed to part 2, "Herded."



MAP 1.2: GATHERHOLD
LAB, LEVEL B



PART 2: HERDED

Regardless of whether the adventurers began with path A or B (or stumbled through the Mists another way), they find themselves waking from unconsciousness in a Vadalis holding facility—one built in the shadow of the Kennels, a grand Vermishard spire in Dread Metrol. The Kennels proper are a fortress laboratory built into and below one of the massive Vermishard spires, surrounded by smaller facilities—including the temporary holding facility in which the adventurers awake. If the player characters are from Dread Metrol, they regain consciousness here after having been hit with knockout gas during the opening scene, while characters who began the adventure in the Talenta Plains are deposited here by the Mists in an unconscious state.

VOLUNTEERS

As this scene begins, the characters lie unconscious on the floor of a Vadalis holding facility in Dread Metrol. Their weapons, shields, and spellcasting implements have been taken by the guards—anything that might present a threat or enable escape—but they’ve been left clothed and unbound, with their armor and other possessions. Read or paraphrase the following:

You regain consciousness in near darkness, the strong smell of sweat and rot permeating the air. The wooden floor you’re lying upon vibrates with the shuffling and movement of several dozen people, some in heavy boots that pound like hammers on the worn planks.

You find yourself in a large open room divided only by rough stalls with low walls. A muted gray light shines through small cracks in the outer walls, as if on a dark stormy day. “Hey, you, get up or they’ll beat you!” comes a hushed voice, its source quickly moving on to shake someone else awake.

The adventurers regain consciousness moments before the Vadalis Kennel guards come to herd the three dozen or so “volunteers,” including the player characters, away for “improvements.”

They find themselves in a building that was once a stable but was roughly converted years ago to house humanoids. The stalls may hold bedrolls, or in some cases, nothing but straw or a piece of worn furniture. Some of the building’s occupants—of which there are several dozen—have personal effects, but none valuable. The place is not intended to house people for more than a day or two. Characters can quickly ascertain these things with appropriate DC 10 ability checks.

Adventurers who have come from the Talenta Plains recognize the layout of the barn as being exactly the same as one of the animal barns they visited at Whitewood. A closer inspection reveals that the structure is made of the familiar Vadalis whitewood, though covered in enough grime to look gray-brown now. The adventurers find that—at the whim of the Mists—neither the spider-horse nor other ranch NPCs were transported with them. None of the occupants of the holding area saw them appear—the unlucky citizens of Metrol were brought here unconscious after a Vadalis raid on a local tavern, and when they woke up, the player characters were there; they assumed the party was just another group of “volunteers.”

If the characters are from Dread Metrol, they immediately recognize this as a holding area

PART 2: HERDED

outside of the Vadalis Kennels. Any character that was subjected to previous Vadalis experiments (such as the Kennel-born from chapter 1) has likely been here themselves; for them, this is a terrible history repeating itself.

DIFFERENCES FROM PART 1

While the adventure paths converge here, the characters' plane of origin will significantly impact how they view unfolding events and how the people around them view the adventurers. Parties based in Dread Metrol recognize others from the tavern in this room, and likewise, the adventurers are known to other locals. Parties deposited by the Mists are strangers here—though the citizens of Dread Metrol are accustomed to occasionally running into refugees from another district, the adventurers (and their likely well-maintained clothing) will be oddities. Be sure to play on the characters' connections to Dread Metrol—or lack thereof—throughout the rest of the adventure.

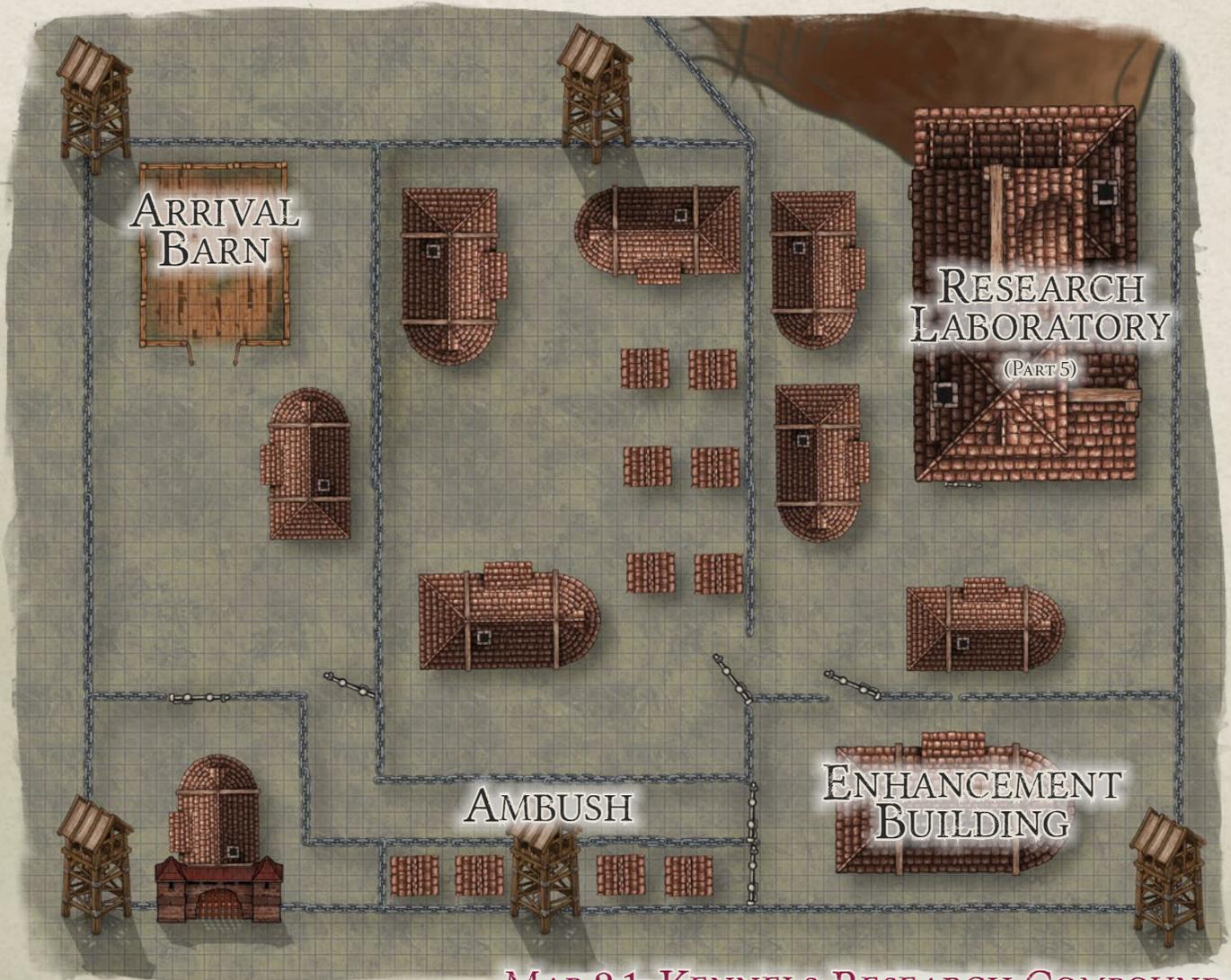
ON THE MARCH

The armed and armored Vadalis guards—including four **guards** and four **heavy guards**—slowly and methodically herd the occupants outside, making sure that they get everyone, and that no one gives them any trouble. All the volunteers—except for the player characters and the soon-to-be-introduced Vesile—are **commoners**. After everyone has left the building, the guards begin escorting everyone southeast across the compound to the enhancement building—the “House of Screams,” as shown on map 2.1.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

During the herding and the initial part of the walk outside, the adventurers get a chance to interact with others to better understand their situation.

The guards don't interfere if characters quietly talk to others during the walk, other than perhaps shouting, “Hey you, get moving!” However, the other volunteers being herded are all terrified of



MAP 2.1: KENNELS RESEARCH COMPOUND

PART 2: HERDED

the guards and afraid to step out of line, so they don't want to have long conversations, especially if they don't already know the player characters. Still, during the march to a different building, the party can learn the following over the course of several brief interactions with other volunteers:

- They're at the Vadalis Kennels.
- House Vadalis is experimenting on the populace, trying to create living weapons that can fight the Karrnathi undead.
- Few of the people subjected to the experiments survive, and those who do usually have strange and gruesome side effects.
- When House Vadalis runs out of volunteers—which is most of the time—they send out teams to acquire new stock.
- They are being taken for experimentation and enhancement to the “House of Screams” below the Vermishard.

Adventurers from beyond the Mists will likely be extremely disoriented. They might not yet realize they're in another world, though any characters who were familiar with Metrol before the Day of Mourning would quickly recognize the city and its distinctive Vermishards—which would be baffling considering Cyre was destroyed. Characters that aren't from Dread Metrol also learn the following from conversation:

- They're in the city of Metrol, which was *not* destroyed in the Last War.
- Something very strange happened 4 years ago—the city was suddenly cut off from the rest of the world and surrounded by mists. There are rumors that a terrible cataclysm destroyed the rest of Eberron!
- The Last War is still going, and Metrol is continually besieged by Karrnathi undead.

Adventurers from Dread Metrol spot at least two characters among the volunteers who some or all of the player characters know:

- A hobgoblin named **Vesile** (she/her) has ties to the black market and has been able to get the characters contraband goods in the past.
- A personal acquaintance of one of the characters has been rounded up as a volunteer. This could be someone described in the Titan's Shoe tavern, or someone tied to a character's background story.



NPC: VESILE DHAKAAN

neutral good hobgoblin, she/her

Vesile is a young adult hobgoblin who once had aspirations to become a *duur'kala*, following the bardic tradition of the ancient Dhakaani goblins. She has taken the second name Dhakaan as an inspiration and stage name. Vesile is personable, well-connected, and known for being able to mysteriously procure things. Unbeknownst to most, she is also connected to the Unbroken, a resistance movement that opposes Queen Dannel's regime. Above all, she is a survivor.

What Does She Want? Vesile wants to escape—and if she can, get as many others safely away as possible. She understands that sacrifices must be made, and for some to find freedom, others may have to fall in the chaos. She has accepted that her own safety is more important to the resistance than that of others, and has no plans to unduly risk herself.

What Does She Know? As the volunteers are being moved, Vesile recognizes a secret sign from beyond the fence—perhaps two people flashing hand signals at each other, or a resistance symbol scrawled in chalk. She rightly guesses that an attack is coming and begins looking at options. She knows that the fence is electrified and that the resistance likely plans something to allow escape.

PART 2: HERDED

SIGHTSEEING

As the characters move toward the enhancement building, they pass the following notable sights:

Courtyard. Outside the stable is a small courtyard, beyond which the city of Metrol can be seen. The late afternoon skies are gray, with dark mists on the horizon in every direction.

Vermishard of Gold. Characters who aren't from Dread Metrol but who were familiar with Metrol before the Day of Mourning recognize that the Vermishard of Gold—one of the great spires of Metrol—lies collapsed across part of the city.

Spider-horse. In the courtyard, a guard sits mounted on a spider-horse (reminiscent of the failed experiment in path B of this adventure, except this one is fully functional). The monstrosity has a Vadalis brand on its side.

Exterior Fence. On the outside perimeter, the compound has 20-foot-high razor-wire fencing, and a guard tower stands in each corner.

Compound Interior. The compound, which surrounds the towering Vermishard spire, is divided into several large sections by assorted stone and wooden walls. The holding barn where the characters come from is one of many.

During their slow shuffling toward a dark destiny, the characters may also be able to learn additional things with successful checks. Here are some suggestions, but feel free to substitute other appropriate checks and abilities if it makes sense.

DC 13 Wisdom (Insight): The hobgoblin Vesile has started getting restless. She seems to be expecting something.

DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation): If anyone tried to climb the razor-wire fence, it'd likely kill or entrap them—and the guards in the towers have heavy crossbows and clear lines of sight to anyone trying for the fence.

DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival): There are no birds on the fence, though several perch on surrounding roofs, suggesting the fence may be dangerous to touch. Indeed, it's magically electrified and deals 2d8 lightning damage to anyone touching it.

DC 10 Wisdom (Perception): Some guards carry packs on their back, which appear to hold personal effects confiscated from the volunteers.

DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine): Most of the volunteers are malnourished and too weak to fight.

OUTMATCHED

If the player characters resort to violence or try to fight their way out before the next section (in which the Unbroken attack), the guards attempt to subdue them nonlethally. The other prisoners fear retribution and won't help the party fight, and the unarmed party members are no match for four armed **guards** and four **heavy guards**. If the guards can't get the characters to stand down within a couple rounds and resume their walk across the compound, the resulting chaos drives the resistance to start their attack early. In that case, skip straight to the "Unbroken Attack" section below.



PART 2: HERDED

UNBROKEN ATTACK

The Unbroken is a resistance movement that opposes the tyranny of Queen Dannel and the horrors she is inflicting on Metrol. An Unbroken cell is here to strike a blow against House Vadalis. The attack happens as the procession moves through the razor-wire corridor—an area that's 20 feet wide and 200 feet long, enclosed on both sides by razor-wire fences. The resistance attack starts when the procession of detainees is bunched up close together, roughly in the middle of the corridor. The goal of the Unbroken is destruction as much as liberation, and they're willing to accept some losses.

The Unbroken have sabotaged one of the complex's guard towers, causing it to collapse across the yard and into one of the facility buildings, as shown on map 2.2. As it begins to topple, Vesile yells, "Watch out!" giving all characters in her vicinity a warning. Then the 30-foot-high and 15-foot-diameter tower falls right across the procession, breaking through the facility walls. Each player character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, made with advantage thanks to Vesile's early warning, or take 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone by the falling tower. On a successful saving throw, the character takes half the damage and is not knocked prone.

As the tower falls, it immediately kills several commoners from the procession, along with a heavy guard. One of the civilians killed outright by the falling tower is known to the adventurers. This

could be one of the NPCs established earlier in the session; if your players enjoy improvisation, you can ask a player to describe the victim and explain how they knew them. If the adventurers came from the Talenta Plains and thus didn't know anyone in the holding area, this victim can be an NPC that was helpful in answering their questions earlier.

THE ESCAPE

Once the tower collapses, the resistance attack begins. Read or paraphrase the following:

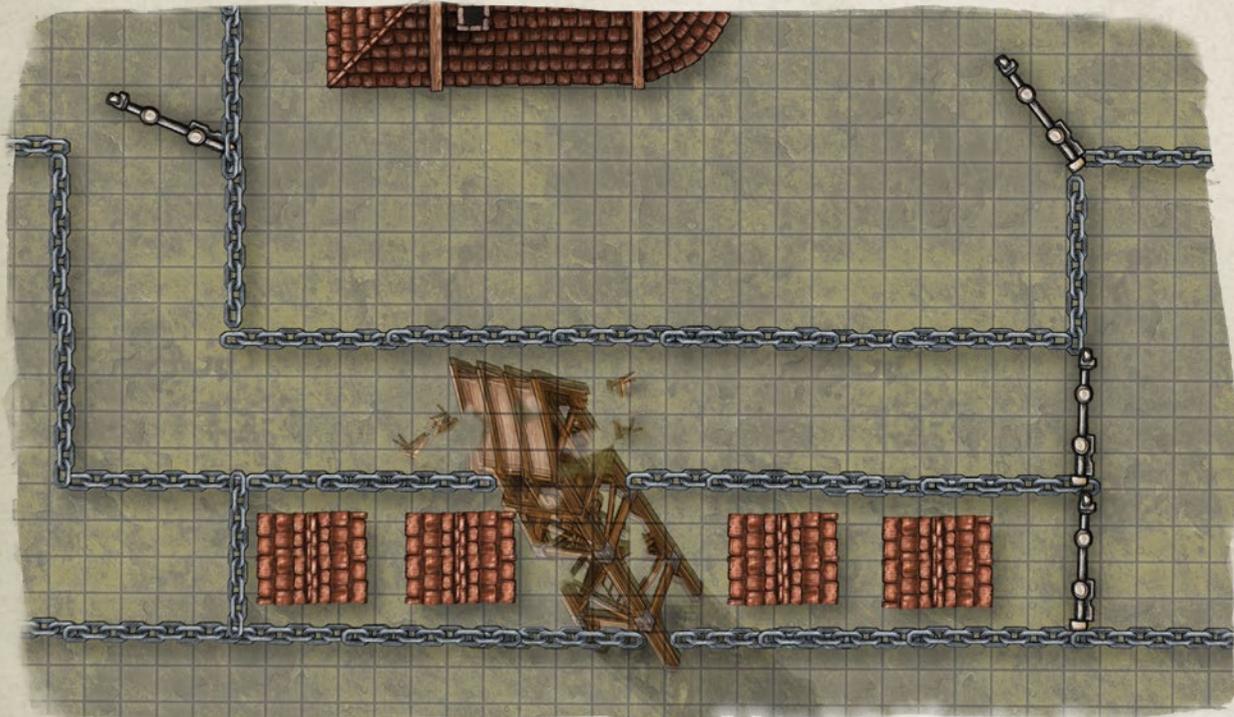
From the broken guard tower, a hulking creature emerges, its body a grotesque amalgamation of several others. It has an ogre's fleshy body, spottily covered by small useless feathers. Its vulture-like head—with vicious sharp beak—turns on an elongated neck, while its arms each end in a single large talon.

The creature roars, strangely deep and unbird-like, and then impales one of the guards and knocks back another.

Vesile looks upon the beast with panic in her eyes. "That creature will kill us all. Follow me if you want to live!"

It should be clear to the characters (and their players) that they are outmatched—their goal is to escape rather than to defeat the creature and the heavy guards who begin battling it. If the party tries to stand and fight, Vesile continues to urge them on toward the open gap in the wall.

The battlefield situation is as follows.



MAP 2.2: TOWER SABOTAGE

THE TOWER RAMP

The tower has fallen and some of its broken beams form a ramp, allowing the prisoners to climb up the destroyed tower and over the compound's fence. Four Vadalis **guards** have moved to block this approach and must be overcome to escape into the city. These guards act on initiative count 10, and if not actively engaged by the characters, use their action to dodge.

VESILE

Vesile shouts at people to run—both to create further chaos and give her an opportunity to escape. She knows it's only a matter of time before the monstrosity is put down, but for now, it's doing its job as a diversion. She asks the player characters to help her overcome the guards on the ramp. Vesile acts on initiative count 1 and can cast *healing word* on injured characters if the party is struggling.

THE VULGRE

The rampaging **vulgre** that escaped the destroyed tower is killing civilians and guards indiscriminately. The monstrosity acts on initiative count 0. If the characters stand their ground and—against the odds—manage to defeat it, Vesile comments as she tries to drag them away, “Are you trying to get yourselves killed? That was just the hatchling!”

VADALIS HEAVY GUARDS

Three Vadalis **heavy guards** move to fight and distract the vulgre, though they were expecting to be dealing with defenseless civilians and have only shields and maces. They take their jobs seriously and engage the vulgre head on to prevent it from rampaging around the facility. These guards act on initiative count 0, after the vulgre.

VOLUNTEERS

The other volunteers—all civilians—are disorganized and unarmed. One tries to go for the fence and is electrocuted. Others try to get past the guards but are thrown back, while most wait anxiously for the way to be cleared. If any are engaged in combat, they act after Vesile.

UNBROKEN

The unidentified Unbroken resistance fighters who destroyed the tower are long gone. They weren't here to fight, just to create chaos and give others a chance to escape. From their point of view, it's now everyone for themselves.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

The character's weapons and combat implements had been confiscated earlier and are being carried by some of the guards. Two of the adventurers can recover their equipment from the guard downed by the tower. After the guards blocking the exit are bested, the other characters easily find and claim their equipment.

INTO THE CITY

Once the characters defeat the four guards blocking the collapsed tower, they're able to escape safely over the fence, along with Vesile and the other surviving civilians (the latter of whom immediately scatter). The area around the facility is full of multistory houses, providing plenty of cover to escape. Vesile either beckons the player characters to follow her or catches up to them once they're made it a few blocks away.

VESILE IS DEAD?!

Vesile plays an ongoing role in this adventure—but if she unexpectedly dies during the conflict at the Kennels, all hope is not lost. In this case, simply introduce an Unbroken resistance member who contacts the party immediately after their escape. They were involved in the sabotage and witnessed the escape from the Vadalis facility. This resistance member can take the player characters under their wing, appearing in future scenes instead of Vesile.



PART 3: STATE OF WAR

After the adventurers escape from the Vadalis Kennels, they seek a safe place to stay while learning more about Dread Metrol and the challenges that face them. Trust is hard to come by, as everyone struggles to survive—and the characters soon have to decide what lines they're willing to cross for their own survival.

RELEASE THE HOUNDS

As the party flees the Kennels with Vesile, she leads them southeast, deeper into the city. Meanwhile, House Vadalis sets loose a pack of magebred hounds, determined to pick up their trail. Read or paraphrase the following:

The stone streets of Metrol run literally red with blood. A heavy rain begins to fall on the city's darkening streets as a siren sounds in the distance, followed by the baying of hounds from the Kennels.

Vesile leads the way through grimy alleys, notably empty of rubbish. "Queen Dannel's lackeys ensure nothing goes to waste," she hastily explains, "yet somehow, there are always these." She points to a fresh leaflet posted on a crumbling wall—it boldly proclaims, "**THE QUEEN WILL SAVE Us.**" Vesile grimaces at it, water dripping off her hood. "We can't stay here; The rain will slow the hounds' pursuit, but not for long."

ORIENTATION

Vesile has seen the player characters in action, senses they're her best chance to survive, and knows her knowledge is valuable to them in return. She sticks close to them during the escape and serves as their guide. As they make their way through the war-torn city, she summarizes the party's situation:

Gilded Arch. They're in Northshore's Gilded Arch ward—often colloquially known as "the Hounds" on account of the animals used by the Vadalis guards who patrol the area here. While the northwest side of Gilded Arch is bounded by the city's walls, Vesile is leading them southeast toward an area that's usually safe from direct Karrnathi attacks.

Northshore. Many of Dannel's loyal subjects live in the wards of the Northshore district—at least those who haven't earned their way up to the Vermishard platforms. While the neighborhood is safe for residents, it's definitely *not* for those fleeing the Vadalis Kennels—after all, the abductions and experiments are all done at Queen Dannel's own bidding.

The Shepherds. The Vadalis hounds are mainly concerned with the security of the Kennels and aren't the only threat. The Queen's Vigilant Wardens—better known as the Shepherds—are the secret police. This force of wererats keeps an eye on the city and ensures that no one opposes Dannel's rule. Anyone could be a Shepherd.



The Unbroken. Vesile believes their best chance of survival is to track down the Unbroken resistance to seek asylum. She's worked with the Unbroken in the past, but her cell was wiped out and she doesn't know the location of an active cell. In any case, they need to get out of Northshore to find sanctuary. The Unbroken might also be able to help the characters establish new identities to avoid being hunted as fugitives.

Escape. Their destination, Southshore, lies on the other side of Dead Man's Land and Starmantle Bay. Crossing to Southshore by water is perilous, as "there are shredders in the water. Nobody survives." Crossing by land is equally inadvisable, as "Dead Man's Land is swarming with ghouls—don't go there unless you want to become one." That leaves the southern land bridge over Dead Man's Land—but it has a Shepherd checkpoint and will be swarming with extra security until at least morning, so they'll need to find a place to wait it out. Vesile knows a guard at the checkpoint—his price is likely to be high, but she's confident he'll get the characters across.

THE QUEEN'S GRIP

The Karrnathi siege—and the Mists—have brought out Queen Dannel ir'Wynarn's dark side, notably her determination to win at any cost. She has become increasingly paranoid about traitors, resulting in the creation of the Shepherd secret police. She has seized property for the war effort and supported both military conscription and the increasingly horrific work of the Kennels and the Cannith Forge. Though Dannel has been long beloved by the people of Metrol, they are afraid of what she is willing to sacrifice to win.

Posters around the city proclaim three slogans:

**DO YOUR DUTY
THE QUEEN WILL SAVE US
DANNEL IS WATCHING**

These are the watchwords of the Watch and all loyal citizens. Everyone must do their duty if anyone is to survive—even if that duty is to surrender to Vadalis experimentation. Dannel *will* save Metrol. And if you doubt that, you should keep it to yourself, because Dannel—or her Shepherds—are always watching.

ENCOUNTERS IN NORTHSHORE

As the party travels across the Northshore district and seek shelter, they meet two concerned citizens, each of whom offer the hope of a roof over their heads. But one of them proves untrustworthy—and all the while, the hounds are in close pursuit.

THE HOUNDS

With Vesile guiding the adventurers away from the Kennels, they have no problem navigating the twisting streets, but the tracking hounds remain hot on their tail.

If the characters are in rough shape and need a short rest first, skip this encounter for now; they'll meet the hounds in the next section.

If the characters are still in good fighting shape with the majority of their hit points, three **Vadalis tracking hounds** catch up to them, perhaps in a tight alley or an abandoned building. This is not intended to be a very difficult encounter. If any characters fall unconscious, the hounds do not kill them; they've been carefully trained to track and knock out escapees to return them for experimentation.

After the hounds are defeated, Vesile urges the party on, warning that more hounds—and guards—will surely be coming.

A CONCERNED CITIZEN

As the party slinks south through the streets of Northshore into the neighborhood of Boldrei's Hearth, they encounter a "concerned citizen" who notices them skulking around. This NPC is purposely left unnamed and undescribed so that if the party is from Dread Metrol, you can introduce a citizen connected to one of the character's backstories, adding a personal touch to the story. Keep in mind that this character will betray them, so this should be someone they haven't seen in a while—maybe a former coworker, but not their best friend or sibling.

If the party is not from Dread Metrol, Vesile knows the NPC instead. You can create your own character or simply introduce them as Len Paddite, a human man.

In either case, they are very keen to know what the characters are doing here, and they invite the party inside to escape the rain, get a meal, and rest. Map 3.1 depicts their home and immediate surroundings.

PART 3: STATE OF WAR

If the adventurers are suspicious, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the NPC feels curious about the party's activities and concerned about their acquaintance's well-being, yet nervous about associating with someone who seems to be engaging in potentially nefarious activities.

The NPC is an honorable person and they don't wish the party—or anyone—harm. However, they're also a patriot who holds Queen Dannel and her Shepherds in high regard. They feed the characters, asking many questions during the meal, though never pushing too hard about why the party is here.

Over the course of dinner, the NPC concludes that the party is indeed on the run from the law, and feels increasingly conflicted—after all, they must do their duty. At the same time, the player characters may come to slowly realize that this NPC is a “true believer” and wholly supports Queen Dannel's leadership of the city. This should not happen so fast that it interrupts their meal, as the party should receive the benefits of a short rest after finishing dinner. The goal here is to slowly ramp up tension and suspicion, without any drama or combat until after the short rest.



MAP 3.1: PATRIOT'S HOME

THE PATRIOT

During the meal, the adventurers may notice the following about their host and surroundings:

- Although it's not a particularly unusual item to have, the living room has a neatly framed portrait of Queen Dannel.
- If asked about why they left the old neighborhood, the NPC talks about “opportunities coming up” and “wanting to do more to help the war effort.” They explain, “I'm no soldier, but I do what I can to help our troops!”
- If asked about the Kennels or being conscripted, the NPC claims “a health-based exemption” but doesn't go into detail.
- The food the host presents (delicious and safe) includes some fresh vegetables. A successful DC10 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that these must be Vadalis grown, and very hard to get, implying some sort of status.
- In the living room is a neat stack of the Metrol Sentinel. This single-page “newspaper” is a propaganda arm for the queen.
- In an office by the bathroom, the NPC has a Vadalis magebred gray pigeon. It can repeat short phrases on command—and deliver them as messages to a recipient the NPC designates.

Near the end of the meal, the NPC excuses themselves briefly, ostensibly to use the restroom. In truth, the NPC has resolved a crisis of conscience, deciding to turn in the player characters to the queen's Shepherds. While the NPC is away from the table, they slip into the office and release their Vadalis messenger bird out the window with a message. A character who makes a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check while the NPC is absent notices the noise of the window opening, but the NPC excuses it as the wind blowing it open. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check senses that their host has grown progressively more nervous about the party's activities and presence, though they've tried to hide it.

PART 3: STATE OF WAR

SUSPICIONS RUN WILD

While the NPC shouldn't be too obviously nervous or suspicious until the dinner is drawing to a close, some characters (and their players) are ever-paranoid. Before the NPC gets a chance to send a message to the Shepherds, the party might try to make a run for it before they're turned in—or even turn on their host, who uses **commoner** statistics.

In that case, the party doesn't gain the benefits of a short rest. They'll likely make it out of the home and a couple blocks away—only to encounter a Shepherd patrol who's out hunting for them. You can have them encounter the hounds there or ask for a series of saving throws to avoid obstacles as they flee.

Once their meal is done, the characters are considered to have finished a short rest. The NPC also offers to let them stay the night, but just as the offer is made (or a bit later, if it better fits the flow of your story), there is a single loud bark outside: a squad of Vadalis guards and hounds is about to arrive. The NPC gets nervous and begins making excuses, “Oh, it's just the neighbor's dog, I'll go see what's going on, please stay here!”

A character peeking out the window can notice the street is suspiciously empty, and with a successful DC12 Wisdom (Perception) check, they see a neighbor across the street quickly shut their curtain, as if in fear.

As the NPC gets to the door, they panic, running outside and yelling to the guards, “They're in here, come quick, they're in here!”

ESCAPING THE HOUNDS

Even if the adventurers haven't yet realized the betrayal, Vesile certainly does. She urges the party to escape out back, where a door opens to a small backyard, as shown on map 3.1.

If the characters did not encounter the hounds before their rest, three **Vadalis tracking hounds** catch up to them in the backyard, although the guards themselves are quite a bit behind and don't make it in time for the combat—after the party has dispatched the dogs, they see the guards rounding the corner, but can escape without issue.

If the characters already fought the hounds in the previous section, they must instead each make a series of three saving throws to get over obstacles. They escape regardless of their successes or failures; however, they may take damage as they go.

Hopping the fence quickly. Make a DC 10

Strength saving throw, taking 1d4 piercing damage on a failed save as one of the hounds jumps and bites as you climb over.

Dizzying speed. Make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw, taking 1d4 psychic damage on a failed save as you find yourself briefly disoriented.

Keep up! Make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, gaining 1 level of exhaustion on a failed save as you use the last of your strength to get away.

A DRAMATIC CHASE?

If time allows and your players enjoy chases, you can expand this encounter into a dramatic chase by using the chase rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* or ones of your own making. Be sure to create complications appropriate to the Dread Metrol setting and remember that the desired “fail state” of the chase is losing health and resources, *not* getting caught—you want the party to make it to Southshore intact!



ANOTHER CONCERNED CITIZEN

As the adventurers make their escape from the hounds and continue southeast toward Dead Man's Land, they notice a shadowy figure trailing them through the streets. The dark figure always seems to be a building or a block behind, ducking out of sight as they look. This figure is a human resident of Dread Metrol named Eyrena Niadh.

If the characters do not approach Eyrena, she eventually approaches them. She is guarded at first, but lays her cards on the table saying that she knows they're Unbroken and are going across the bridge. She asks if they have a way to cross safely.

It's clear that they can't cross now, as the checkpoint is swarming with extra guards, so they need a place to hide out until morning. She offers them a deal: she'll give them a place to stay if they agree to get her sister across to the resistance in Southshore.

Eyrena is not willing to share details with the party about who her sister is or why she needs help to cross, and keeps it a secret that her sister is actually a Reconstructed (as described in the "Adventures in Dread Metrol" section of chapter 1). A Wisdom (Insight) check of 10 or higher confirms that she is genuine in her offer to assist, though somewhat hesitant. A result of 15 or higher reveals that she is holding something back, but not maliciously. If confronted, she admits, "It's my sister. Getting her across may require special care. I can't say any more as it would endanger her. The deal is the deal—shelter for the night, a place to rest—and you get my sister across and to the Unbroken. Take it or leave it."

THE HORROR OF THE RECONSTRUCTED

For Ping and the other Reconstructed in Dread Metrol, the horror of their situation is *not* because the people of Eberron feel warforged prosthetics are shameful or distasteful. On the contrary, being fitted with such prosthetics can provide major improvements to their bearer's quality of life, and people throughout Eberron benefit from such arcane advances.

However, Ping's reforging was non-consensual, performed entirely for the purpose of turning her into an unquestioning weapon. Her horror derives solely from this denial of her agency and violation of her body.

You can learn more about the Reconstructed in the "Adventures in Dread Metrol" section of chapter 1.

NPC: EYRENA NIADH

neutral good human, she/her

Eyrena (**scout**) is a human in her late forties. Before the Mists and the siege, she was a senior editor for the *Metrol Messenger*, a newspaper which was subsequently turned into the propagandistic *Metrol Sentinel*. After it was taken over, she was kept on as a reporter only by the virtue of being able to produce the sort of articles Dannel's political machine wanted to further their brutal war efforts. Eyrena supports the Unbroken, though she has had no contact with them.

A year ago, during a particularly brutal Karrnathi attack, Eyrena found herself caught amidst a raging battle, about to be struck down by an arcane artillery blast aimed at an advancing unit of Reconstructed troops. The last thing she remembers before the blast striking is one of the Reconstructed breaking ranks and leaping to cover her from the blast.

When she came to, Eyrena found herself tightly wrapped up in the arms of a dying Reconstructed who had taken the brunt of the blast to save her. With no other survivors to witness her crime—stealing the "property" of the Forge—Eyrena dragged the Reconstructed back home and slowly, secretly nursed her back to health.

The blast's damage was serious, and it took the soldier the better half of a year to regain her health. During this time, the Reconstructed could say and remember little, and Eyrena came to call her "Ping" on account of the noise one of her metal parts made when she rested.

Needing extra food chits and other supplies, Eyrena began to refer to Ping as "her sister," as it was certainly easier to claim that she was caring for her sister than admitting to sheltering an illegal Reconstructed who had "deserted" her duties.

Eventually, Ping regained her ability to speak, but between the reforging and the blast damage, only pieces of her memory returned. Ping struggled with finding purpose but remained with Eyrena, the two of them becoming close and the title of "sister" becoming fact.

What Does She Want? Eyrena wants the characters to help Ping get out of the district and find the Unbroken.

What Does She Know? Eyrena suspects that they're the escaped prisoners from the Kennels. She believes they're with the resistance and can help her; she doesn't realize that they are actually looking for the Unbroken themselves. In any case, she's been lurking around the streets, hoping to find them and has been waiting for an opportunity to approach.

Being sympathetic to the resistance, Eyrena is willing to act as an information broker and spy for the Unbroken in exchange for help with Ping.



NPC INFORMATION: PING

chaotic good Reconstructed human (she/her)

The Vadalis Kennels aren't the only piece of the war machine that feeds on the citizens of Metrol. In the Forge of House Cannith, flesh is merged with steel to create constructed soldiers known as the Reconstructed. A far more dangerous and intrusive process than fitting magical prosthetics, the process that creates the Reconstructed can also suppress memory and one's sense of humanity.

The woman known as **Ping** does not remember her human name. She was forced into service years ago, when Cannith artificers grafted construct elements to her body to improve her strength. Each time she was injured in battle, more and more of her flesh was replaced with wood and steel. Currently, both of Ping's legs are artificial, as is one of her arms and half of her face and torso.

Under Eyrena's care, she eventually regained her ability to speak, yet her memories remain jumbled. In addition, she sustained severe battle damage that Eyrena couldn't repair. Part of her jaw is missing, and she sometimes has trouble speaking. Her metal right forearm is bent, and she is missing fingers. However, she is capable of fighting if need be.

Even with her health largely restored, it is dangerous for Ping to be in Northshore. The Reconstructed are considered the property of the state, and discovery would force her back into service. Eyrena also lacks the ability to fully repair Ping, and she hopes a magewright can be found among the Unbroken—without their assistance, Ping's reconstructed parts continue to deteriorate.

What Does She Want? Ping wants to join the Unbroken. This has been a difficult decision for her—she doesn't want to leave Eyrena behind—but she hates putting Eyrena in danger and she wants to make a difference with her life.

What Does She Know? Ping knows that rogue Reconstructed are taken to the Forge and "reclaimed," and that life out of hiding is dangerous. Yet it is better than doing nothing.

THE FIRST NIGHT

If the characters refuse Eyrena's offer, they're unable to find safe shelter for the night. Although they gain the benefits of a long rest, they begin the following day with a level of exhaustion (proceed to the "Bridge of the Dead" section).

If the characters agree to help, Eyrena leads them to her house and introduces them to **Ping**, after which they can finish a long rest without penalty. In the early morning, Ping changes into one of her two sets of clothing that she and Eyrena have designed with hoods and masks, allowing her to hide her true nature from casual inspection. After a touching farewell with Eyrena, she is ready to leave with the adventurers.

Vesile urges the player characters on to the bridge before dawn.

LEVEL UP!

Regardless of how or where they end up resting, the characters advance from 1st to 2nd level by the time they head to the Bridge of the Dead.

RELENTLESS ASSAULT

This night and every night, the darkness brings another assault by the Karrnathi undead besieging the city. On each night the player characters spend in Dread Metrol, use the Night Terrors table in chapter 1 to determine the horrors inflicted on the city. Tonight, though the conflicts, plagues, or Shepherd raids may come as close as the streets outside Eyrena's house, they ultimately do not prevent the player characters from resting.

BRIDGE OF THE DEAD

After the characters have survived the night in Metrol and their pursuers are no longer hot on their heels, they head to the Bridge of the Dead in hopes of crossing to Southshore.

ABOUT THE BRIDGE

Early in the siege, a force of undead broke through the southwestern gate. Ghouls and skeletons swarmed into the city. The army finally repelled the incursion with the assistance of a force of monstrous mercenaries—notably, an elite squad of medusas working for House Tharashk. While most of the medusas were slain in the battle, they managed to create a makeshift wall by petrifying the bodies of the attacking undead. The battle was won, but the Karrns left behind a stretch of cursed land between Northshore and Southshore. This narrow strip, running from the southern city walls to Starmantle Bay, is called Dead Man's Land. It's shrouded in fog, which hides the hunting ghouls; any humanoid who dies in Dead Man's Land rises as a ghoul after one minute.

There's only one safe way to cross Dead Man's Land: the Bridge of the Dead. Cannith engineers used the masses of undead petrified in that first battle as the foundation of this bridge, and the bones and claws of the undead can still be seen protruding from the mortar. When crossing the Bridge of the Dead, the characters are walking on the bones of their enemies—and they can see the fog swirling below the bridge as ghouls wait for someone to fall.

In theory, people who don't want to take the bridge could brave Starmantle Bay, which lies northeast of Dead Man's Land. But all remaining boats—of which there aren't many—have been seized for use by the army and the Watch. Further complicating the situation, Vadalis has stocked the bay with deadly magebred quippers called shredderfish, intended to counter aquatic attacks.

Alternatively, foolhardy souls could navigate the swirling fog of Dead Man's Land, but the area lies under a dark curse and is overrun with ghouls.

Thus, the Bridge of the Dead is by far the safest path between the heavily controlled Northshore quarter and the more chaotic Southshore. The Northshore guard post is heavily reinforced and all traffic is monitored—so people without official business may have to bribe the guards to get across.



SHREDDERS AND GHOULS

Should the party wish to attempt crossing by water (whether before contacting Vesile's contact among the gate guards or after learning about his high price), Vesile warns them that crossing either the bay (northeast of the bridge) or Dead Man's Land (southwest of the bridge) is extremely dangerous.

The queen's forces have commandeered all watercraft of sufficient quality to survive the crossing, and the shredderfish are magebred to chew through wood and thin metal, so improvised rafts eventually fall apart. If the adventurers attempt to cross the bay by swimming or with a raft, they encounter three **swarms of shredderfish**, followed by one more **swarm of shredderfish** as a separate encounter after the first is done, but before they reach the shore.

If the adventurers instead try to cross southwest of the bridge into the fog of Dead Man's Land, they face three **ghouls**, followed by one more **ghoul** as a separate encounter after the first is done, but before they reach Southshore.

A RAT AMONG RATS

The bridge checkpoint is guarded by a heavy iron portcullis between two 20-foot-tall stone towers. On one side, a smaller humanoid-sized iron door is built into the stone, kept locked at all times.

Everbright lanterns shining from the towers flood both sides of the gate with light, and a guard stands atop each tower, making it impossible to approach unseen. The gate itself remains closed and impassable unless a crossing is authorized. The characters can ascertain this and similar details about the checkpoint with appropriate DC 10 ability checks.

The gate is staffed by two **Shepherd wererats**, one by each tower. The Shepherds are charged with controlling access to the gate, checking all who wish to pass, and detaining anyone suspicious. Inside the towers, several more well-armed veterans stand ready to fight should the bridge be attacked. Vesile tells the characters that taking the bridge by force is not a viable option.

One of the Shepherds on duty is Vesile's contact, Grovaine. Vesile instructs most of the party to stay in the shadows—as much for their own safety as anything, as Grovaine is not to be trusted, though she doesn't think to mention he's a wererat unless asked. If they try to make a move against Grovaine instead of using Vesile's code—even a subtle spell or an arrow from far away—they are likely to have to face the garrison in full.

Vesile calls Grovaine to meet with a coded light signal, then wanders closer to the tower. Read or paraphrase the following:

Soon after Vesile flashes her signal in the direction of the bridge, one of the Shepherd guards pulls out his smoking pouch, lights up, and ambles in her direction. Once he finds a nearby spot for a break, Vesile follows and speaks to him from around a corner, just out of sight of the guard tower.

"It's a nice morning, despite the fog," Vesile begins.

"Not as nice under these moons," her contact replies.

"Many moons make for brighter nights."

"A dozen moons make for a crowded sky."

"Seven would be enough."

The pair continue like this, negotiating in coded speech. Eventually, Vesile's contact finishes his smoke and returns to his post, while Vesile rejoins you.

"My contact can let us pass, but we have to do something for him ..."

NPC: GROVAINE

lawful evil wererat (he/him)

Grovaine (**Shepherd wererat**) serves as one of the Queen's Vigilant Wardens, better known as the Shepherds. While ultimately loyal to his masters, he is also corrupt and willing to look the other way on certain things—so long as it helps him get ahead while still serving the queen's needs in some way. "The queen gets her due, I might as well get mine in the process."

What Does He Want? Grovaine won't risk his neck to let anyone through the checkpoint unless he's getting something out of it. Money isn't a significant motivation for him, but power and recognition are. He'll do nearly anything to climb the internal Shepherds ladder and sabotage his competitors.

What Does He Know? Grovaine is no stranger to "selling" passage and stays apprised of current events in case an opportunity comes up. He knows that all day yesterday, there were extra guards at the checkpoint looking for escapees. He catches on very quickly as to who Vesile is seeking passage for—and passage for a large group like this is difficult and costly.



PART 3: STATE OF WAR

THE COST

Vesile reports three options for ways the player characters can “pay off” Grovaine:

Option 1: A Bird in the Hand. Grovaine’s position could be substantially elevated if he were to bring in a known Unbroken or Karrnathi sympathizer. It has to be someone who could be proven to be hiding others from their war duties—such as giving refuge to rogue Reconstructed. The ultimate bounty would be an actual rogue Reconstructed. If the characters choose to turn in either Ping or Eyrena, they succeed in paying this price.

Option 2: Apartment Hunting. Grovaine has his sights set on a specific apartment in a building that’s popular with senior Shepherd officers and other high-ranking officials. This apartment is currently occupied by a pair of low-level Shepherd clerks. If they were to mysteriously disappear—never to return—he would have a good shot at getting the apartment. Grovaine has told Vesile that it must not look like they were intentionally targeted for violence—better to make it seem like an everyday robbery.

Option 3: Climbing Over Each Other. Grovaine’s watch partner has been growing suspicious of Grovaine’s behavior—and making things worse, he’s also proven to be quite capable. It’s high time for Grovaine to be rid of him. However, the job’s not that simple, since if his partner were killed but Grovaine did nothing to prevent it, it would look bad all around. Instead, it must look as though Grovaine has bested the assailants—and for this, “assailants” are needed. Grovaine will provide the party with an opportunity to ambush his partner, but they must first secure two patsies to take the fall for the crime. Grovaine doesn’t much care where the patsies come from, they must simply be humanoids—and alive.

THE PRICE IS NOT RIGHT

The bargains offered by Grovaine are all dark deeds and intended to be representative of the setting and the desperation of war. If you are playing a lighter-themed game and do not wish to subject your players to such grim choices, you can adjust the “Climbing Over Each Other” option to be a simple assassination, skipping the frame-up.

The party has time to discuss among themselves which price they wish to pay. Once they’ve decided, proceed to the appropriate section below. While deceiving or betraying Grovaine is possible, Vesile strongly warns against the idea—this is not the last time the Unbroken will need his help.

A BIRD IN THE HAND

If the player characters choose option 1—betraying either Ping or Eyrena—Vesile contacts Grovaine with another *message* spell to let him know their decision. After either turning Ping over to the gate guards or informing Grovaine where Eyrena can be found, the rest of the party can pass immediately. Proceed to the “Passage Granted” section.

APARTMENT HUNTING

If the player characters choose option 2—arranging the “disappearance” of the apartment’s Shepherd tenants—Vesile leads them to the address Grovaine gave her, depicted on map 3.2. The two-room apartment in question is on the third floor of a four-story building. Characters who do not wish to use the front door can find a fire escape that leads straight to their target apartment on the third floor.



MAP 3.2: CLERKS' APARTMENT

INKARNATE / ANDREW BISHKINSKYI

PART 3: STATE OF WAR

The two clerks who occupy the apartment are a married couple named Jemma and Jin Ertland. These two **commoners** are sleeping in the bedroom when the characters arrive and can't put up a fight. Unless the characters take steps to silence them before they wake up, they scream for help as soon as they wake, giving the characters only 1 minute to get out before three **heavy guards** arrive. More guards follow soon after, leaving the adventurers no choice but to flee.

Alternatively, the clerks can be persuaded to leave their apartment and never return with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check, but they plead with the characters, as the apartment has been in the family for generations.

Either way, once the apartment is vacated, proceed to the "Passage Granted" section.

Treasure. The clerks have a stockpile of assorted coins and family jewels, which would be worth 100 gp in normal times. During this siege, coins and jewels have little value, and the true treasure is the stockpile of ration chits, which have a street value roughly equivalent to 120 gp pre-siege.

CLIMBING OVER EACH OTHER

If the player characters choose option 3—to ambush Grovaine's partner—Vesile gives Grovaine the go-ahead. He tells her the time and place where he'll arrange an opportunity for the adventurers to ambush his partner later in the morning. However, they'll first need to find a pair of patsies to take the fall for the hit. Vesile offers two suggestions.

Taverngoers. Not far from the bridge, there's an all-night underground tavern called the Last Order. By this time of morning, it's full of desperate and drunk patrons. There, the party finds a pair of drunk soldiers who've lost everything—they're easy enough to scoop up but are essentially innocents.

Bandits. A trio of ruffians often prey on the Last Order tavern's patrons. Vesile tells the party that if one of the adventurers passes through a certain alley alone, the three **bandits** are sure to strike. The characters need to take at least two of them alive to satisfy Grovaine's plan, so be sure to allow the bandits to make death saving throws. If defeated, the bandits carry 20 gp worth of ration chits from the night's haul, and one of them has 5 pieces of silvered ammunition.

Either way, once the party's obtained the patsies, Vesile leads to the ambush location provided by Grovaine—an alley entrance 200 feet from the bridge checkpoint, shown in map 3.3. They're to kill his partner and leave the patsies there alive. She gives them a wrapped package, explaining "Grovaine wanted me to give you this"—inside, they find a silvered dagger.

Grovaine's partner Dorgan, a **Shepherd wererat**, arrives at the alley as scheduled. When confronted, Dorgan calls for help while engaging the characters himself.

Once Dorgan is defeated, the characters find another silvered dagger on his body. Grovaine arrives swiftly before the other guards, ensures that Dorgan is dead, then casually kills the patsies before urging the player characters to get out of sight (if they are still visible). Just as another pair of guards arrive on the scene, Grovaine makes a show of 'finishing off' the patsies.

Proceed to the "Passage Granted" section.

PASSAGE GRANTED

Once the party has paid one of Grovaine's prices for passage, they can go through the checkpoint. Grovaine personally "checks their papers" before clearing them to pass through the gate.

The checkpoint on the other side of the bridge is far less imposing, featuring only a makeshift barricade and a couple of guards in mismatched outfits rather than uniforms. Vesile slips one of the guards some ration chits and they both turn to literally look the other way.

The party then passes into the Southshore district. Proceed to part 4, "The Unbroken."



MAP 3.3: ALLEY AMBUSH

PART 4: THE UNBROKEN

Upon safely reaching Southshore, the characters must make contact with the Unbroken. While finding the resistance isn't intended to be difficult, it could be time-consuming. Rather than immediately proceeding to "Signs of Resistance," feel free to expand on the party's travel through the city before they meet Wargoyle, taking the opportunity to provide more information on the district and daily life in Dread Metrol.

FINDING WARGOYLE WITHOUT VESILE

If Vesile has not survived, the player characters can still make contact with the resistance. Instead of Vesile leading them there, the party is approached by an Unbroken agent who identifies themselves and tells the player characters, "Wargoyle wants to see you."

SIGNS OF RESISTANCE

Once the party has made it into Southshore, Vesile much more openly leads them through the streets in search of the Unbroken.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The Southshore district—even early in the morning—is chaotic and lively. War is the daily chore here. Soldiers can be seen returning with pallid faces from the walls, while others head off to replace them on the ramparts. Children line the sidewalks, each one waiting to see if their parents return from the front today.

Vesile strides more confidently through these streets. Occasionally, she stops to ask someone whether they've seen "Wargoyle." Whatever the whispered answers are, they lead deeper into the district, until finally you come to an inner courtyard of a two-story building.

"You bring strangers to our doors, Vesile," comes a commanding female voice from one of the lower windows. "There are a dozen crossbows aimed at you. Explain yourselves."

The voice in the window belongs to a medusa called Wargoyle. There are indeed a dozen crossbows aimed at the party through the courtyard's various windows—Wargoyle's resistance cell isn't

taking any chances. She is cautious, but genuinely doesn't wish the characters harm, even if tempers flare and warning shots are fired from either side. Once the situation has calmed and the player characters have introduced themselves, a trio of resistance fighters emerge to escort them in.

Once the player characters are allowed to enter Wargoyle's lair, read or paraphrase the following:

The Unbroken, many of whom keep their crossbows trained on you, are a mishmash of sickly-looking civilians in shoddy clothing. Some look to be barely adults. Most bear telltale signs of Vadalis or Cannith experimentation, and all have a cold, severe look to them.

None of these remotely compare, however, to the haunted look of their leader who makes her way forward.

Wargoyle is a gray-skinned medusa—but the snakes on her head hang limply down to her shoulders, lifeless. Two dark-gray wings emerge from her back, their stony surfaces cracked and pitted—for they too are devoid of life.

"I am called Wargoyle," she says gravely, "I have some idea of what you are. Let's talk about *who* you are."

KRISTÓF KÓTELES



NPC: WARGOYLE*chaotic neutral medusa (she/her)*

House Tharashk provided the Cyran army with a host of monstrous mercenaries, including gargoyles and an elite squad of medusas. When most of Metrol's medusas were killed in the battle that would lead to the construction of the Bridge of the Dead, the few that survived were designated prime assets. Vadalis made special efforts to "improve" them for further battlefield use—**Wargoyle** is a grim reminder of how often Vadalis's improvements go wrong. In their efforts to create an armored flying medusa, they ended up with a specimen that could neither fly nor petrify.

Considered useless to the war effort, Wargoyle was set loose, only to find a new life leading an Unbroken cell to fight against the regime's brutal experiments. None who fight alongside her know Wargoyle's true name.

What Does She Want? Wargoyle is always recruiting into the resistance, but she is also paranoid of wererat infiltrators. She questions everyone's motives, and no one gets to join without proving themselves.

What Does She Know? Her own Unbroken cell is small and independent, more of a hit-and-run outfit. Wargoyle knows how to get in touch with the leader of a much larger cell who would be able to shelter the characters on a more permanent basis—provided they prove themselves. This larger Unbroken cell also has connections to researchers and mages who may be able to help characters who came from Eberon proper.

WAR STORIES

Wargoyle questions the characters in detail about themselves and their intentions. She is particularly suspicious of their choice to run with a Reconstructed. However, Ping's honesty and earnestness to join quickly impresses her. As an ex-soldier who faced horrible experimentation, Wargoyle sees a kindred spirit in her.

Partway into the conversation, a panicked, out-of-breath messenger runs in to report to Wargoyle.

"They took him! I didn't get to him in time. They're moving him now. Taking him to the Vermishard of Law! We have to do something! But ... it's a full convoy."

Evaluating their options, the messenger and Wargoyle determine that the convoy will pass through a "no-fly zone," a term Wargoyle seems to recognize but does not explain. If asked about it, the Unbroken only say, "Don't worry, you'll see."

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

For several months now, this Unbroken cell has been receiving intelligence from a Vadalis mage-wright deep inside the Kennels. Two days ago, "Crane" (as he refers to himself) contacted them to ask for extraction and sanctuary. He claimed to have information on a Vadalis breakthrough that could alter the course of the war, and he was afraid to be discovered.

Wargoyle sent one of her best operatives—the now-panicked messenger—to quietly get Crane out and bring him back here, to eventually be handed over to the leader of the largest Unbroken cell. By the time the operative arrived at Crane's house, a Shepherd death squad was already surrounding the building and arresting the mage-wright. More guards and an armed carriage quickly arrived.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

If you'd like to expand this adventure into a longer campaign, the characters proving themselves to Wargoyle is an excellent place to do just that.

Rather than immediately proceeding to the "War Stories" section and having Wargoyle receive the urgent transport news during her initial meeting with the characters, she can give the characters any number of smaller tasks within Southshore before introducing the time-sensitive mission to rescue Crane.

TIME TO ACT

Wargoyle quickly decides to strike the convoy and liberate Crane. She gives the adventurers a brief overview of the situation, as detailed above in the "Additional Background" section. She doesn't have enough people to handle the job, though she explains that they have "other weapons."

This is an opportunity for the party to prove themselves. Wargoyle informs them, "If you want our assistance, you will help us with this. Except Vesile—your services are needed elsewhere."

Wargoyle assigns two of her fighters to lead Ping and the player characters to the ambush location. She tells them: "Your task is to get Crane out. Wait for the doves, then move in. Ignore everything else. Get him, get out. If none of us is with you, don't worry, we'll find you. Just stay in Southshore. For the Unbroken and a free Metrol!" Wargoyle's soldiers echo her words, "For the Unbroken and a free Metrol!"



MAP 4.1: SHEPHERD CONVOY AMBUSH

NO-FLY ZONE

Vesile leaves the player characters at this point, wishing them luck in their future endeavors. Once their goodbyes are concluded, the Unbroken begin to move out. They do not run as a group, but rather disperse into alleys, all taking their own routes.

As the adventurers and Ping move toward their destination, they notice that the area sports a heavy protective netting strung above the rooftops, as if keeping out a flying menace. Their two escorts don't volunteer any information, but if asked, they briefly explain that in addition to protecting against some siege ammunition, it keeps out the deadwings. These creatures are flying Karrnathi-made undead that have infested some wards. They usually flock at night, but can be occasional menaces during the day as well. Infested regions have become known as "no-fly zones."

DOVES OF WAR

The Shepherd convoy, which is heading through Southshore toward the Bridge of the Dead, features an enclosed wagon pulled by an armored spider-horse. The wagon is driven by a Shepherd wererat and a Watch heavy guard captain. Six Watch guards serve as an escort, along with two more Shepherd wererats.

The convoy is slowly moving down a 40-foot-wide street with reinforced city walls on one side and buildings on the other, as shown in map 4.1. The resistance's intent is to hit them at a T intersection, and the party arrives on the scene just in

the nick of time. There are plenty of alleys to allow the characters to choose where they wish to be when the resistance strikes, though their Unbroken contacts provide no details other than "focus on your part, wait for the doves." The Unbroken operatives are used to working on a "need to know basis" in case any of them are caught by the Watch.

Once the party is in place around the intersection, read or paraphrase the following:

The enclosed black and gold wagon crawls across the intersection as if in slow-motion, pulled by a large armored spider-horse. Half a dozen stern Watch guards walk alongside it—the whole thing looks rather like a funerary procession.

For the Shepherds, the "traitor transport" is an opportunity for public intimidation. Passersby get out of the way, yet many linger to watch, their expressions equal parts horror and wonder.

Suddenly, several loud clicks ring out in unison, causing everyone to look up. High above the street, bladed bolts strike at the protective netting that keeps out the deadwings. The projectiles cut into the netting and a piece of it drops down, smothering one of the wagon's guards as others dodge out of the way.

Then, released by Unbroken operatives within the crowd, half a dozen white doves fly up toward the opening in the net. They never reach freedom as—with a terrible screech—they're grabbed and torn to bloody pieces mid-air, prey for small winged creatures coming from beyond the net.

With a panicked scream of "deadwings!" the street turns to chaos.

PART 4: THE UNBROKEN

Drawn by the bait of the doves and the hole in the net, dozens of deadwings descend on the street, attacking bystanders, the Shepherd convoy, and the Unbroken indiscriminately.

The Watch convoy guards begin to scatter and fight the winged beasts while the Unbroken fighters emerge to engage the two Shepherd wererat escorts. This leaves the wagon guarded only by one Shepherd wererat and the heavy guard captain, who try to push it forward but are unable to get far among the chaos.

The player characters are expected to get to the wagon and recover the prisoner, and **Ping** fights alongside them. The following factors affect the encounter.

The Wagon. The wagon is currently guarded only by one **Shepherd wererat** and the **heavy guard captain**, as all its other escorts are distracted by the deadwings. Its door is locked with a heavy padlock, which can be picked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or broken with a successful DC 20 Strength check. Both options require an action to attempt and may be attempted multiple times. The Shepherd wererat driving the wagon has the lock's key.

Deadwings. At the start of the second round of combat and every round thereafter, two **deadwings** join the combat—one attacks the player characters, the other attacks the captain and Shepherd. Additionally, a third deadwing nearby can be seen attaching to a nearby civilian.

Other Combatants. In the background, the chaos includes Wargoyles and several Unbroken operatives, along with six Watch heavy guards, two more Shepherd wererats, and a flock of deadwings. However, they're not directly relevant to the player characters' part of the conflict—narrate their parts rather than rolling.

Pursuit. The Shepherd wererat and Watch heavy guard captain actively try to stop the characters from getting away with the prisoner, but do not pursue them farther than 30 feet away from the wagon.

Spider-horse. The **spider-horse** pulling the wagon is well-trained and bred to obey its Shepherd masters. However, it is beset by deadwings and unable to do anything but buck. On initiative count 10, roll a d20. On a result

of 10 or lower, nothing happens. On a result of 11 or higher, the spider-horse bucks, violently shaking the wagon. Each creature within 5 feet of the wagon must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone; the DC of this saving throw is equal to the number rolled on the d20.

Crane. Inside the wagon lies a visibly pale and sickly human. This is Crane d'Vadalis, an **artisan magewright**. A character can use an action to make a DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a success, they determine that he's been injected with something—perhaps a sedative or another powerful serum—and can tell that whatever has been done to him is beyond the traditional healing available to the characters. Crane is very weak, unable to talk or respond to telepathy, and requires carrying, which can be accomplished by any character with a Strength of 8 or higher.

Once the characters recover Crane, the rest of the resistance fighters disengage and make their getaway. Deep horn blasts can be heard throughout the district, sounding the siege alarm as the characters escape. During their flight, they see soldiers and magewrights heading to the breach area to deal with the deadwings and fix the net.



ACCEPTABLE LOSSES

The characters can regroup at Wargoyles hideout for a debriefing, where they learn the following:

- Four Unbroken fighters were killed during the raid, along with several civilians, and Wargoyles herself was seriously—but not mortally—wounded.
- Despite all the losses, the Unbroken cell considers the raid a great success, and Wargoyles is thrilled to have pulled off such a risky job.
- No one is able to communicate with Crane. Whatever is wrong with him is beyond their medicine, affecting both body and mind.

DELIVERING CRANE

The player characters have more than proven themselves to Wargoyles, but she asks them one more favor: to deliver Crane to Dalen Osserak's larger cell of Unbroken.

Wargoyles gifts the characters a *pearl of power* that belonged to a fallen comrade.

If Ping survived, she believes she has found her place and chooses to remain with Wargoyles's crew. Ping gives the player characters her personal *stone of good luck*.

Although time is of the essence, the party is able to take a short rest before departing. When they are ready to set off, their Unbroken guides lead them south through the Southshore district, which they traverse without incident. Crane is still in very poor condition; he can either be carried or stumble along at half speed if assisted by another character.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

If you want to expand this adventure into a longer campaign, the party's journey with Crane to the south part of the Southshore districts can prove more perilous than what's presented here.

If you plan to add an encounter during the party's travel across Southshore, ensure the party gets a long rest after rescuing Crane. As usual, roll on all columns of the Night Terrors table from chapter 1 every evening.

THOSE WHO DON'T OBEY

As the player characters make their way into the southern part of the Southshore district, they're soon followed at a distance by several separate figures. Wargoyles's fighters explain, "It's nothing to worry about, just our escorts. They've given the countersigns. They're leading us from behind. Keeps everyone safe if we don't know the location before we get here."

Eventually the escorts lead them to the back entrance of a three-story building in the shadow of one of the palace spires. Read or paraphrase the following:

An unmarked door leads to a stone stair, and after descending it, your group pauses at a heavy metal door.

One of your Unbroken companions signals the room's occupants with a complex rhythmic knock, and as the door creaks open, noise pours out of the bustling area beyond.

The first and most striking feature of this half-empty warehouse is the sturdy barricade located only a few feet in. From behind it, two armored guards sheathe their heavy crossbows to lower a wooden ramp, allowing you to cross over.

Beyond the barricade, a large open space holds scattered bedrolls, food crates, weapons, and more.

"Follow us—the commander will see you now," directs one of the Unbroken, pointing to a crudely walled-off office in the far corner.

It's easy to tell that this resistance presence can be taken down, emptied, and moved within the span of an hour. The "command area" is no different. Its walls are made of doors and loose planks, hastily repurposed.

Inside, a tall, thin person with graying hair stands over a large table, studying a map of Metrol. This is Dalen Osserak, the commander of the largest Unbroken cell in Metrol. They gesture for the characters to be led in, along with Crane. After the party enters, a pair of resistance guards take posts just inside the door.

NPC: DALEN OSSERAK*neutral human (they/them)*

Dalen Osserak is in their late 50s. Prior to the siege, they were one of the most powerful people in Metrol and a Gold Concordian of the Aurum. While they inherited much of their wealth, they made their own name as an information broker.

However, everything Dalen once had—wealth, power, family—was taken away when the Mists isolated Metrol. They were cut off from their Aurum cohorts and displaced from their Northshore estate by Queen Dannel's war machine. Their wife was killed in an undead attack, and their son and daughter were conscripted into service, only to die on the walls.

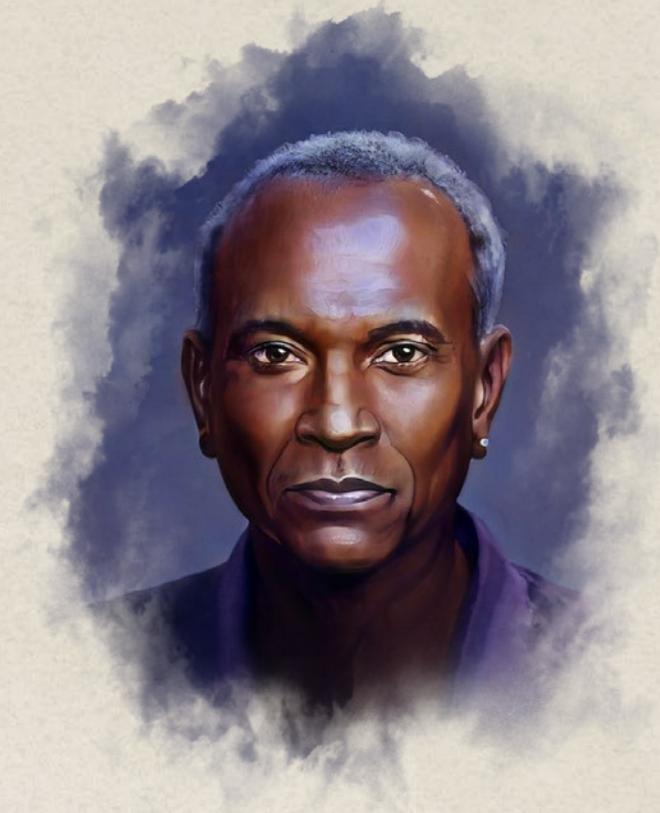
Having lost everything, Dalen has channeled their charisma and social skills into building a resistance to the regime. Dalen is in charge of the largest Unbroken cell in Metrol ... but their true motivation is to overthrow Dannel and take power in Metrol.

What Do They Want? The dragonmarked houses in the Kennels—Vadalis, Jorasco, and Ghallanda—are key to Dannel's domination of Metrol, and so Dalen's foremost efforts are dedicated to shutting down their research, or at least keeping any major breakthroughs out of Dannel's reach.

What Do They Know? The strike at the Vadalis Kennels that liberated the player characters was the work of Dalen's fighters, but it was only the first step in a bigger plan. They were simply weakening the defenses before striking the real threat—the inner labs in the Vermishard. The last intelligence that the Unbroken received from Crane was that the lab was on the brink of a major breakthrough.

BURSTERS

Dalen questions the characters and fills them in on the Unbroken cell's recent work and goals. Early in the conversation, Dalen asks about Crane's condition, then sends one of the guards to fetch their own medical expert to examine him. They offer the adventurers a safe place to stay and rest, saying, "We don't know how long it's safe for, but as long as you're with us, you're welcome wherever we are!"



Once the conversation with the commander has run its course, the doctor arrives to examine Crane. Read or paraphrase the following:

The doctor mutters to himself as he inspects his patient, ignoring any interruptions: "Has he not said anything at all? Has he been getting paler? Have these skin blotches become more pronounced?"

Suddenly, Crane begins violently convulsing. His eyes open wide, but instead of screams, he only manages loud gurgling noises. The dragonmark on Crane's arm pulses with an eerie green glow.

Then his chest heaves violently. Blood splashes across the doctor's face as several fist-sized insectoids with fleshy wings burst out of Crane's abdomen, each striking out in a different direction and issuing a piercing shriek.

Four **burster bugs** emerge from Crane's body. The bursters use their Stunning Shriek as soon as they can upon emerging, then each burster bug attacks a different target.



PART 4: THE UNBROKEN

THE KEY

Once the bursters have been dealt with, the mortally wounded Crane regains consciousness. He can't be helped with low-level healing, and though a spell like *regenerate* could restore his internal organs, such skill is beyond the Unbroken's reach. Read or paraphrase the following:

Though torn, bloodied, and clearly on the edge of death, Crane's eyes have cleared and he somehow finds the strength to speak.

"Bursters," the man says, "newest breed. They must have injected me with the larvae ... knew I'd be rescued ... smart. Cut off my brain function, keep me silent ... But that doesn't matter."

Crane pauses and coughs up blood, clearly fading.

"New project ... a cure ... a hunger cure. They've stabilized it. Want to spread. We'll be no better than the undead. Can't ... let ... it ... happen! All samples ... the lab, the Kennels. Section B12 ... with the First. Must destroy the cure. Need a key. This key ... take my hand ..."

With this, Crane slowly reaches out his dragon-marked arm toward the player characters.

If one of the player characters already bears the Mark of Handling, he simply gestures to his mark, attempting to communicate that they'll need their mark to access the cure.

If none of the player characters bear the Mark of Handling, as he touches a character's hand, his dragonmark pulses blue and fades from his arm. The character he is touching feels a tingling sensation on their hand and sees a subtle blue glow appear there, looking like a blurred dragonmark. With his last breath, Crane remarkably transfers some of his dragonmark essence to the character. This does not bestow upon them a true dragonmark, but gives them enough of its energy to open the arcane locks in the Vadalis Kennels that only respond to a Mark of Handling. The effects last for 24 hours and the affected character has a full understanding of the nature and duration of the effect.

DRAGONMARK TRANSFERENCE

The dragonmark transference experienced here is situationally unique and unheard of—it's likely that such a phenomenon is tied to the Dark Powers and would never have been possible in Eberron. If the characters from this adventure are intended to continue in a longer campaign and the affected player shows interest, consider having the affected character develop an aberrant dragonmark (using the Aberrant Dragonmark feat in *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*) after this temporary one fades.

THE SECOND NIGHT

With Crane dead and the possible assassination plot against Dalen foiled, Dalen asks the adventurers to help with a raid on the Kennels to seek Crane's "cure"—retrieving it if they can, otherwise destroying it. After all, they now have "the key" to get in. In return, Dalen promises the full help of the Unbroken—either to seek a way out of Metrol, to continue working with the resistance, or to be set up with a new identity to evade the Shepherds' efforts to track them down.

Dalen gives the party leave to rest for the night while the Unbroken make a plan for the assault. In the meantime, Dalen gives the adventurers access to the resistance's armory. Free of charge, each player character can select mundane arms and armor totaling 75 gp in value. The armory has limited stock, containing only one of any item worth 25 gp or more.

The party now has another chance to complete a long rest. As before, roll on the Night Terrors table in chapter 1 to determine the horrors inflicted on the city at night.

LEVEL UP!

After receiving Crane's "key" and finishing a long rest, the characters advance from 2nd to 3rd level.

PART 5: THE END IS THE BEGINNING IS THE END

The adventure reaches its climax as the party infiltrates the very place they recently escaped—the Kennels—in hopes of sabotaging Vadalis’s latest breakthrough, one that threatens all of Metrol.

THE PLAN

With one of the characters possessing—at least temporarily—the dragonmark key to get into the heart of the Kennels, Dalen makes a plan to attack the opposite side of the compound as a distraction, allowing the adventurers to access the lab area unseen. The resistance leader is unwilling to share the details of the plan until everyone is in position, in order to protect the identity of the operative who will be helping them. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check confirms that Dalen is being honest, and their sealed lips are purely to protect the operative, but they’re confident the plan will work.

Once inside the Vadalis facility, the party’s task is to find whatever the researchers had been working on, recover it if they can, and destroy it if they can’t—along with any notes. Nothing should be left for Dannel to use on the populace.

GETTING THERE: CONSEQUENCES

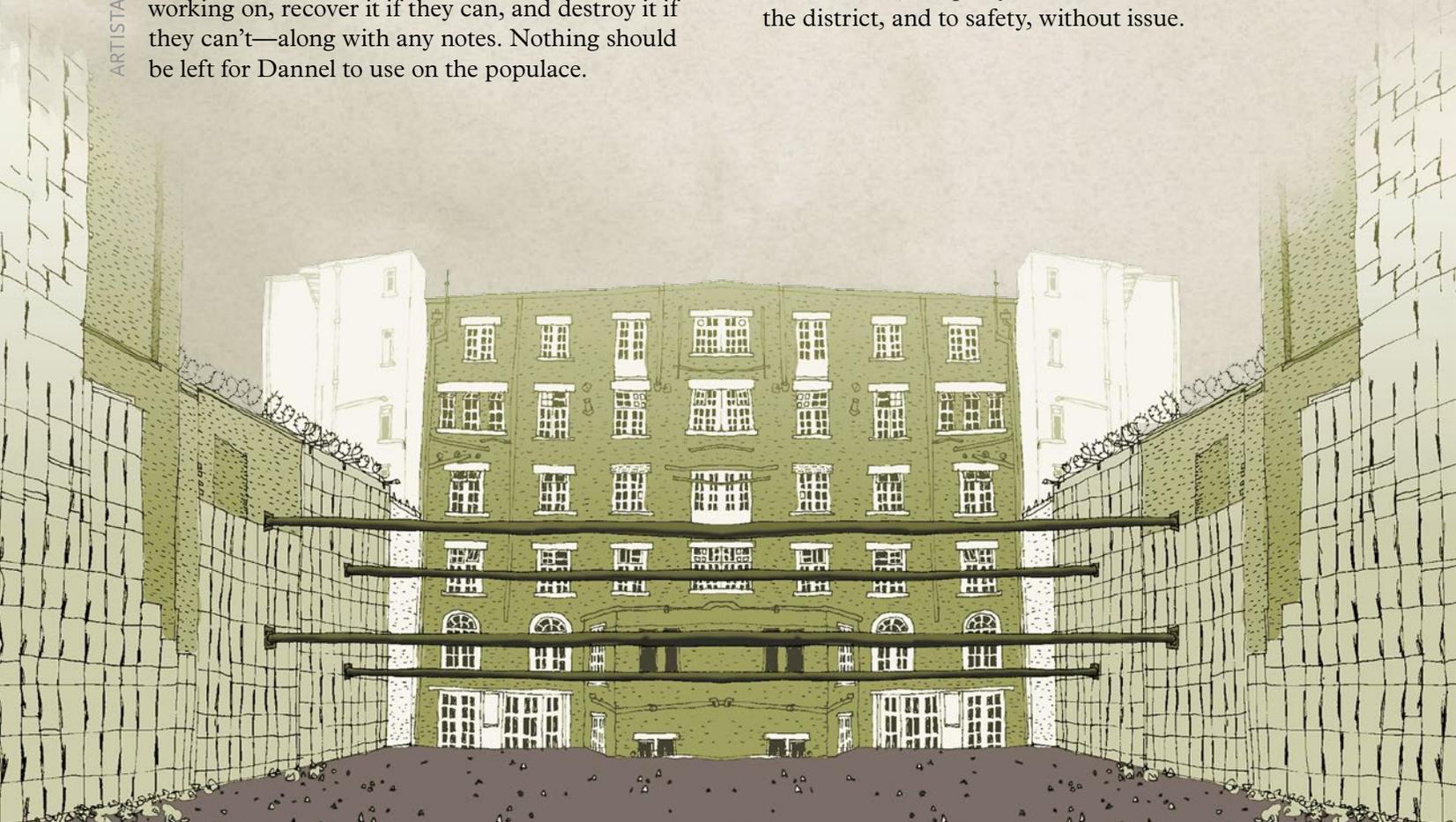
The plan calls for the adventurers to travel in a separate group from the other attacking groups, as is the resistance custom. Getting back to Northshore requires crossing the Bridge of the Dead, but Dalen can arrange this with Grovaine in advance, allowing them to cross unimpeded.

However, if the characters betrayed Grovaine earlier in the adventure, they discover that getting across the bridge is impossible—even for Dalen’s forces. Dalen arranges for part of their compound to be dismantled to make rafts, but the crossing is still perilous (you can learn more about these dangers in the “Bridge of the Dead” section of part 3). While on the open water, they face two **swarms of shredderfish**. Alternatively, if the characters decide to brave Dead Man’s Land, they face two **ghouls**.

If the characters chose Grovaine’s “Apartment Hunting” option earlier in the adventure, were seen by the clerks, and left them alive, they face another complication. One of the clerks notices them on the street while traveling through the city and raises an alarm—even if the characters spared their lives—resulting in a chase during which the party must evade the authorities. All player characters must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or gain one level of exhaustion as a result of the chase.

Otherwise, the party is able to make it across the district, and to safety, without issue.

ARTISTAN



TO THE KENNELS

The characters arrive at the designated meeting place, a three-story building across the street from the outer fences of the Kennels—the Vadalis facility at the base of the towering Vermishard. An Unbroken operative meets them there, gives the appropriate countersign, and escorts the characters to a cramped apartment on the third floor. Read or paraphrase the following:

The window of the cramped third-floor apartment opens up to the cobblestone street below. On the other side of the street, separating the city from the Vadalis Kennels, a towering razor-wire fence rises nearly to the level of this window. Beyond the fence, a scattered complex of buildings lies beneath the soaring stone cliffs of the Vermishard.

The grizzled Unbroken veteran locks the window in the open position, letting in the moist air. He brings out a large ceramic bowl filled with an oozy brown liquid that smells of the swamp. Inside, several gelatinous balls—each the size of a large marble—bob gently.

The man nods at the bowl: “Enchanted froghe-moth eggs. You swallow, then you jump! But you must jump quickly—you might not be able to keep the eggs down. Aim for the building by the Shard.”

Almost as if on cue, a thunderous noise sounds from the opposite end of the compound and all guards rush in that direction. Dalen’s operatives have done their part—it’s now or never!

Swallowing the enchanted egg allows a creature to jump up to 40 feet in any direction for the next minute, without making an ability check or taking falling damage. However, the eggs contain a foul-tasting, toxic liquid that most creatures can’t hold down. Upon swallowing, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or vomit, which ends the egg’s effects at the end of their third turn after taking it. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is also poisoned for 1 minute, unless they have poison resistance or immunity.

The resistance veteran also gives the characters a large jar containing some sort of black ooze. Read or paraphrase the following:

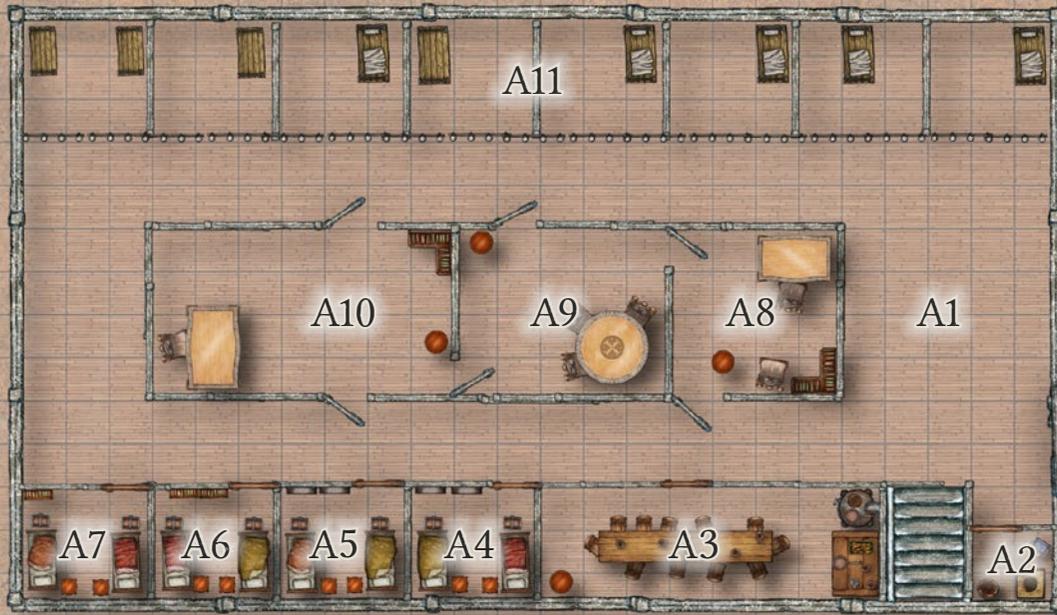
“For getting out. The Shepherds are smart, they’ll seal or guard the way you got in, so you’ll need to find another way out. Throw the ooze against the fence—it’ll weaken the wards just long enough for you to cut through and get out when you need to. And hurry, they can’t keep the guards busy forever—half an hour, tops!”

NOPE! NOPE! NOPE!

Characters that (understandably) don’t want to swallow the eggs will need to improvise another way in. Climbing the 20-foot-tall fence requires a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (3d6) slashing damage on a failed save and half as much damage on a successful one. Or the players might come up with a more creative idea—perhaps creating a makeshift zipline, or if they’re small enough, simply having a strong party member carry them during the jump.



MAP 5.1: KENNELS LAB, LEVEL A



RESEARCH BUILDING: LEVEL A

The party arrives—most likely by jumping—right at the door to the Research building, which is built partially into the side of the Vermishard. You likely won't need a map until the characters finish exploring the building and make their escape—the “Getting Out” section presents map 5.3, which depicts the building's surroundings.

All guards in this area have either left or are over by the fence some 60 feet to the south, distracted and looking the other way. The door is locked with a simple lock, which can be opened with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. These checks can be attempted multiple times if necessary.

Dalen's distraction won't last long, and the players should remember they'll have to complete their mission quickly. As they go inside, remind them if needed of Crane's last words: “Section B12 ... with the First. Must destroy the cure.”

Upon entering the building, the party finds themselves on **level A**. The characters can't further their main objectives on this level, but diligent exploration can yield some useful supplies. There are four Vadalis **heavy guards** on duty, as well as two research assistants and six patients, detailed in the following sections. Map 5.1 provides the layout of this wing.

A1. ENTRYWAY

When the characters enter level A of the Research building, they find themselves nearest to the staircase leading down to **level B**. It is clearly marked “To Level B” and is closed with a complicated lock, which can be opened with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

As the party reaches the entryway on the lower level, a Vadalis **heavy guard** on the far side of the entryway attacks on sight. He calls out to the other three **heavy guards** on this floor—one is in the common area (**A3**) and two are in a guard bedroom (**A5**)—who emerge on the next round and join the fray. Each guard carries a copy of the key to **level B**.

A2. TOILET

It's clean and functional.

A3. KITCHEN AND COMMON AREA

The common room is simple and practical, with a large table and several chairs. The party can find a week's worth of rations and a full dragonchess set.

A4–A5. GUARD BEDROOMS

Each of the bedrooms holds two cots and bedside tables, which contain some personal effects of the guards who use them. In each bedroom, the party can find two random weapons (from chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*) and a shield.

A6–A7. RESEARCHER BEDROOMS

The researchers take turns staying overnight in these bedrooms. Each room holds two cots and bedside tables, which contain some personal effects. One of the rooms also contains a healer's kit.

A8–A10. OFFICE, LABORATORY, AND EXAMINATION ROOM

These rooms are the main work areas of this floor, designed for medical observation and minor experiments. They're clean and clinical.

When the two research assistants (**artisan magewrights**) hear the party fighting the guards in the entryway, they hunker down separately in two of these rooms. They're not dragonmarked and have no detailed knowledge about what is going below, nor any special access. Their job is to examine and write down observations of the "patients" and their reactions to various "enhancements." One of the researchers begs for the characters to let them go, offering to tell them where "the good stuff" is hidden in the laboratory (**A9**).

The "good stuff" is a stash of healing potions kept in a secret compartment in the laboratory, which requires a successful DC 18 Investigation check to find without help. The stash has a gesture-lock, which all the research assistants know. Alternatively, it can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check using a crowbar or similar sturdy implement. Inside is a box containing one *potion of healing* per player character. These potions bear the House Jorasco label, which proclaims their flavor is "Black Licorice."

A11. OBSERVATION CELLS

One entire outer wall of this facility is dedicated to a row of large observation cells. Six of these contain "patients" that are being held for "observation," and the other two are empty. If the player characters are native to Dread Metrol, you could have them recognize someone from their old neighborhood here.

Unlike the rough shed the characters woke up in earlier, some effort has been made to make these comfortable, with soft cots and personal effects scattered about. Each door is secured with a simple lock. All guards and researcher assistants have keys to these cells, or they can be opened with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

The patients are subjects of Vadalis experiments—though thus far, these experiments seem to have yielded few results. These six **commoners** are all tired, most of them experiencing pain or other physical ailments, but don't show increased strength or other "beneficial" mutations. Much like the player characters were at the start of the adventure, these patients were conscripted as "volunteers." They ask to be rescued, but are fearful and won't leave the building or complex unless the characters escort them.

SERNA D'VADALIS

If the characters are from "Eberron proper," then Serna d'Vadalis, the missing scientist from part 1, can be found among the "patients" in the observation cells. She is in the same condition as the others and eager to be rescued. Serna knows nothing helpful about the Kennels and has no direct connection to the outcome of this adventure; she was simply unlucky enough to be caught in the Mists and brought to Dread Metrol.

RESEARCH BUILDING: LEVEL B

When the characters unlock the door to the lower level (whether by taking a key from one of the Vadalis guards or opening it themselves), they can move downstairs to **level B**. Read or paraphrase the following:

The older stone stairs lead down to a maze of corridors. Everbright lanterns light the stone walls with a white, clinical light that flickers occasionally into shadows as figures pass by them.

The halls echo with unintelligibly muffled conversations coming from a distance. A sound of soft moaning comes from beyond one of the doors, although the echoes make it difficult to tell which.

Map 5.2 provides the layout of this wing. If the characters came from the Talenta Plains at the start of the adventure, they recognize this floor's layout is identical to the lab at Whitewood Ranch. While it's not actually the same facility, there is an eerie familiarity.

The shadows the characters see in the flickering light are cast by one of several researchers, all of whom hide upon noticing the characters' descent. There are no additional guards on this level. With a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check, the first character to come down the stairs notices the door to **B7** closing as they arrive. The researchers

MAP 5.2: KENNELS LAB, LEVEL B



remain in their respective labs and are only encountered if the characters enter those rooms.

Doors on this level are clearly labeled with their number, B1–B10. Most feature simple locks that can be breached with either a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools or a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. The door to **B10** is an exception; in addition to requiring a Mark of Handling, it needs a physical key and gesture to unlock, as discussed in its area description below.

B1. TOILET

This room is currently unlocked and unoccupied. It’s clean, functional, and slightly larger than the restroom upstairs. Clearly, what goes down on this floor is more important.

B2–B4. OFFICES

These three offices belong to the senior researchers found elsewhere on this floor. All three offices are empty of people and contain only hints of what the researchers are working on. Each office requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check to quickly discover the room’s clue, though the characters don’t need this information to complete their mission.

Office **B2** belongs to Maxille d’Vadalis, the researcher who can currently be found in **B7**. The clue in this room is that one of several plaques on the wall is a commendation from Queen Dannel

herself. The plaque congratulates Maxille’s team on the successful development of the spider-horse for military use and thanks them for their “sacrifices.”

Office **B3** belongs to Doran Stronne, the researcher found in **B8**. The office is home to more than a dozen musical instruments, most disassembled and in various states of disrepair. The clue in this room is a set of notes that refer to a major breakthrough achieved by “using a biological approach to sonic mind-alteration.”

Office **B4** belongs to Karanta Dozle, the researcher found in **B9**. Karanta’s room has many exotic plants, some of which are flowering. The clue in here is a set of vials along with a “dosing journal.” It reveals that Karanta has been taking antitoxin, gradually reducing her dose over several months, which a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Medicine or Nature) check reveals could allow her to develop a natural resistance to a toxin. The vials present in the room can be combined for a total of two full vials of antitoxin.

B5. VULGRE EXPERIMENTS

This room contains two cages, each containing a grotesque malformed vulgre that moans in agony. The monstrosities are docile and move very slowly. They are clearly suffering and in a lot of pain. Even if the cages are opened, the creatures do not come out or attack; the characters can put them out of their misery or move on.

B6. SHREDDERFISH AQUARIUM

This room contains a large wall-to-wall aquarium split into three sections, each open on top. Two sections each hold two **swarms of shredderfish**, while the contents of the third are obscured by cloudy water. A resourceful adventurer could potentially throw an enemy into either of the live sections to be devoured.

The room also has three large containers, one containing wood, one with stone, and one with bones.

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation or Nature) check or a Wisdom (Animal Handling or Nature) check can ascertain that these shredderfish are being conditioned to consume different materials.

A closer investigation of the cloudy section reveals that it holds a dead swarm, along with remains of partially eaten rocks.

B7. ARACHNOQUESTRIUM

This room contains **Maxille d'Vadalis** (she/her), who is the senior researcher on this level, along with four **young spider-horses**. Maxille is a true believer and yearns to defend the facility from the interlopers. She orders the spider-horses to attack as soon as the characters breach the room.

Maxille is a die-hard loyalist and would rather die than help the party. Unless a character succeeds on a DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation check) or uses mind control such as the *suggestion* spell, she fights to the death. If she thinks the characters may wish to keep her alive to use her dragonmark, she potentially cuts away her dragonmarked arm as her last act while yelling “you’ll never use me!”

Maxille carries a key with an embedded Eberron dragonshard within it; this key opens the door to the Advanced Lab (**B10**).

B8. “OPERA” HOUSE

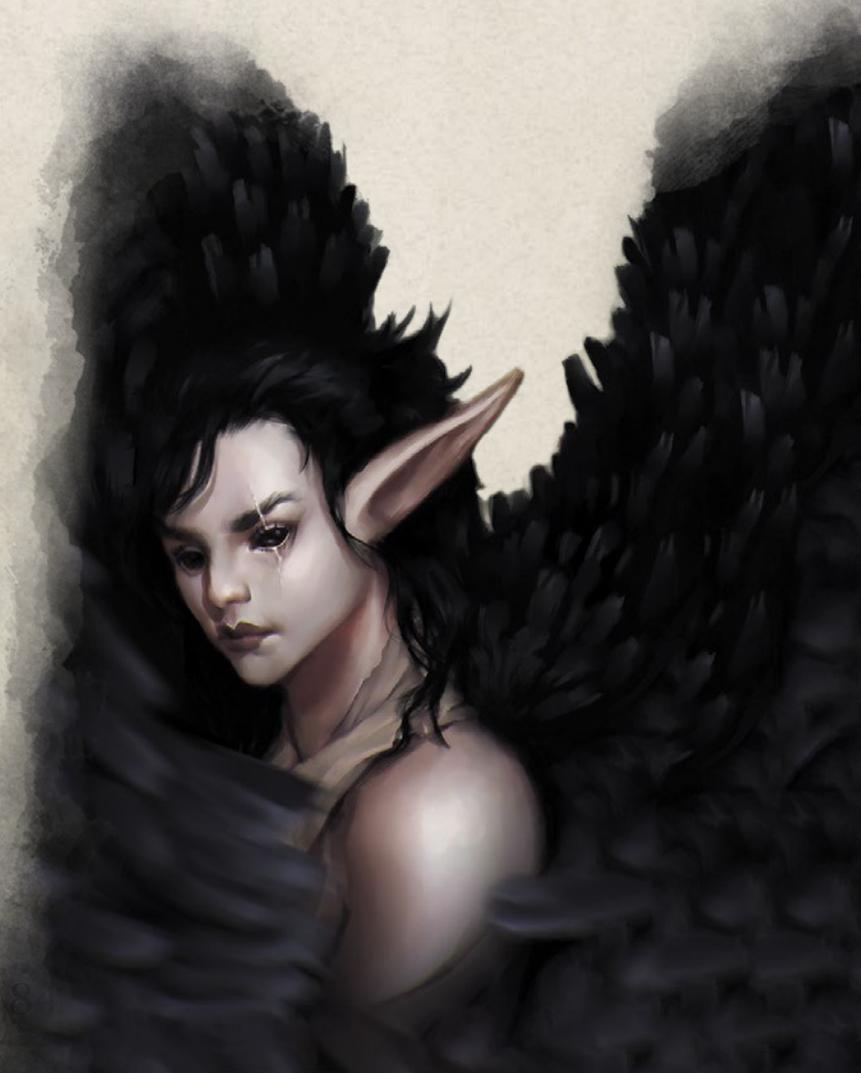
This peculiar room contains the researcher **Doran d'Vadalis** (he/him), two **harpies**, and a monstrous two-headed **owlbear**. One of the owlbear’s two heads is malformed and hangs limp with vacant eyes.

The two harpies, whose names are Simek and Yahara, are in separate cages. Simek is sleeping, while Yahara periodically sings a short melody that seems to only affect the owlbear. Doran has been experimenting with altering the harpies

to control the owlbear with targeted harpysong segments. The harpies have not been treated well, kept in a cage and forced to sing all day in shifts—one sleeps while the other continues singing.

Doran, who is immune to the harpies’ Luring Song action, sees the party’s incursion as the perfect opportunity to test his harpy-controlled specimen. He has released the grotesque owlbear out of its cage prior to the party arriving, and it stands between Doran and both sets of doors. When the party enters, he orders Yahara to have the owlbear attack, and she obeys.

As the characters fight off the owlbear, they may be able to turn the situation to their advantage. The harpy’s control of the owlbear lasts only as long as she keeps singing—if she stops, the effect ends at the start of the owlbear’s next turn, at which point it turns on Doran and tears him to pieces. After the third round of combat, Simek wakes up and uses her song against the player characters. During combat, the characters can use *silence* or negotiate with the harpies, who will only help the characters if their cage is opened. The cage requires a successful DC 15 Strength check or a DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools.



PART 5: THE END IS THE BEGINNING IS THE END

If Doran is about to be killed or the owlbear begins to turn on him, he begs for his life and offers his full cooperation.

Doran carries a key with an embedded Eberron dragonshard within it; this key opens the door to the Advanced Lab (**B10**).

In one of the drawers of this room, the characters can find an ink-stained owlbear claw along with notes on creating a magical tattoo. These can be used together to create one *eldritch claw tattoo* ^{TCE}, which produces a tendril in the shape of an owlbear claw. (If the party is particularly capable, you can have Doran use his own *eldritch claw tattoo* against the party during combat.)

B9. BENIGN GROWTHS

This area is home to a multitude of vine-like plants, some of which can be seen moving. The researcher **Karanta d’Vadalis** (she/her) is here.

While the room contains many plants, only one presents danger. An **assassin vine** lies across the floor and walls near the door, indistinguishable from the other plants and vines here. It is under Karanta’s command and does not attack or make itself known unless the characters begin hostilities.

Karanta believes herself to be safe and does not immediately attack. If the party enters, she tells them that she has no quarrel with them as long as they leave her be. She urges them, “Imagine you never came to this room. Find and take what you need, just not here. Do this for both of our sakes.”

Characters who make a successful DC10 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell that both her offer and her threat are very genuine—she wields some power that is not immediately evident.

If the characters agree to leave and close the door, Karanta keeps her word. If they refuse or attempt to enter, she and the assassin vine attack.

Karanta carries a key with an embedded Eberron dragonshard within it; this key opens the door to the Advanced Lab (**B10**).

B10. THE ADVANCED LAB

The door to this room is not only made of sturdy steel, but has a triple lock that can’t be picked, broken, or unlocked by the *knock* spell. The door requires all of the following three elements:

Physical Key. The door has a visible keyhole, but the lock is enchanted and can’t be picked. The three senior researchers on this floor each have a copy of the key needed to open it.

Gesture. The door has a magical touchpad requiring a specific symbol to be traced to deactivate the lock. Each of the three researchers on the floor know the symbol—and conveniently, both floors of the complex use the same symbol for their gesture-locks. The low-ranked researchers on level A use the gesture on their potion stash, so the characters may have already learned it to access the stash. The gesture can also be figured out by making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check to cleverly apply powder or paste to the touchpad.

Dragonmark. Finally, the lock only opens if the gesture is used by a character bearing the Mark of Handling. There are three marked researchers on this level, and the character who got the mark transferred onto them by Crane is also able to open the door.

Once the characters gain access to the lab, they find it unoccupied. Two doors in the far corner of the room are clearly marked as **B11** and **B12**, both of which can be opened with a key from any of the senior researchers on this floor. If a character listens at the doors, a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check identifies gurgling sounds coming from **B11**.

The room is full of magical and alchemical equipment (though none of particular interest to the party’s mission), research notes, and well-organized journals on various topics. The character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score recognizes that these journals likely contain important information on the work being done in this lab. The characters can learn the following from the journals:

Bursters. This journal details the development of bursters—the creatures that killed Crane—from the larvae of a rare insectoid species. Vadalis has focused on accelerating their growth and developing the ability to administer the larvae via either injection or ingestion. The notes explain that only one “matriarch” was successfully enhanced for accelerated growth, and that every effort is being made to keep her in good health.

Hunger Crisis. Several journals detail various experiments to solve Metrol’s hunger crisis. Multiple failed experiments are described, including the vulgre program—which “can be considered salvageable for military purposes, but does not address the initial problem.”



The First. The most recent journal details the culmination of two years of research and Vadalis’s final success in creating “the hunger cure.” It details a test subject referred to only as “the first,” describing their health, mental state, and eating habits—reportedly thriving solely on a diet of undead corpses. All of the factors are discussed with great positivity and optimism, and the subject’s good behavior and voluntary undertaking of improvements are praised multiple times. The final notes report the subject is “ready for release pending confirmation of transmission ability.”

Samples. The journals discuss the formula for the “cure” serum, referred to as “Formula 45-1.” Recent notes talk about difficulties reproducing the serum, despite having the detailed formula and a large supply of previously produced samples. One researcher’s entry suggests that someone may have sabotaged the formula notes, intentionally leaving something out—and as the characters may guess, Crane was indeed responsible for the sabotage. His real name can be found among the notes: Gruidalle Shawe d’Vadalis.

B11. BURSTER MATRIARCH

This room contains a table, feed storage containers, cleaning supplies, and tools. However, much of the room is filled by a 10-by-10-foot glass enclosure—and inside, a hideous humanoid-sized insect creature with a large ovipositor and wings. The creature is fleshy in places and not dissimilar to the bursters that killed Crane.

This is the **burster matriarch**. The characters are safe from it while it is in its cage, and don’t need to interact with it if they wish to move on. The glass cage has a latched door that can be opened from the outside.

The creature is used to people tapping on the glass and does not become agitated unless the door is opened, in which case it rushes through with force. The enclosure has several tiny air and food slits; however, these are all angled down through the glass and can’t be used to effectively target the creature, which has total cover. If the characters wish to kill it, they need to open the humanoid-sized door to the cage.

B12. THE CURE

This room is part alchemical laboratory, part elaborate storage area. Fancy cabinets contain countless neatly labeled vials of different colored liquids. A laboratory bench holds various components. A bookcase shelves many leather-bound journals, most of which contain formulas. The room also contains another door—but this one is unnumbered, labeled only with a sign reading “THE FIRST.”

BOOKSHELVES

The bookshelves contain detailed notes on the ingredients and preparation of the formulas in this room, including F45-1. They can easily be taken or destroyed.

EXPERIMENTAL POTIONS

The cabinets hold various potions, all well-organized but labeled with inscrutable codes like B23-6. Among them, the characters find vials that were the result of Vadalis’s attempts to recreate standard potions. However, even though they look and taste like the intended potion, these experimental potions can have strange consequences upon use. Each character can find one potion from the Experimental Potions table. Unless they use the *identify* spell, they can only learn what the potion “probably” is, not its possible side effects. When a character drinks an experimental potion, they must succeed on the indicated saving throw, or suffer its alternate effect instead of the potion’s usual effect.



PART 5: THE END IS THE BEGINNING IS THE END

EXPERIMENTAL POTIONS

d6	Normal Potion	Alternate Effect
1	<i>elixir of health</i>	You must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or the potion has the effects of a <i>potion of poison</i> instead of its usual effects.
2	<i>oil of slipperiness</i>	You must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or your speed is reduced to zero for 1 minute instead of the potion's usual effects. You can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of your subsequent turns.
3	<i>potion of fire breath</i>	After you drink this potion, each time you attempt to breathe fire at a target, you must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, instead of targeting a single creature, you target every creature within 15 feet of you, including yourself.
4	<i>potion of hill giant strength</i>	When you drink this potion, you must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the duration is reduced to 1 minute, and for the duration, your newfound strength is difficult to control. Whenever you hit with a melee attack while one or more allies are within 5 feet of you, one of those allies takes 1d8 bludgeoning damage.
5	<i>potion of growth</i>	When you drink this potion, you must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the duration is reduced to 1 minute. For the duration, your limbs grow disproportionately from your body and you have disadvantage on all attacks.
6	<i>potion of heroism</i>	When you drink this potion, you must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or be under the effects of the <i>bane</i> spell for the duration, in addition to the potion's normal effects.

FORMULA 45-1

The formula vials are well-organized, but the spot where the characters would expect to locate the “cure” is conspicuously empty.

However, the characters easily locate a small sturdy carrying chest labeled 45-1. It's not particularly heavy, requiring just one free hand to carry. The chest has a simple padlock, but the party finds that none of the researchers' keys open it. The chest can be opened with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Neatly secured inside the chest are seventeen vials marked F45-1.

HEALING POTIONS

Though most of the potions in the room are unusable or unpredictable, a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation or Medicine) check locates a cache containing one *potion of healing* per player character. These potions bear the House Jorasco label, which proclaims their flavor is “Diet Banana, contains artificial sweeteners.”

JAR OF BURSTER LARVAE

There is a large jar labeled “accelerated burster larvae.” It's not difficult to ascertain that some of these were injected into Crane to incapacitate and kill him. Although not in immediately injectable form, this is a horrific weapon and is likely valuable to the right buyer—the jar would be worth a fortune if returned to the resistance.

UNNUMBERED DOOR

The other door in this room bears no number and is labeled only as “THE FIRST.” It has a simple latch and can be easily opened from the outside.

DECISION POINT

When the characters finish exploring room B12, you may wish to remind the players of their primary mission. They've been tasked with recovering or destroying the formula for “the cure”—which they've now located, and it's up to them to decide what to do with it. They may want to consider the following:

- They've seen the horrors being perpetrated in the name of war.
- They know that the formula potentially turns people into undead-eaters.
- They can return the formula to the Unbroken—if indeed it's better in the hands of the resistance, despite their own often-horrific methods.
- It's easy to destroy the formula and samples if the characters so choose. After all, if they're stopped on the way out, it may be confiscated and then their efforts are for naught.
- Of course, they could even keep the formula and samples for themselves.

There are no correct answers here, nor any ability checks required. The choices are for the group to decide on—but time is ticking.

THE FIRST

When the door leading to the First's room is opened, read or paraphrase the following:

This small room was designed as a holding cell, but it's since been decorated to look more like a bedroom. It holds a comfortable bed, nightstand with a candle, and other small personal effects.

A foul stench emanates from the room's sole occupant, a young man in simple gray clothing. He sits cross-legged on the floor, chewing on what looks to be a rotten human leg. Beside him, a putrescent, long-decomposing corpse—or what's left of it—lies on the floor.

The young man pauses eating and speaks with rotting flesh still visible in his mouth. "Have you come to take me home?" he says.

The young man in this room, who refers to himself only as the First, is good-natured and willing to answer questions. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check confirms that the First is human and in excellent health. He does not register as undead or anything unique to the characters' special senses—other than his willingness to eat undead flesh, the party finds no evidence of what's been done to him. The corpse he's been eating was once a Karrnathi undead; the researchers killed it then gave it to the First to eat.

The First is willing to go with the characters if they promise to take him back to Brokenwall to help his people. He's not sure if he is able to transmit the "hunger cure" to others, but he hopes so—that's what the researchers have been working on recently. If you'd like to continue your campaign in Dread Metrol, it's up to you as DM whether transmission is actually possible and under what circumstances.

The characters must decide what to do with the First. If they leave him in the laboratory, they are effectively leaving the "cure" in Vadalis's hands. Taking him peacefully requires them to agree to help him—he's fairly naive and as long as he's promised help, regardless of whether it is true or not, he's happy to come along.

BROKENWALL

The district of Brokenwall, in the Undercity below Southshore, was lost to the undead several months ago. Since then, the remaining people of Brokenwall have been abandoned and the general population considers it a place of horrors. No one has been heard of ever getting out or in—not that there are any volunteers to try the latter.

NPC: THE FIRST

chaotic good human (he/him)

The First (**commoner** with maximum hit points) is a young man in his late teens who has been in the laboratory for several weeks. His birth real name is Kandess, though he neither uses it nor shares it without persuasion. He is calm, soft-spoken, and mostly harmless.

He's not only been called the First by "loving" Vadalis researchers, but has wholly embraced the name himself as his true name, duty, and destiny.

What Does He Want? The First wants to return to his home district of Brokenwall and save the people of the district from the hunger that many are dying for. He willingly volunteered for these Vadalis treatments and believes his determination and strength of will have helped him succeed in becoming the First.

What Does He Know? Brokenwall is an Undercity district that was cut off from the rest of Metrol by an undead incursion. The army and the Watch have abandoned and barricaded Brokenwall, but the First managed a desperate escape. People were already starving in the district when he fled, and he knows they'll all die soon if no help comes.

Believing in the power of authority, his search for help led him to being conscripted for enhancement, and because of his willingness to volunteer for anything to save his people, he became a subject for these experiments.

As far as he is concerned, the Vadalis researchers are saving everyone and have been true to their word. Though eating the dead was "strange at first," he soon got used to it and says he's never felt better.



CAMILLE KUO

GETTING OUT

Once the characters have made their decisions on how to proceed, they are able to make their way out of the building without any resistance. If the party released the prisoners on level A, they are waiting to be led to freedom—these six **commoners** all have two levels of exhaustion and their speed is halved.

Sounds of distant battle ring out as the characters emerge outdoors. Map 5.3 depicts the building's surroundings. The door of the laboratory lies 50 feet from the fence bordering the street to the east.

One Vadalis **heavy guard captain** riding an armored **spider-horse** waits atop an outcropping on the Vermishard, 50 feet above the party. When the characters emerge from the building, he whistles, drawing the attention of two Vadalis **heavy guards** who are both 70 feet away in the direction of the fence. More guards can be seen in the other distant sectors of the facility, but they are too busy handling Dalen's distraction to engage the party at the moment.



MAP 5.3: KENNELS
LAB EXTERIOR

It should be clear to the party now that their goal is to escape—there's little time to fight off more than one or two guards before reinforcements arrive. The complex battlefield and opponents present the following complications.

WARDED RAZOR-WIRE FENCE

The 20-foot-tall fence deals 2d8 lightning damage to anyone touching it either with their body or a conductive object like a weapon or tool. As an action, the black ooze given to the party can be used to de-electrify the fence for 1 minute. During this time, the fence can be attacked and cut open without taking damage. The fence has AC 15, a damage threshold of 5, and immunity to cold, fire, lightning, poison, and psychic damage. The characters must deal 15 points of damage to the fence to make a hole big enough for one creature to get through.

MOUNTED GUARD

The mounted **heavy guard captain** begins by shooting at the characters, then directs his **spider-horse** steed to climb down the wall. Once they reach the player characters, the captain and his spider-horse both engage in melee. This guard's primary concern is retrieving Vadalis's stolen property. If the characters are seen carrying a chest, he prioritizes it, and also attempts to knock out any prisoners with his mace as he catches up to them.

OTHER GUARDS

The other guards are less picky. They are too far away to engage in melee and snipe at the adventurers and prisoners alike with their crossbows.

The guards do not follow the characters outside the fence and instead focus on downing any prisoners left within the compound. Once the characters reach the street, an Unbroken runner gives them a sign to follow her and leads them away to a hidden safehouse. If the player characters reach the street before all of the other prisoners do, it's up to them whether they wish to continue fighting or leave the rest of the prisoners behind.

CONCLUSION

Once clear of the Kennels, the characters are able to rendezvous in a secret Unbroken safehouse in Northshore, where they are met once again by Dalen and a host of armed resistance fighters.

During their travel here, the characters would have had an opportunity to decide what they want to do with the First and—if they did not destroy it—the formula. They must now report to Dalen. If they have brought anything back, Dalen insists on the resistance keeping all of it—the adventurers have, after all, completed their mission. Though Dalen would never admit it, their ultimate goal after overthrowing Dannel is to take her place leading the city, and they're not afraid to get their hands dirty to accomplish this. A character that succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check can tell Dalen doesn't plan to destroy the serum—they may not have decided yet how to use it in the Unbroken's fight, but they'll certainly try.

Dalen makes good on their promises to the adventurers. As a material reward, the group is given one *+1 weapon* of the party's choice and one *+1 shield*. Furthermore, Dalen offers each of the player characters 200 gp, and if they brought back the jar of burster larvae, Dalen offers another 500 gp for it. These rewards are one last sign of Dalen's cunning; from their days in the Aurum, Dalen has collected a considerable sum of coins, but in Dread Metrol, they're nearly worthless. Dalen is more than happy to shower the player characters in useless wealth. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) reveals their minor deception; if the player characters are from Dread Metrol, they automatically succeed on this check and are aware

how worthless this offer is. If challenged, Dalen also offers their personal treasure: a bottle of 967 YK vintage Aundairian Bluevine wine, and (if the adventurers also hand over the burster larvae) a crate of six *healing potions* in House Jorasco's popular pomegranate flavor.

Citizens of Metrol are given new identities and their freedom; it's their choice whether to remain with the Unbroken or not, though this decision need not be made immediately.

If the party hands the First over to Dalen, the young man is visibly sad and uncertain whether the Unbroken will allow him to fulfill his "destiny" of returning to Brokenwall, yet he still thanks the characters for getting him this far.

This concludes the adventure for characters native to Dread Metrol or those who will be continuing their adventures in the demiplane.

LEVEL UP!

After completing this adventure, the characters advance from 3rd to 4th level.

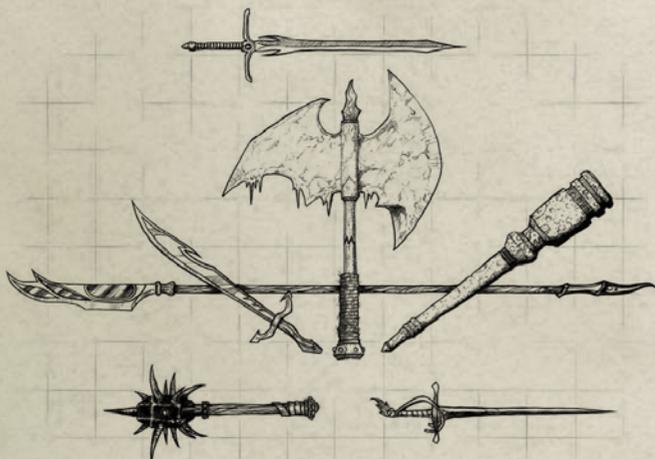
THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

For characters playing the adventure as a one-shot or for those who were promised help returning to Eberron-Prime, the following additional scene takes place. Read or paraphrase the following:

As promised, Dalen has put you in touch with someone in Metrol who has been studying the strange Mists. The meeting was complicated to arrange and apparently came at some cost to Dalen. Yet here you are.

The Unbroken leader's connections have taken you into the heart of the Forge Vermishard, where House Cannith explores arcane mysteries and crafts terrifying weapons of war. The air is charged with the scents of ozone and molten metal, and you can hear screams in the distance. But Dalen's word is good, and you are escorted safely into a vast chamber. The walls are lined with glass tanks filled with strange mists and vapors, each charged with different forms of energy.

An imposing figure waits for you—he's clearly human, but half his body is made from steel and stone. This is Starrin d'Cannith, the infamous Gorgon. Iron horns curl up around his head, and one of his eyes is made from glowing crystal. His right arm has been augmented with a steel battlefist, from which protrude not fingers, but menacing sharp claws. Embedded into his palm, a silver talisman bears the crown of Cyre.



PART 5: CONCLUSION

“You wish to volunteer for my experiments?” His booming voice echoes across the room. “We’ve made a breakthrough. I’d wager my left hand that you’ll survive the transition.” He considers you for a moment. “Well, maybe my right hand.”

The conversation with Starrin is very brief. He knows he has the power in this situation, and if the adventurers don’t join his experiment, he has a whole city of people to “volunteer.” He feels no personal concern for the adventurers’ well-being, but he knows the value of *willing* volunteers and means them no harm. He simply needs subjects for his latest experiments to penetrate the Mists, which have previously met in dismal failure—but this time, he’s hopeful for a better outcome. He assures them that the process will be quick and painless. Probably.

If the characters agree to participate in Starrin’s experiment, he leads them to another door. Read or paraphrase the following:

Soft moaning comes from beyond the door. Your grim-voiced host opens it and walks into the room without hesitation.

Inside is a restrained spider-horse. Heavy chains stretch from it to the walls around, leaving it suspended several feet in the air. The monstrosity bucks and moans from the restraints.

In one fluid motion, Starrin draws his ornate dagger across the creature’s neck, slicing it open. No blood comes out; instead, dark shadowy mists pour out of the dying creature and engulf you.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH

The characters wake up on the side of the road, just outside of Whitewood Ranch. It is night, and they can tell by the celestial bodies that about one month has passed since they were sent to investigate the ranch.

If adventurers attempt to enter the ranch, they are met once again by Eizek d’Vadalis, who remembers their initial visit but has no memory of them sneaking into the Proprietary Research building. He says, “You left so suddenly, I thought I’d said something wrong! Are you still interested in some magebred horses?”

Eizek also mentions that it is fortuitous that they are here, as his ranchers have found something peculiar in the woods, and he’d like to retain the party’s services. He takes them to a cave several miles away from the ranch, where they see the

corpses of several clawfoot raptors and one horse. It’s clear that something large has been eating them. Of course, House Vadalis has no interest in sharing the real reason behind the disappearances—the missing spider-horse (described in the “About the Ranch” section of part 1). Instead, Eizek explains that his ranchers found the cave when looking for a missing horse. “A young sword-tooth titan has been hunting here!” he says. “We’ve taken the liberty of killing it and disposing of the carcass; however, we know that these raptors are often quite precious to the locals, so we thought you might deliver the sad news to them for us. There is even a small sum of gold in it for you!”

If the characters will be continuing their adventures in Eberron, they each receive 50 gp from Eizek for delivering the news, and another 50 gp each from the original broker who hired them to investigate the ranch, as all parties are satisfied with the given explanation.

EXTENDING THE ADVENTURE

Instead of a “cinematic” conclusion as described above, the return to Eberron can be expanded into a short adventure. In this event, Eizek and a more knowledgeable researcher admit—entirely off the record—that one of their experiments has escaped and may be dangerous, though they have no more clue as to the mysterious nature of the Mists than the characters. They ask the characters to track it down and kill it off.

The characters may then encounter a spider-horse matriarch’s lair, where there are several more spider-horses and potentially other arachnid creatures.

Alternatively, Starrin’s way through the Mists might take the characters to other Domains of Dread rather than back to Eberron. In this case, rather than the talisman on his battlefist depicting the crown of Cyre, the symbol should be altered to depict a relevant talisman for the destination domain.

FIN



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

ARTISAN MAGEWRIGHT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Arcana +4
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common plus any two languages
Challenge 0 (0 or 10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Artisan. The magewright is proficient in one type of artisan's tools.

Spellcasting. The magewright's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 12). To cast one of its rituals, the magewright must provide additional material components whose value in gold pieces is 20 times the spell's level. These components are consumed when the ritual is finished. The magewright knows the following spells:

At will: *guidance*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*
Rituals: *knock*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

ASSASSIN VINE

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)
Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

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

Damage Resistances cold, fire
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and it takes 21 (6d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The vine can constrict only one target at a time.

Entangling Vines. The assassin vine can animate normal vines and roots on the ground in a 15-foot square within 30 feet of it. These plants turn the ground in that area into difficult terrain. A creature in that area when the effect begins must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be restrained by entangling vines and roots. A creature restrained by the plants can use its action to make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, freeing itself on a successful check. The effect ends after 1 minute or when the assassin vine dies or uses Entangling Vines again.

BANDIT

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

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

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

ACTIONS

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

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

APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

BURSTER BUG

Tiny monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Immunities thunder

Senses blindsight 20 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Stunning Shriek (Recharge 6). The burster bug emits a shriek in a 5-foot radius. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is stunned for 1 minute. The stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Creatures automatically succeed on the saving throw if they can't hear the burster bug or if they are immune to thunder damage.

REACTIONS

Startling Shriek. The burster bug can use its Stunning Shriek when it rolls initiative.

BURSTER BUG MATRIARCH

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities thunder

Damage Resistances poison

Condition Immunities paralyzed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The burster bug matriarch makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned this way, the target is paralyzed. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Larvae Injector. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is infested with 1d3 burster bug eggs, which immediately hatch into burster bug maggots. At the start of each of the target's turns, the target takes 1d6 piercing damage per maggot infesting it. Applying fire to the bite wound before the end of the target's next turn deals 1 fire damage to the target and kills these burster bug maggots. After this time, the maggots are too far under the skin to be burned. If a target infested by burster bug maggots ends its turn with 0 hit points, it dies as the maggots burrow into its heart and kill it. Any effect that cures disease kills all burster bug maggots infesting the target.

Stunning Shriek (Recharge 6). The burster bug matriarch emits a shriek in a 10-foot radius. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is stunned for 1 minute. The stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Creatures automatically succeed on the saving throw if they can't hear the burster bug matriarch or if they are immune to thunder damage.



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
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 0 (10 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

ACTIONS

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

DALEN OSSERAK

Medium human, neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Cha +7, Int +6, Wis +6
Skills Deception +10, History +6, Insight +9, Perception +9, Persuasion +10, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Draconic, Elvish, Goblin, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Cunning Action. On each of their turns, Dalen can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Evasion. If Dalen is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Dalen instead takes no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Dalen deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Dalen that isn't incapacitated and Dalen doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Dalen makes three attacks with their shortsword.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. Dalen halves the damage that they take from an attack that hits them. Dalen must be able to see the attacker.

Uncanny Insight (3/Day). When Dalen or a creature they can see makes an attack roll, a saving throw, or an ability check, Dalen can cause the roll to be made with advantage or disadvantage.

DEADWING

Tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
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 Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

ACTIONS

Leech Life. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The deadwing attaches to the target. Until the deadwing is detached, the target takes 5 (1d4 + 3) necrotic damage at the start of each of the deadwing's turns. A creature can detach the deadwing by making a successful DC 13 Strength check as an action. The deadwing can't make attacks while attached in this way. It can detach itself from a target by spending 5 feet of its movement.

DORAN D'VADALIS

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Medicine +6, Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Spellcasting. Doran is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12). Doran has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying*
1st level (4 slots): *healing word, sanctuary*
2nd level (2 slots): *calm emotions, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

GHOUL

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

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 charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

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

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

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

HARPY

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The harpy makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its club.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Luring Song. The harpy sings a magical melody. Every humanoid and giant within 300 feet of the harpy that can hear the song must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed until the song ends. The harpy must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the harpy is incapacitated.

While charmed by the harpy, a target is incapacitated and ignores the songs of other harpies. If the charmed target is more than 5 feet away from the harpy, the target must move on its turn toward the harpy 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 harpy, 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 harpy's song for the next 24 hours.



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

HEAVY GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 14 (ring mail)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The heavy guard makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

HEAVY GUARD CAPTAIN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The heavy guard captain makes two melee attacks.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

KARANTA D'VADALIS

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Spellcasting. Karanta is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *primal savagery*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *healing word*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin*, *spike growth*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

MAXILLE D'VADALIS

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Dark Devotion. Maxille has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. Maxille is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). Maxille has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *toll the dead*

1st level (4 slots): *command*, *inflict wounds*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Maxille makes two melee attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

OWLBEAR

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Keen Sight and Smell. The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

PING

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 15 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +4

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Construct Nature. Ping counts as a construct in addition to being a humanoid. She doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Reconstructed Contingencies (Recharges on a Short or Long Rest). When Ping is reduced to 0 hit points, she doesn't die or fall unconscious. Instead, she assumes a more complete construct form. She regains 1 hit point and 8 temporary hit points. Additionally, she gains 8 temporary hit points at the start of each of her turns for 1 minute or until she is reduced to 0 hit points.

ACTIONS

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

SHEPHERD WERERAT

Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Insight +6, Intimidation +3, Investigation +3, Perception +6, Stealth +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common (can't speak in rat form)

Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

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

Regeneration. The Shepherd regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the Shepherd takes damage from a silvered weapon or a spell, this trait doesn't function at the start of the Shepherd's next turn. The Shepherd dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

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

Shifting Strike (Humanoid Form Only). The Shepherd transforms from human to hybrid form, then makes one weapon attack.

Bite (Rat 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 wererat lycanthropy.

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

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

APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

SPIDER-HORSE

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (barding)

Hit Points 42 (5d12 + 10)

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Charge. If the spider-horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

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

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) poison damage.

Sticky Leg. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target is stuck to the spider-horse's leg and grappled until it escapes (escape DC 13). The spider-horse can have up to four creatures grappled at a time.

Sticky Trample. Creatures within 5 feet of the spider-horse that are grappled by it or prone must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage and is restrained. On a successful one, a creature takes half damage and is not restrained. As an action, a restrained target can make a DC 13 Strength check, breaking free of the sticky substance on a success.

SWARM OF SHREDDERFISH

Medium swarm of Tiny monstrosities, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 28 (8d8 - 8)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (-1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Blood Frenzy. The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Specialized Breeding. The swarm deals double damage to water vehicles.

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 shredderfish. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Water Breathing. The swarm can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature 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.

UNBROKEN OPERATIVE

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Brave. The operative has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the operative can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The operative deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the operative that isn't incapacitated and the operative doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The operative makes two melee attacks.

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

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



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

WARGOYLE

Medium monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +8, Perception +8, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Wargoyles deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Wargoyles that isn't incapacitated and Wargoyles doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Wargoyles makes either three melee attacks—one with her poisoned dagger and two with her shortsword—or three ranged attacks with her longbow.

Poisoned Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

REACTIONS

Stonewing Block. Wargoyles adds 3 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Wargoyles must see the attacker.

VADALIS TRACKING HOUND

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

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

Pounce. If the hound 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 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the hound can make an additional bite attack against it as a bonus action.

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

ACTIONS

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



APPENDIX A: FRIENDS AND FOES

VESILE

Medium humanoid (hobgoblin), neutral good

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3

Skills Perception +3, Performance +4, Sleight of Hand +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Song of Rest. Vesile 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. Vesile can confer this benefit on herself as well.

Spellcasting. Vesile is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*

1st level (3 slots): *charm person*, *healing word*, *illusory script*, *heroism*, *thunderwave*

Taunt (2/Day). Vesile can use a bonus action on her turn to target one creature within 30 feet of her. If the target can hear Vesile, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the start of Vesile's next turn.

ACTIONS

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

VULGRE

Large monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands Giant but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vulgre makes two beak attacks.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Consume Carrion. The vulgre consumes a dead body within 5 feet of it to regain 2d6 hit points.

YOUNG SPIDER-HORSE

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Charge. If the spider-horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 4 (1d6) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (1d8) poison damage.

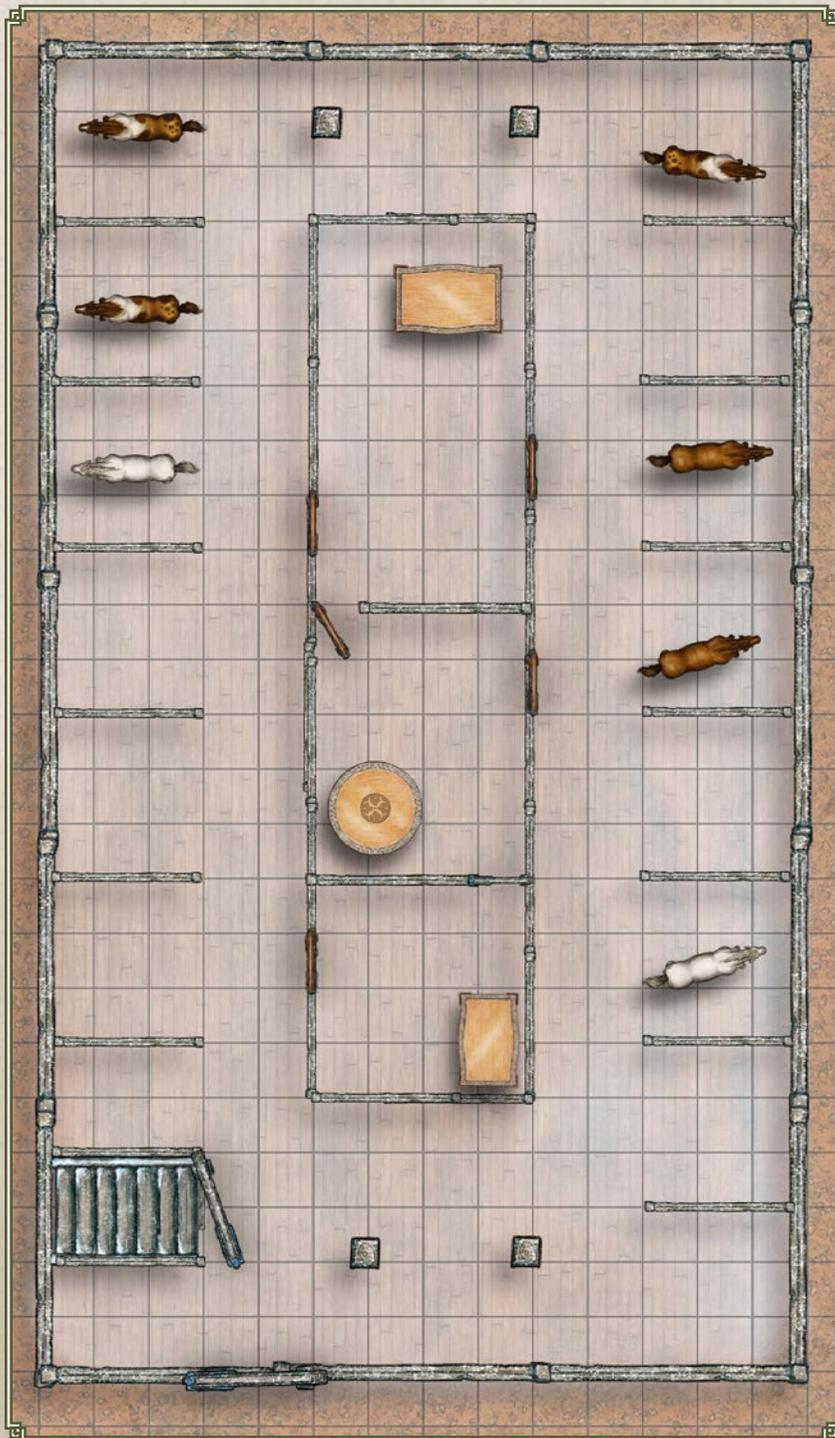
Sticky Leg. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one Medium or smaller creature. *Hit:* The target is stuck to the spider-horse's leg and grappled until it escapes (escape DC 11). The spider-horse can have up to two creatures grappled at a time.

Sticky Trample. Creatures within 5 feet of the spider-horse that are grappled by it or prone must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage and is restrained. On a successful one, a creature takes half damage and is not restrained. As an action, a restrained target can make a DC 11 Strength check, breaking free of the sticky substance on a success.



APPENDIX B: ADVENTURE MAPS

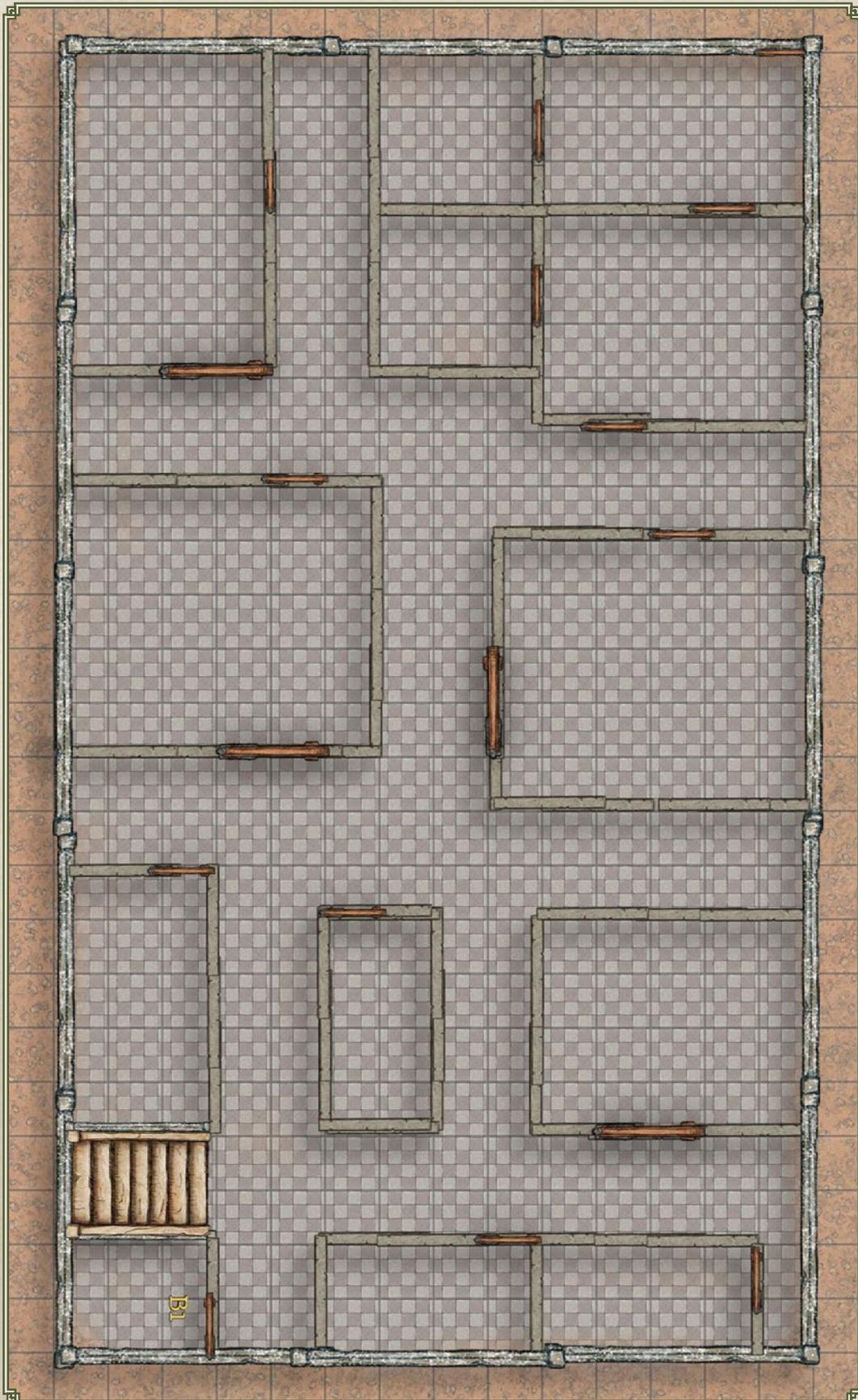
MAP 1.1: GATHERHOLD LAB, LEVEL A



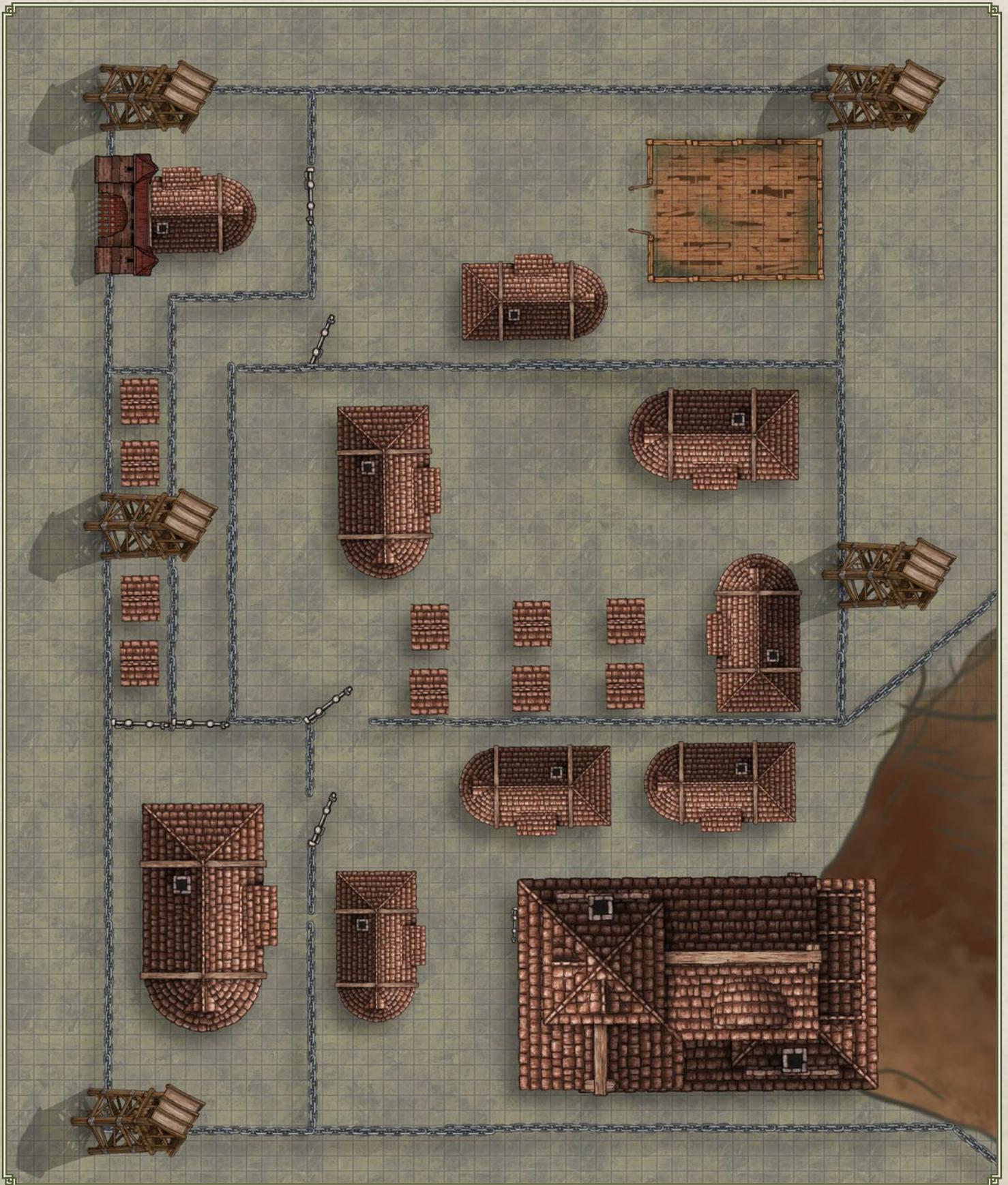
HIGH-RESOLUTION MAPS

In addition to this appendix, which provides full-page versions of the maps used in this book's adventure, your Dungeon Masters Guild digital download also includes a zipped folder. This folder contains high-resolution copies of all maps, including a version in full color and another on a white grid.

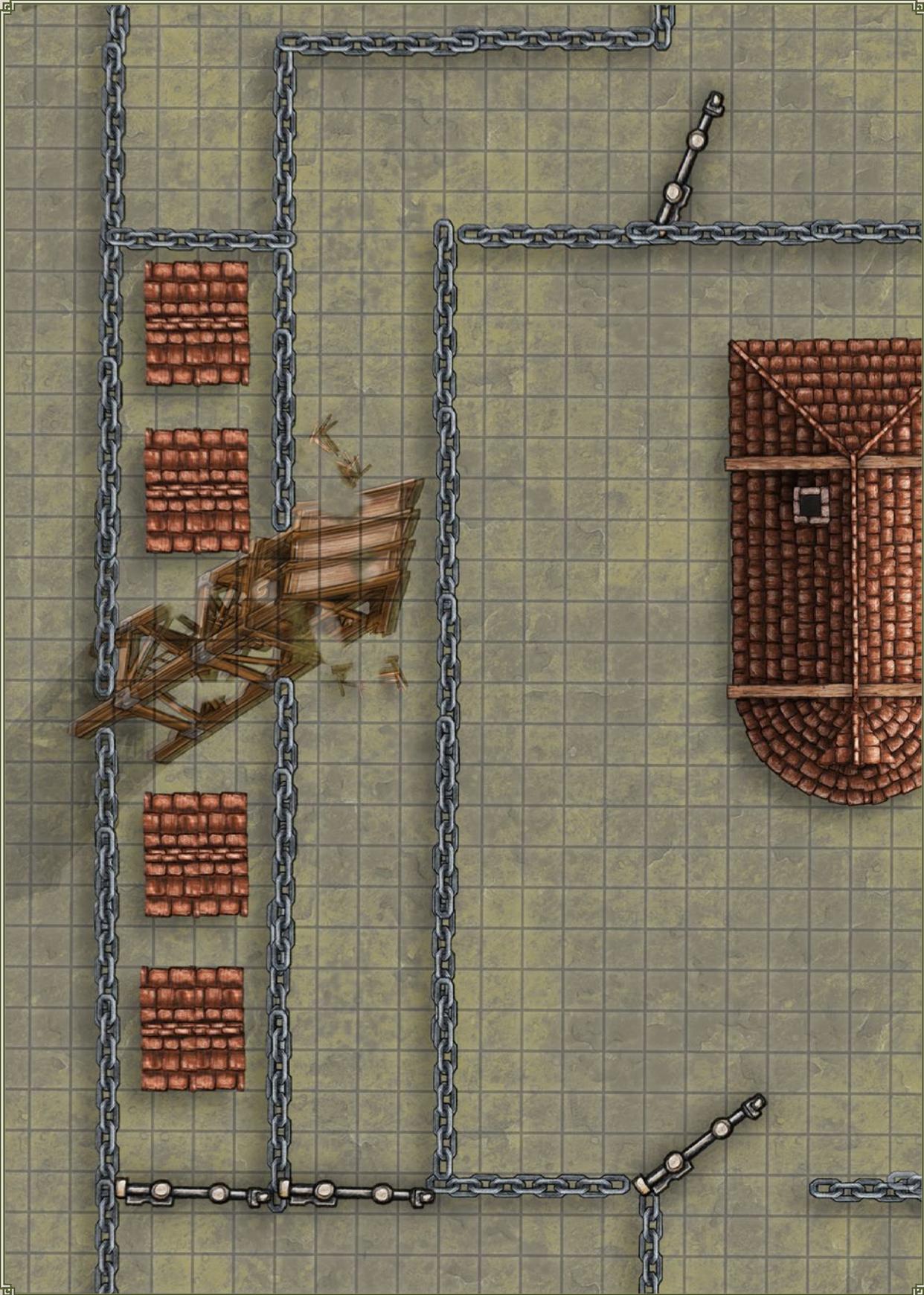
MAP 1.2: GATHERHOLD LAB, LEVEL B



MAPS 2.1 & 5.3: KENNELS RESEARCH COMPOUND



MAP 2.2: TOWER SABOTAGE



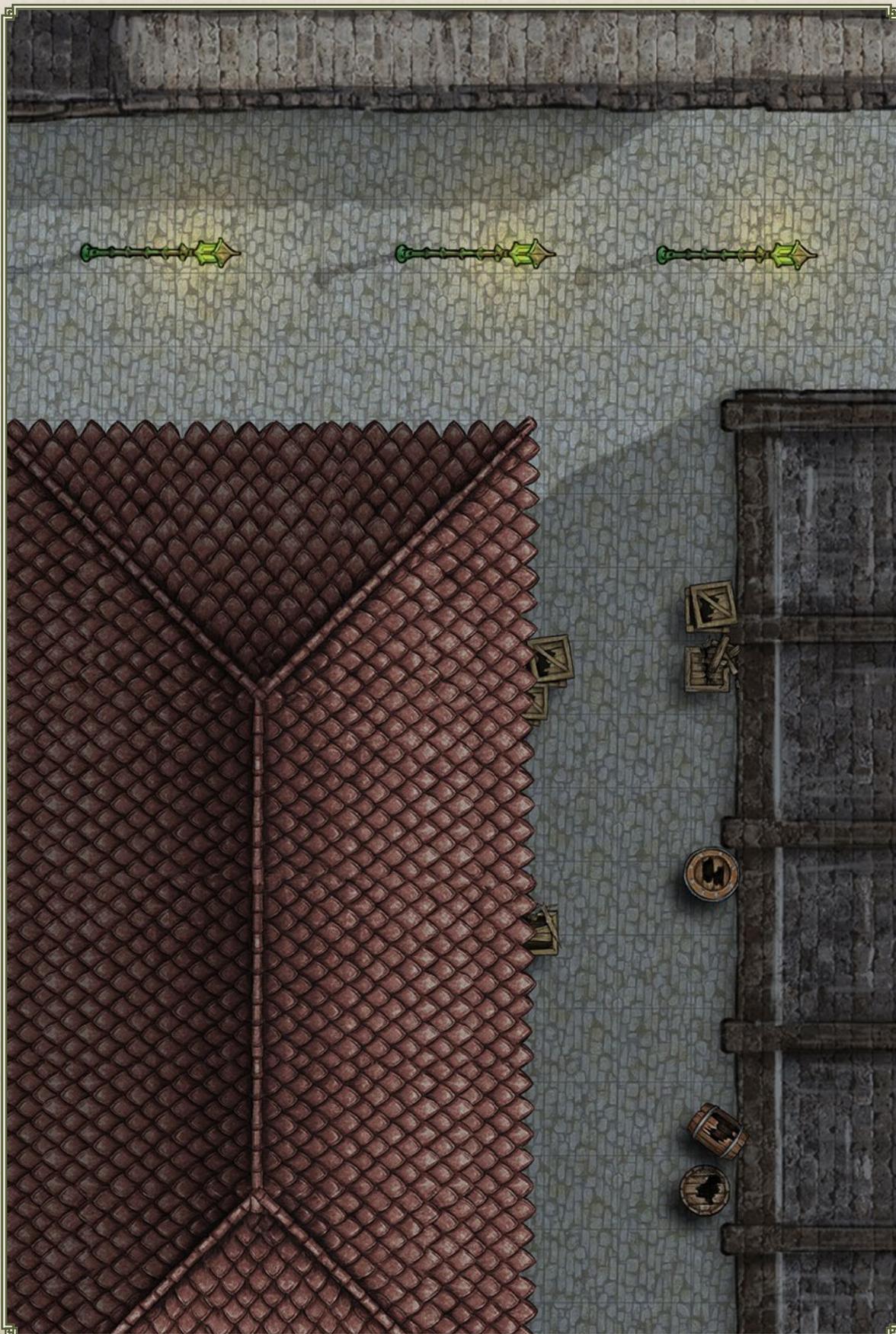
MAP 3.1: PATRIOT'S HOME



MAP 3.2: CLERKS' APARTMENT



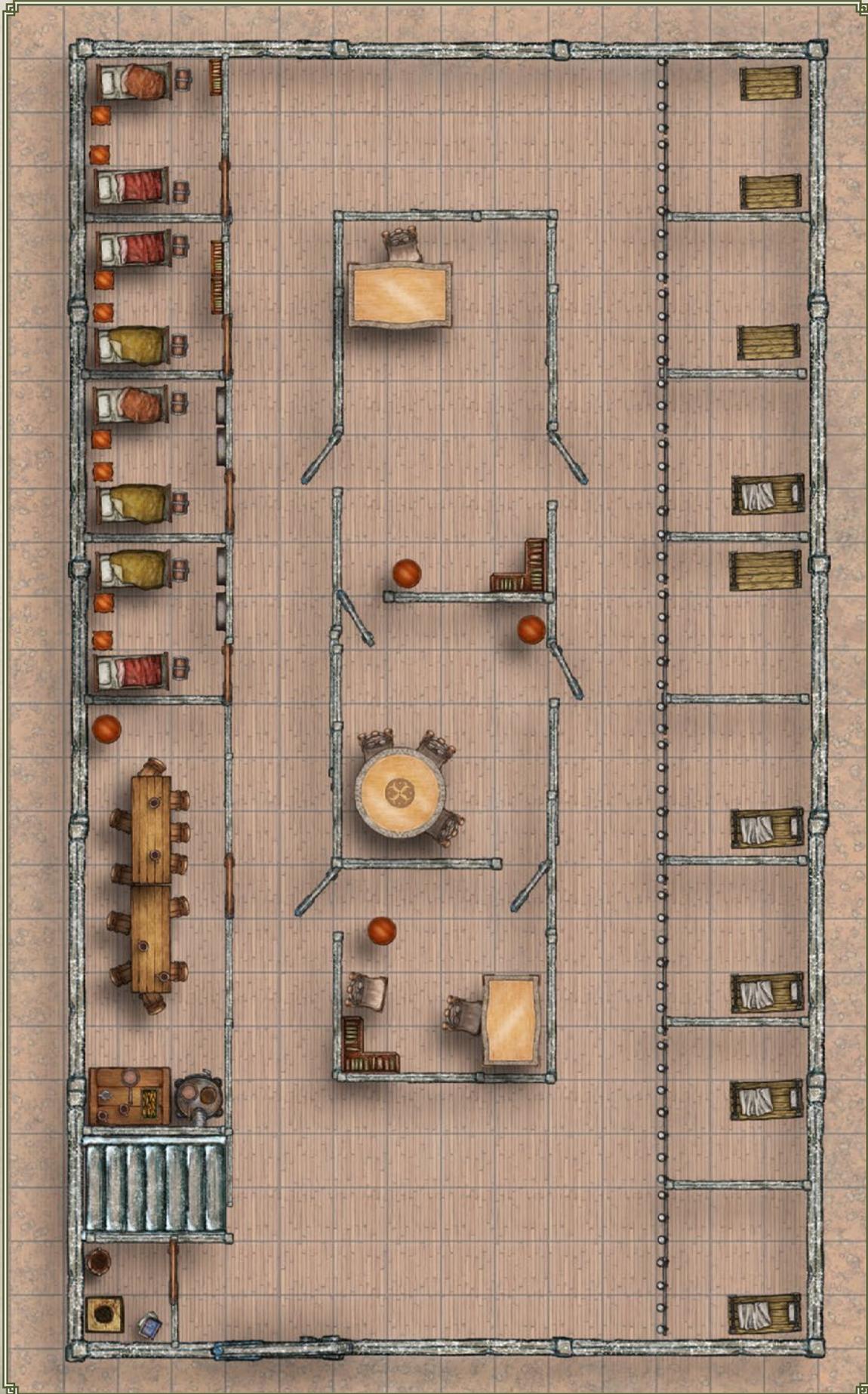
MAP 3.3: ALLEY AMBUSH



MAP 4.1: SHEPHERD CONVOY AMBUSH



MAP 5.1: KENNELS LAB, LEVEL A



MAP 5.1: KENNELS LAB, LEVEL B

